

Peaks & Glaciers®

2026

25th Anniversary Exhibition Catalogue

All paintings and drawings are for sale and are available for viewing from Monday to Friday by prior appointment at:

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Fig. 1
Alexandre Calame (1810-1864)
The Wetterhorn seen from Rosenlaui, Switzerland
 Peaks & Glaciers 2008



Fig. 2
Jacques Fourcy (1906-1990)
The Aiguille d'Argentière seen from the Aiguille du Tour, Chamonix
 Peaks & Glaciers 2011

Running a long-established family firm that mostly deals in old paintings and drawings, we are often reminded that one must not live in the past too.

With that in mind, brevity and relevance are called for in marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Peaks & Glaciers* as an exhibition dedicated to the best paintings and drawings of the Alps.

There is neither the space nor the need in this introduction to reflect on how much the business of selling art has transformed over the last two decades but if one adage remains true, it is that the pictures should speak for themselves. For that reason, I am illustrating here a dozen memorable *Peaks & Glaciers* highlights in the knowledge that many followers of these exhibitions keep the catalogues year on year and this is surely an occasion to look back and see that my overriding concern has been to source the best quality pictures. (see figs. 1,2,3)

It is naturally a source of pride to me that the buying, framing and selling of several hundred Alpine pictures since 2001 has brought me into contact with so many lovers of the Alps, whether avid buyers, devoted skiers and climbers or visitors with a more romantic appreciation of those hallowed places so aptly named in Leslie Stephen's 1891 *Playground of Europe*,

Fig. 3
Edward Theodore Compton (1849-1921)
Piz Bernina, Piz Roseg and the Tschierva Glacier above St. Moritz seen from Fuorcla-Surlej
 Peaks & Glaciers 2011



Fig. 4
Charles-Henri Contencin (1898-1955)
The Jungfrau in winter
 Peaks & Glaciers 2012

Fig. 5
Ernst Emil Schlatter (1883-1954)
A view of Zuoz looking towards St. Moritz and Piz Margna in the Upper Engadine
 Peaks & Glaciers 2015

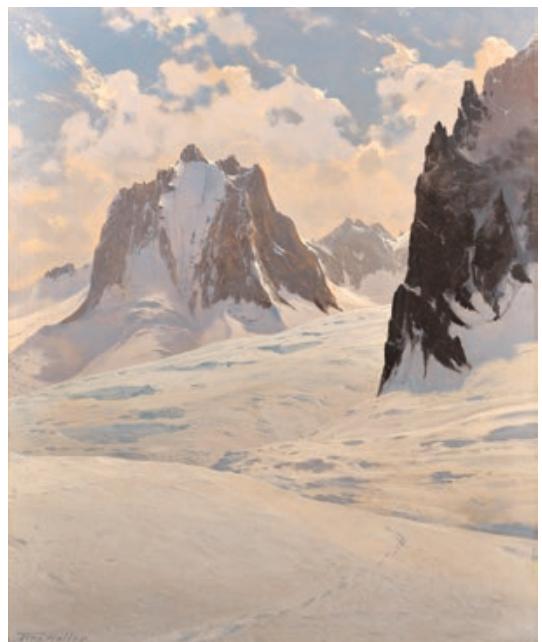


Fig. 6
Toni Haller (1907-1944)
The Tour Ronde and Grand Capucin, Mont Blanc Massif, Chamonix, France.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2018



Fig. 7
Gabriel Loppé (1825-1913)
The Wetterhorn in winter seen from Grindelwald.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2015

arguably the greatest collection of essays written about mountaineering and the lure of the Alps. Some collectors have indeed remained both loyal and active for long periods in spite of our age of information overload and countless art 'platforms'. I would therefore like to dedicate this catalogue to all those friends and clients who have trusted me and have sought out my expertise. In continuing to support *Peaks & Glaciers*, you have allowed me to enjoy my role as a specialist dealer, adviser and writer on this subject all in the knowledge that I too have been fortunate to continue climbing mountains. Indeed, those trips into the mountains inspire me more than anything else to look for pictures from a largely pre-photographic age, from the early 1800s to the early 1900s, which were made to reward their eventual owners with the best possible memories of days spent in or above the Alpine valleys. (see figs. 4,5,6,7,8,9)

The catalogue captions offer some brief biographical detail about the artists but every effort is made to locate and identify the specific view in each picture and to accompany it with some relevant detail. It is equally important to remember that many painters featuring in *Peaks & Glaciers* were first and foremost commercial ones who relied on contracts with galleries and annual exhibitions at salons or societies to make a living. This explains why they perhaps had favourite locations or subject matters and rather than considering them as repetitions, it was more a case of supply and demand (see figs. 10, 11, 12).



