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Hawking

[Laura Theresa Epps Alma-Tadema \(1852–1909\)](#)

[Bury Art Museum](#)





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Image credit: Bury Art Museum

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Notes



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This picture was painted by the wife of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, an artist famous for his anecdotal re-creations of ancient Rome, in the majority of which passive, female characters are offered up to the male gaze. Here his wife has taken a more or less trivial scene from mediaeval history as her subject, but in it she has created a dynamic role for the female protagonist. A woman has gone hunting with her pageboy and wolfhound; her hawk perched on her upraised, gloved hand. The lady is actually doing the hunting, not just watching men do it. The artist has used an upright canvas and cleverly telescoped the picture space in order to increase the tension. The hunter, like some mediaeval Diana, watches the intended prey, two herons, one of which takes the alarm and spreads its wings ready for flight, the other hesitates, probably fatally.

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She stops mid-step, motions to the page holding the dog to stop likewise; the hawk prepares for flight. Another minute and the tension will be relieved, the excitement will start and death will no doubt ensue for the hesitant heron. The artist has caught the intense, hushed moment quite brilliantly and has painted a frozen instant in time.



Bury Art Museum

Bury

Title	Medium	Measurements	Accession number
Hawking	oil on canvas	H 102 x W 53 cm (E)	473.1941
Acquisition method	Work type		
gift through the Clough Bequest	Painting		

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Bury Art Museum

Moss Street, Bury, Greater Manchester BL9 0DF England

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Artist or maker

Laura Theresa Epps Alma-Tadema

1852–1909

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