

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Charles-Henri Contencin (1898 - 1955)

The Breithorn and Lauterbrunnen Valley seen from above Wengen, Switzerland.

oil on panel, 12¾ x 17¾ in (32.5 x 45.5 cm) signed Peaks & Glaciers 2019, p. 18

The artist's inventive motif of ski or sledge tracks comes into its own in this beautiful scene painted above Wengen. With so much sunlight playing over the valley and the snowfields below the 'Lauterbrunnen' Breithorn, a thaw seems imminent. In a masterly manner, Contencin used his dark line of trees to cut the view in half pictorially; to conjure the sense of a vast void beyond before one's eye alights on the rocky wall across the valley. Despite its relatively small format, this painting is complex but highly successful and one where the painter has favoured using the wooden panel's 'ground' as a colour intermittently. However, as is often the case in Contencin's pictures, the confident handling of the old snow in the broad foreground is the key to both the composition's success and its visual appeal.