Fig. 8
Gabriel Loppé (1825-1913)
Climbers descending from Mont Blanc to the Grands Mulets Hut, Chamonix, France.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2016



Fig. 9
Gabriel Loppé (1825-1913)
The Shadow of Mont Blanc painted from the summit on 6th August 1873.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2019

Fig. 10
Willy Burger (1882-1964)
Lake Zurich with the Glarus Alps, Switzerland.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2020



Fig. 11
Angelo Abrate (1900-1985)
The Matterhorn in the clouds, Val d'Aosta, Italy.
 Peaks & Glaciers 2023



Fig. 12
Cesare Maggi (1881-1961)
Il Lago Blu, Breuil-Cervinia, Val d'Aosta, Italy. (The Matterhorn seen from Cervinia)
 Peaks & Glaciers 2023

The Swiss painter, Alexandre Calame, retains a prominent spot this year as always. Without his innovation in this genre of landscape, it would be hard to imagine how the successive generation of Alpine painters could have flourished. His French disciple, Gabriel Loppé, distilled Calame's ideas into his own practice of painting *en plein air* and thereby gave rise to the next generation of *peintres-alpinistes*. The British-born E. T. Compton's contribution as a chronicler of many hundreds of different peaks, glaciers and valleys is equally as important and yet it is surprising how different he was from Loppé in character and painting style. There still seems to be no explanation for it but their paths hardly crossed at all through the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As ever my boxes of maps, Google Earth and a *cordée* of guides and topography boffins have helped me identify some of the more obscure locations. I maintain that the effort that goes into getting the viewpoints right only enhances the enjoyment these Alpine landscapes bring us.

In conclusion, I am delighted to present such a strong contingent of drawings this year and in returning to those same sources, the artist confronted by mighty mountains and valleys, it is fitting that the majority of these pictures were done from the motif - *en plein air*.



Edward Harrison Compton (1881-1960)

*The Breithorn and Klein Matterhorn,
Zermatt, Switzerland.*

watercolour and gouache
on paper, 24 x 32 cm.
signed, inscribed and dated : 6.8.27

Even in mid-August the Breithorn retains an impressive snow dome. Surprisingly, it hasn't really diminished nearly a century after E. H. Compton made this very fine watercolour seen from Rotenboden in summer.

Referred to as E. H. (Edward Harrison) to distinguish him from his father, Edward Theodore, this Compton was also a *peintre-alpiniste*. (see p. 45) He was his father's only pupil and family diaries document an amazing number of climbing and sketching trips together. E. H. excelled at watercolours, a medium where he seems closest to his father's work, whereas his oil paintings were executed in a looser and more modern palette.

The Wetterhorn in winter seen from Grindelwald, Switzerland.

oil on board, 40 x 30cm.

signed and inscribed on a label on the verso: No. II,
Sunset on the Wetterhorn in winter, Valley of Grindelwald.
Gabriel Loppé, 14 Avenue du Trocadéro, Paris. £30-

