

A PORTRAIT OF Carl-Heinz Dömken

■ by © Judith Wich-Wenning

Expressive, striking colors, dynamic pencil strokes and eye-catching subjects are the trademarks of Carl-Heinz Dömken's art. His paintings immediately draw the attention of the spectator and change the atmosphere of a whole room. Artwork by Carl-Heinz Dömken takes a prime position in Arabian horse art collections around the world. Dömken's paintings of legendary horses as for example Nazeer, Alaa El Dine, Morafic, Ghazal etc. are true treasures. But who was Carl-Heinz Dömken, the artist behind these great works?

Dömken possessed a large variety of talents. Arabian horse breeder, artist, journalist, author, sculptor – all this and more was Carl-Heinz Dömken. In addition, people who had the chance to meet him in person, describe him as a very unusual man. Carl-Heinz Dömken was born on April 14th, 1929 in Hannover, Germany. Already in his early childhood, Carl-Heinz Dömken loved horses. Old photos show him as a two year old on a rocking horse and only a little later he started to ride real horses. When he was eight years, Carl-Heinz Dömken saw for the first time paintings of Arabians. These works of art by the incomparable Adolph Schreyer (1828 – 1899) fascinated the little boy. While gazing at these paintings, Bedouins on their proud steeds almost seemed to come to life in front of him. One year later, Dömken read the popular books by the German author Karl May. These romantic adventure novels playing in the Orient were another step to fall in love with Arabian horses. After studying German, journalism and psychology in Hamburg, Carl-Heinz Dömken returned to his hometown Hannover and worked as assistant director at the state-owned theatre. Here he met Constanze, a ballerina and married her only shortly after. This was the beginning of a marriage which

was to extend over 59 years until Carl-Heinz Dömken's passing. In the year 1960, at the age of 30 years, Dömken acquired his first Arabian stallion. Arabian horses were very rare at that time in Germany and it was hard to buy Arabians. Dömken discovered and purchased the stallion Nizar at a circus. The chestnut descending from Crabbet bloodlines turned into one of the foundation stallions of German Arabian horse breeding. A daughter of Nizar was Nishi (x Joschi) a lovely female Dömken immortalized in one of his expressive paintings.

Carl-Heinz Dömken was always passionate about Arabian horses, but when he saw the stallion Ghazal (Nazeer x Bukra) for the first time, he was absolutely hooked. This was the horse of his dreams; Ghazal seemed to have stepped out of a fairy tale. Ghazal – a full brother to Ansata Bint Bukra – possessed enormous type and aura. No wonder that he enchanted Dömken, who took upon enormous efforts to acquire this stallion. In 1967 Dömken's biggest wish came true: Ghazal's former owner, Fürst zu Inn- und Knyphausen, closed his breeding program and decided to part with Ghazal. Of course Carl-Heinz Dömken immediately seized the opportunity and acquired his dream horse. Now Carl-Heinz Dömken's most wonderful and also most successful time as a breeder started. Ghazal graced his stud farm for the next five years. In 1972 Ghazal died much too early after an accident. He became 19 years old.

Already during his lifetime, Ghazal turned into a legend. He produced extraordinary offspring, as for example the breathtaking mare Ghazala (x Hanan) for her breeder Dr. Hans-Joachim Nagel. Moreover, Ghazal sired the full sisters Moheba II and Malikah (both out of Malacha). They founded legendary families and their influence can be felt until our time.



AFIFA WITH HER FILLY GHAZALAH. WHEN GHAZALAH WAS BORN, HER FATHER GHAZAL HAD ALREADY PASSED AWAY. HE IS PICTURED IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE PAINTING

The stallion Muqatamm (Mahomed x Ghazalah) was the pride of his breeders Constanze and Carl-Heinz Dömken. He was line bred to Ghazal. No wonder that Muqatamm became champion at the first Asil Cup ever organized.

Today the names Dömken and Ghazal are connected inseparably. With the book "Ghazal – Der Fürst der Pferde" ("Ghazal – The Prince of Horses") Carl-Heinz Dömken immortalized his beloved stallion. This book – a mixture of photos, paintings and sensitive, sometimes romantic and passionate texts – turned into a source of inspiration for innumerable Arabian horse enthusiasts. It attracted many new people to fall in love with this special breed. Carl-Heinz Dömken was the author of several other very successful books about Arabian horses. He wrote for example "Mahomed – Ghazals Erbe" ("Mahomed – Ghazal's Heir"), "Stammperde der Araberzucht" ("Foundation Horses

of Arabian Breeding") etc. His drawings and illustrations graced the covers of numerous books (e.g. books by Carl Raswan published by Olms Press and novels by Karl May) and were printed in innumerable magazines and newspapers. His original paintings – mainly in watercolor or acryl – are much sought-after collector's items.

Carl-Heinz Dömken was one of the founders of the Arabian Horse Registry in Germany. Moreover, in the year 1974 the Asil Club was founded by a circle of friends meeting at the Dömken's farm.

People, who had the pleasure to meet Dömken personally, describe him usually as a unique character. His sense of black humor was legendary, though not always easy. Dömken was straight forward, a dazzling personality who enjoyed provoking. Carl-Heinz Dömken was not afraid of anything



THE STALLION GHAZAL WAS LEGENDARY.
CARL-HEINZ DÖMKEN IMMORTALIZED HIS BELOVED NAZEER-SON IN SEVERAL MESMERIZING PAINTINGS

– or anybody. Farm visitors were usually deeply impressed. The house reminded many of a private museum. Dömken possessed a huge collection of books, memorabilia and a small zoo. The Dömkens even had an aviary with small monkeys!

