

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Charles-Henri Contencin (1898 - 1955)

The Jungfrau in summer, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland

oil on panel

46 x 55 cm.

signed

Contencin came from northern France and having survived the First World War when only 17 years old, he trained as an architect and draughtsman. From an early age he began to visit the Alps where he would paint and climb especially in the Savoie and Bernese Oberland. Initially he was employed by the French railways to commission works of art for their respective companies. Although he was technically an amateur artist, he became an active member of the Paris based *Société des Peintres de Montagne* and painted abundantly throughout his career. His paintings were frequently displayed in regional and national exhibitions. Towards the end of his life, he was the President of the *Société*.

Contencin made quite a few versions of this view of the Jungfrau from the Wengernalp in both summer and winter as the cog railway meant the area was accessible all year round. As was one of his favourite places to paint, it is arguably one of the finest aspects of the Jungfrau Massif. In this high summer landscape, Contencin used the small hay cabins in the foreground meadow to lend the composition some scale. The sense of the wide valley -the abyss- beyond the sparse trees is palpable.