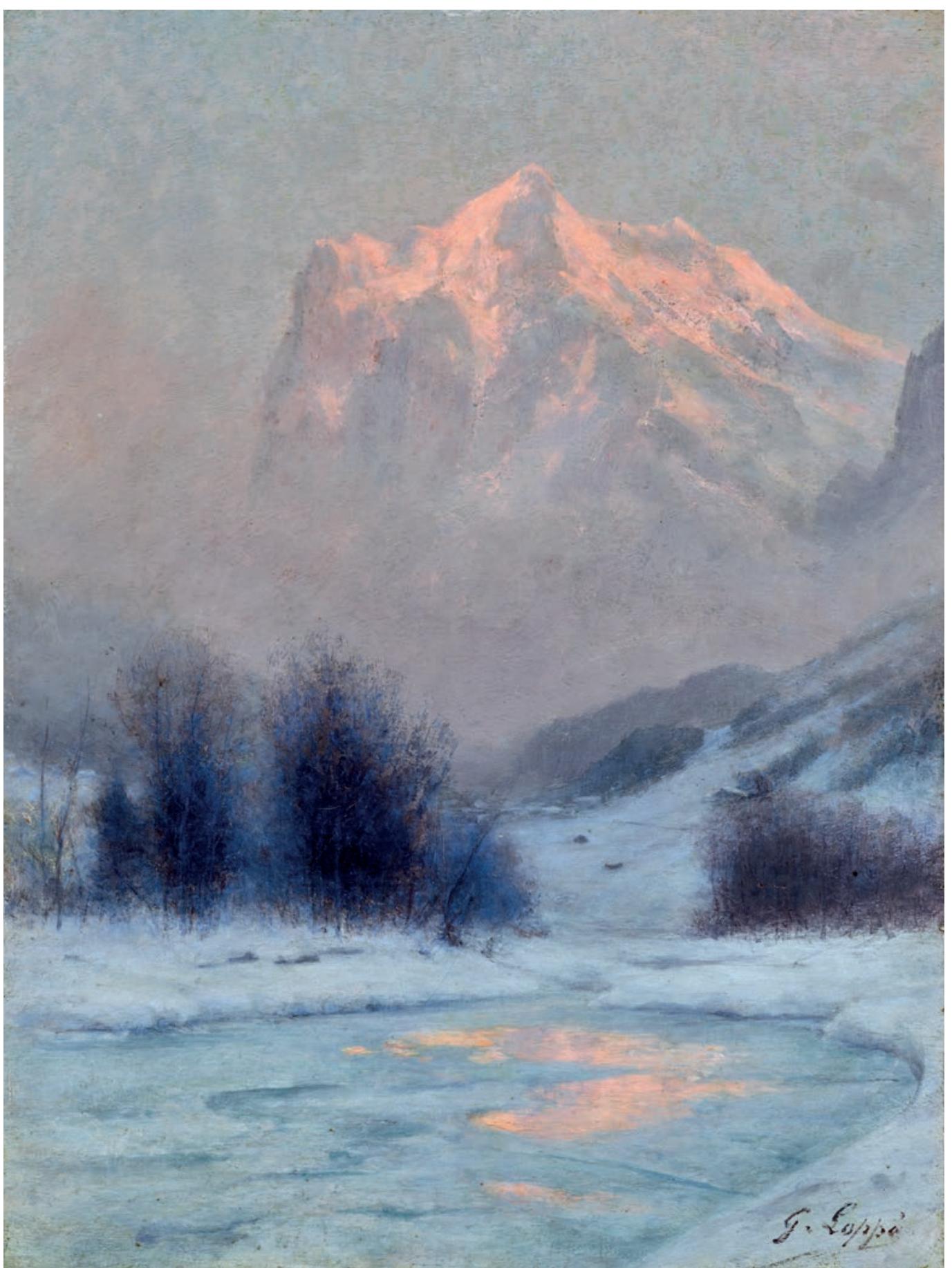
A superb *plein-air* study for a larger painting now in a private collection in England, (see fig. 7) this oil sketch from 1892 is both topographically sound and compelling in the way in which Loppé rendered the end of a deep winter's day.

The peace and beauty of the sparsely populated Bernese Oberland valleys appealed to Loppé and in the late 1870s, he re-acquainted himself with Grindelwald, a village which became a firm favourite like Zermatt for years to come.

Indeed, in 1846 Loppé had taken his first ever steps on a glacier up behind the Wetterhorn with an English climber, Beresford Walker. With this maiden traverse of the Strahlegg Glacier he marked the beginning of a climbing career that would endure for over half a century.

In this *Wetterhorn* landscape, with great finesse and success Loppé converts the cold sky and wintry silence into paint. The frozen Schwarze Lütschine river reflects the dying sunlight off the Wetterhorn's west face and behind the bare stands of alder and birch trees Grindelwald's chalets and farm buildings spread out and up the hill to the left. The last brushstrokes the painter would have laid on were surely those pink slashes across the foreground. Like tied notes in music, they sustain the tone of the whole composition. On 25th January 1892, Loppé recorded in his diary: 'Course et après-midi je peins une ébauche du Wetterhorn au soleil couchant.' (Went for a long walk and in the afternoon painted a sketch of the Wetterhorn and the setting sun.)

Today this landscape has changed little since Loppé's time apart from the retreat of the Grindelwald glacier on the Wetterhorn's flanks. The peak itself (3,690m) dominates the end of the valley and has three summits. Further down the valley at Zweilütschen, the Schwarze and Weisse Lütschine merge to become the Lütschine river which flows on to the Brienzer See at Interlaken.





E.T. Compton (1849-1921)

The Jungfrau seen from Männlichen, Switzerland.

bodycolour en grisaille on coloured paper, 15 x 35 cm.

signed, ca. 1890

Reproduced at actual size.

Compton frequently used this *grisaille* or monochrome technique and to great dramatic effect. On specially prepared paper it allowed him to experiment with the atmospheric conditions and concentrate on the contrast between the snowfields and ridges in shadow. The studies often became finished oil paintings using the same palette of greys and a large two-metre version of this Jungfrau view now hangs in the Manchester City Art Gallery.



