



19th century English landscape with Horse Racing, Possibly the
Epsom Derby

Samuel Henry Alken

\$6,950



REF: 2335

Height: 25.39 cm (10")

Description

Samuel Henry Alken (1810-1894)

Horse Racing Scene, Possibly the Epsom Derby

Oil on board, unsigned

Attributed, English school circa 1840

Presented in a later gilt frame with beaded inner edge

This dynamic mid-19th century racing scene, attributed to Samuel Henry Alken-also known as Henry Alken Junior-captures the high-stakes moment just before the thundering release of horses and riders at the starting line. A tightly packed field of brightly jacketed jockeys leans forward with urgent anticipation, the taut muscles of their mounts echoing the gathering tension. In the foreground, a race marshal gestures dramatically to signal the start, his stance underscoring the energy about to be unleashed.

Though unsigned, the work bears the unmistakable hallmarks of Samuel Henry Alken's hand: vigorous composition, attention to equine form, and a sharp eye for the choreography of sport. The figures are finely modelled, the palette lively but grounded, and the setting-with its wooded backdrop, animated crowd, and distant grandstands-suggests a major 19th-century race meeting, possibly the Epsom Derby, a subject Alken is known to have returned to in several formats.

The composition's panoramic sweep and low horizon lend a cinematic quality, while the density of detail-each silken cap and coat, each bridle and plume-evokes the pageantry and social theatre of Britain's sporting calendar at the height of its Regency and early Victorian splendour.

A rare and spirited scene from the golden age of English sporting painting, this work would make an important addition to any collection focused on equine subjects, Regency-Victorian sport, or the Alken dynasty.