

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Charles-Henri Contencin (1898 - 1955)

The Refuge Caron (or Ecrins) above the Glacier Blanc, Dauphiné Alps, France

oil on panel

19½ x 39¼ in. (49.5 x 100cm.)

signed.

The Dauphiné and its mountains was an area that Contencin returned to many times during his painting and climbing career. The Barre des Ecrins (4102m) rear up in the western French Alps, the Dauphiné, and offer some spectacular climbing with a lighter footfall of visitors in the summer season. The Refuge

Caron, better known as the Refuge des Ecrins, is perched in a spectacular setting, a precarious hundred metres above the Glacier Blanc at over 3,000 metres. With so much white paint required,

Contencin used thick streams of impasto to delineate the ridges and crevasses caught in direct sunlight. The shadow cast by the wall of the Ailefroide is brilliantly delineated in a uniform colour. Having

survived the First World War when only 17 years old, Contencin trained as an architect and draughtsman and from an early age, he began to paint and climb in the Savoie and Bernese Oberland.

Initially he was employed by the French railways where he ended up commissioning works of art for their respective companies. Although he was technically an amateur painter, he was an active member of the Paris based Société des Peintres de Montagne and his paintings were frequently displayed in regional and national exhibitions. Towards the end of his life he was the President of the Société.