

# PASSION AND VERSATILITY

## A PORTRAIT OF

# Terence Gilbert



*Terence Gilbert's range of work is definitely remarkable. His paintings of city sceneries in London or Paris are impressive; his portraits of celebrities, actors and politicians are highly regarded. However, Terence Gilbert has a deep lifelong love: horses play an important role for Terence since his childhood. No wonder that Terence Gilbert's paintings of Arabian horses are so unique. They reflect his deep love for equine subjects and his great passion, the Arabian horse.*

■ *by Judith Wich-Wenning*

*Terence Gilbert's father had enormous influence on his son's later career. "Art is my life", smiles Terence. "I was born in Lambeth, south London. My father loved horses, particularly the English Thoroughbred, whose ancestors were three Arabian stallions. Here is where they get their speed and beauty from. My dad took an active interest in horse*

*racing and from the age of five, I accompanied him to Race Meetings all over the country. There I saw some of the finest horses in training parading in the paddock, then winning on the course. Because of my father, I started drawing and painting in all my spare time. I won a painting competition run by a national newspaper when I was ten years old."*



*"Desert Storm".*



*"Exercise", oil on board.*

*Terence Gilbert's father worked as a warden at the National Gallery. This allowed young Terence to achieve valuable experience studying the Old Masters. "At the age of twelve I got special permission to copy the Old Masters' paintings there", Terence Gilbert remembers. "I went to the National Gallery three mornings a week. Later, I studied full-time at Camberwell School of Art and upon leaving worked freelance as an illustrator."*

*In the 1960's Terence started his career in an advertising company and four years later progressed as an illustrator*

*for movie posters, magazines and book covers. He did for example designs for a James Bond film. During this time, Terence illustrated many Western book covers. His impressive scenes of horses and riders in the American West were highly popular. The Museum of Western Art in Colorado as well as many private collectors started to purchase his original paintings and drawings.*

*From the middle of the 1970's on, Terence Gilbert was represented by important galleries and received numerous commissions for his art. His subjects included portraits of*





*"The Beloved", oil on board.*

important personalities as Damon Hill or Charlton Heston. Terence painted also a portrait of H.R.M. The Queen and Ronald Reagan at Windsor, which was presented to the President at the White House. Middle Eastern art enthusiasts became interested in Terence Gilbert as well. So Terence received first commissions from the Emir of Sharjah, the National Guard of Saudi Arabia, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, H.R.M. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, Emir of Abu Dabi and first President of the U.A.E. later on came commissions from the rulers of Bahrain and Oman as well

as of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Al-Maktoum of Dubai. So Terence Gilbert's connections to the Middle East are very strong. Being a horse lover since his childhood, Terence has a soft spot for Arabians. "What fascinates me about Arabian horses?", he ponders, "Where do I start and where do I finish? Of all creatures on Earth they have to be the most beautiful. As well as great beauty, they have pride, stamina and loyalty. They are magnificent, magical creatures. The proud way they hold their heads, their action, the shine on their coats, the long flowing manes and high held tails, they are every artist's dream subject."

*Terence Gilbert's first encounter with Arabian horses was fateful. "A patron of mine owned several Arabian horses", he relates. "I had previously accepted commissions to paint her prize winning Saluki hounds, but when I visited her home and stud and saw her Arabian horses, I was spellbound by their beauty and got out my sketch book and did numerous drawings of them. So the beautiful Arabian horses and Salukis became a major feature of my work."*

*His travels have led Terence Gilbert to many Middle Eastern countries including Kuwait. He was fascinated*

*by this country and its motives. Terence enjoyed immensely sketching the Dows moored in the Port area. This inspired him to several oil paintings later on. Furthermore he visited Egypt, Dubai, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. In the U.A.E. Terence Gilbert was commissioned to go to the Royal Stables to paint Arabian horses in their natural environment – a very special experience for Terence.*

*The Old Masters have been a large influence for Terence Gilbert. His life long admiration is the marvelous artist George Stubbs (1724 – 1806) who was a true expert for*



*"Stallion exercised in the Sea".*



*"Arabian", oil on gold.*



*"Arabian White on Gold".*

*"Arab Heads".*



*"Arabian Gold".*

equine subjects. Terence Gilbert paints in a very unique style combining realism with impressionism. "These days, I mainly paint in oil, but over the years, have painted in all mediums. Certain subjects for example small landscapes can be effectively executed in watercolour. Subjects that are required to dry quickly are best done in acrylic. Horses require the depth and richness of colour which brings out the shine

on their coats, especially when they are running at speed", explains Terence.

"My plans for the future are hopefully to continue to paint beautiful horses and have my work exhibited in galleries worldwide", Terence Gilbert relates. "My dream would be to have an entire exhibition devoted to the Arabian horse. □





*"The Horse Dealer, Oman".*



#### About the author

*Judith Wich-Wenning is a well-known prolific journalist from Germany. She has published the highly appreciated book "Jewels of the Desert" as well as numerous articles and photos in various international Arabian horse magazines. The Arabian horse in art is one of her most favorite subjects. Her travels have taken her around the world and especially to the Middle East. Judith Wich-Wenning breeds fine Arabians of straight Egyptian bloodlines at her stud farm "Orienta Arabians".*

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