

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Ferdinand von Wright (1822 - 1906)

A Golden Eagle - study

oil and pencil on canvas

11 1/4 x 9 1/4 in. (28.5 x 23.5 cm.)

signed with initials on reverse

Provenance:

Fredrika Fabritius (1818-1902), the artist's sister.

Literature:

A.Leikola, J.Lokki et al., *Bröderna von Wrights fåglar*, 1989, p.139, illus. in colour

Fifteen years ago we were introduced to the rarefied subject of Finnish ornithological art when we had - all too briefly, in hindsight - a haunting picture of a ural owl by Ferdinand von Wright. He and his four brothers were brought up in a remote region in central Finland, their forebears having moved there from Yorkshire in England in the previous century. Three of them, Magnus, Wilhelm and Ferdinand became

noted artists, known principally for birds but also for landscapes and other illustration work. They were largely self-taught, and, in their backwoods existence, parallels might inevitably be drawn with their contemporary working far away in more tropical latitudes, the great John James Audubon.

Ferdinand's magnificent *Fighting Capercaillies* (1886) hangs today in the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki, and is nothing less than an icon of Finnish art. In the same national collection hangs his [Golden Eagle by a Lake](#) (1897, oil on canvas, 31 x 40 in.), for which this is a study.