

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Raymond SHEPPARD (London 1913 - London 1958)

Polar Bears Hunting Seals

Black chalk and pastel with touches of watercolour on blue paper.

Signed RAYMOND SHEPPARD at the lower right.

352 x 442 mm. (13 7/8 x 17 3/8 in.) [sheet]

This striking study of a polar bear and seal is a splendid example of Sheppard's abilities as a wildlife artist, and of his mastery of the pastel medium. His natural rendering of the polar bears and their power over the seals is simply yet assuredly drawn, and with a few flicks of pastel he has captured the strength and beauty of these powerful creatures. Polar bears seem to have been a particular favourite subject of the artist, while further studies of seals can be found in Rowena Farre's *Seal Morning*, one of the many books illustrated by Sheppard, which includes several charming sketches of seal pups and their mothers.

Provenance:

The estate of the artist.

Artist description:

Primarily known as an illustrator for such publications as *Lilliput*, *Picture Post* and *The Studio*, as well as children's literature, nature books and calendars, Raymond Sheppard was also a skilful painter of animals, landscapes, portraits and domestic scenes. During the Second World War he served in the photographic section of the Royal Air Force, and produced a number of drawings of aerial subjects. He was a founding member of the Wapping Arts Group, which set out to paint views along the Thames from the Pool of London to Blackwall and Rotherhithe. Sheppard's use of materials was as varied as his output and he was equally adept in the use of chalk, watercolour, pastels and oil. A further curiosity is that Sheppard was not only a realist draughtsman but occasionally explored semi-abstract and surrealist themes as well. A member of the Zoological Society, Sheppard published such books as *How to Draw Birds* (1940), *Drawing at the Zoo* (1949) and *More Birds to Draw* (1956). He exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Institution and the Royal Scottish Academy.

Much of Sheppard's graphic work survives in the form of books and illustrations but, due to his untimely death from cancer at the age of 45, his output as a draughtsman is less well known. He was particularly

fond of depicting animals, and would often go to Regent's Park Zoo to observe the animals and study them from life.