

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Racehorses exercising outside a rubbing down house
SAMUEL ALKEN JNR.

Sold



Description

SAMUEL ALKEN JNR. English School 1784-c.1825 Racehorses exercising outside a rubbing down house Oil on canvas, indistinctly signed 48.2 x 61 cms 19 x 24 inches

The Alken family, apart from being one of the most important in sporting art, is also one of the most complex structurally. Sefferien Alken Snr. is credited with being the patriarch of the dynasty which included artists over three generations. Sefferien Snr., born in 1717, is believed to have come to England from Denmark and he is recorded as working as a stone and wood carver.

His son, Samuel Alken Snr., had seven children, four of whom became artists. His eldest son was Samuel Alken Jnr. born on 10 April 1784 at 3 Dufours Place, Soho, the family home. Although Samuel Jnr's younger brother Henry Thomas (Henry Alken Snr.) became the most famous of the artistic dynasty and there is a fair bit of recorded information of his life, little is known of the former's. In his father's will he was left one shilling which presumably was a deliberate insult, possibly because, it has been suggested, the son traded on his father's name by also signing 'S. Alken'. However from studying recorded works it becomes apparent that father tended to paint more shooting scenes with rather more naively painted dogs than his son and the latter tended more towards racing and hunting scenes.

A number of prints were published after Samuel Jnr's works including a set of sixteen published in the early 1820's, depicting various sports, including hunting (otter and fox) racing, shooting and fishing. Sally Mitchell, in the Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists, says of him "He was no doubt an artist of considerable competence."

It is not known what happened to him because he disappeared from view in about 1825.