Carl-Heinz Dömken very much enjoyed handling stallions, their power and self-assurance impressed him. Dömken's soft spot was a black stallion as he appeared in Karl May's novel "My Rib". Dömken always kept a black stallion in his barn even when he was sometimes not used for breeding. Type, dryness and nobility were the ideals for Carl-Heinz Dömken. He always "followed his own drums", never fashion or fugitive hypes.

The Dömkens had to move farms several times. During the last years of Carl-Heinz Dömken's life, they continued their breeding program on a smaller scale. When the Dömkens became

older, they started to worry who will continue their lifework in later years. Luckily a friend of Carl-Heinz introduced them to his godchild Magda. She was a student from Poland and first was to stay at the farm for some days. Everything developed very well and the Dömkens finally adopted Magda.

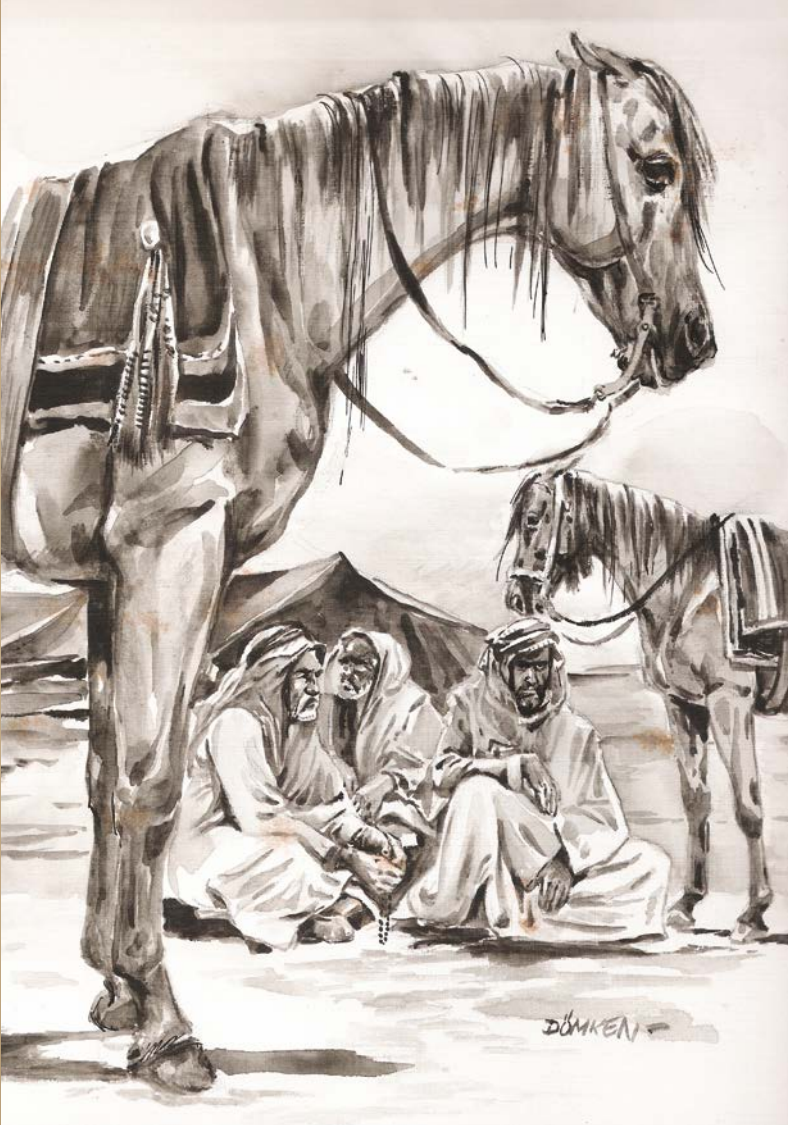
Unfortunately Carl-Heinz Dömken fell severely ill in 2012. After a short but grave illness, he passed away on December 12th, 2012 at the age of 82 years. Carl-Heinz Dömken has touched the lives of many people. He had enormous influence through his eye-catching artworks, sensitive books, drawings for newspapers and last but not least his breeding program. Carl-Heinz Dömken has secured himself a prominent place in Arabian horse history!



A PORTRAIT OF MAHOMED (HADBAN ENZAH I X MALIKAH BY GHAZAL)



A PAINTING OF AN ARABIAN WARRIOR



CAMP SCENERY



ORIGINAL ARABER "GAZAL"

EXQUISITE ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR PAINTING OF GHAZAL.
FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. MAHMOOD AL-ZUBAID, EL ADIYAT ARABIANS, KUWAIT.



CHARMING ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR OF THE FILLY NISHI.
PAINTING FROM THE COLLECTION OF JUDITH WICH-WENNING, GERMANY.



FULL OF SPEED AND DYNAMIC: PAINTING OF A SALUKI.



IMPRESSIVE ORIGINAL ACRYL PAINTING OF ALAA EL DINE. OWNED BY SHEIKH SAOUD BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL-THANI



ORIGINAL ACRYL PAINTING OF THE STALLION MORAFIC. OWNED BY JUDITH WICH-WENNING, GERMANY