George Nelson (1864-1921)

Davos in Winter looking towards Glaris, Engadine, Switzerland.

watercolour on paper, 34 x 46cm.
signed and dated 1892

The Grandes Jorasses seen from the Couvercle Hut, Chamonix, France.

oil on panel, 34 x 45 cm.
signed

The sight of the Grandes Jorasses across the Mer de Glace must rank as one of the best panoramas in the Alps. At just under 2,700 metres the location of the Couvercle Hut takes a decent glacier traverse and some exposed sets of ladders to get to, and thus the view rewards the more dedicated walker and climber.

This is an outstanding example of a mountaineer's picture; a true endorsement of a *peintre-alpiniste* accustomed to working in the thinner air with little shelter from the elements. Painted towards the mid-afternoon, far below the glacier is made up of flat passages of the palette knife with small flecks of darker blue at the edge representing the seracs. The ridge behind the glacier in the foreground has strong passages of Payne's grey and ultramarine violet and creates great depth across the valley.





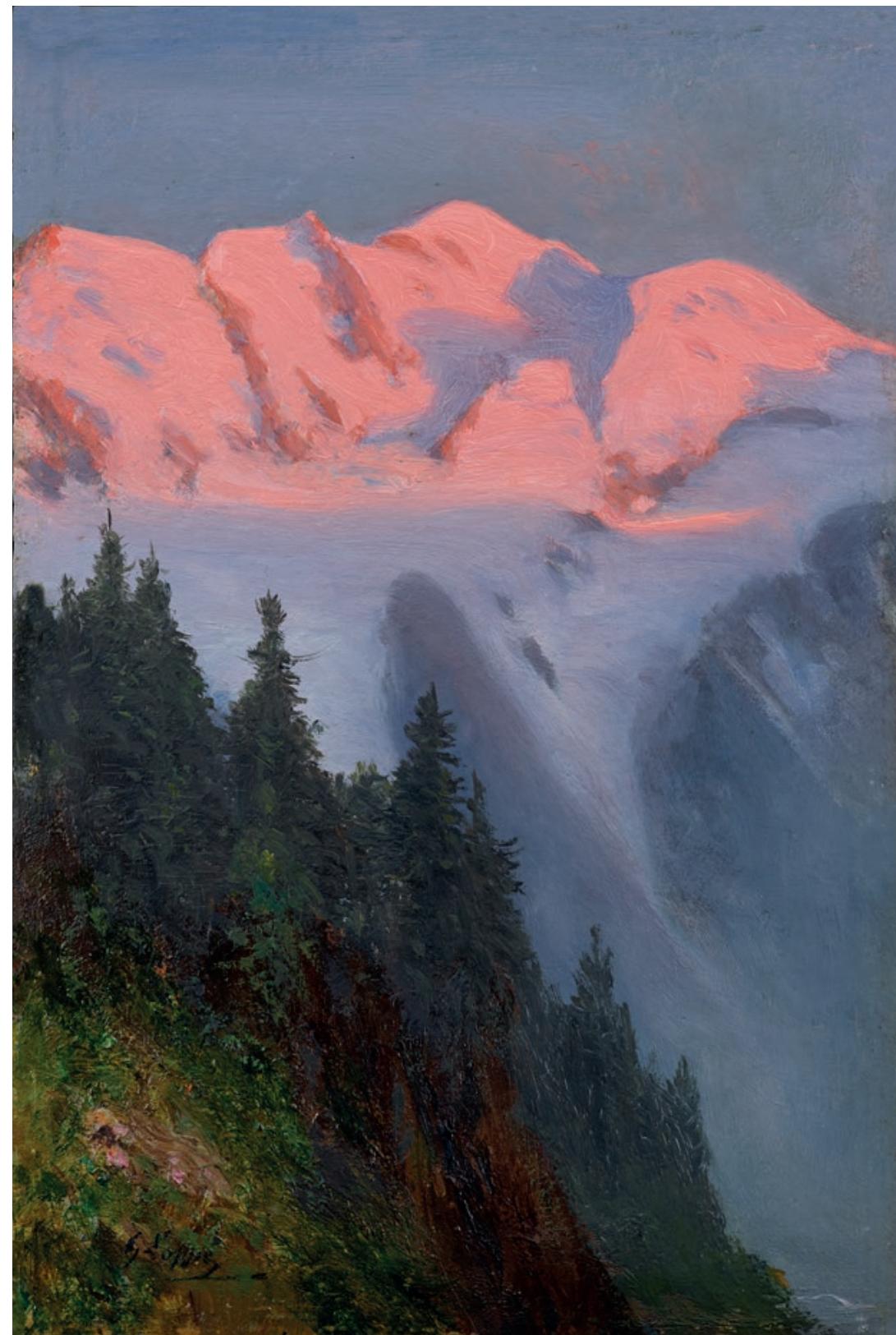
Charles-Henri Contencin (1898-1955)

The Dent Blanche seen from the Balcon du Val d'Hérens, Evolène, Switzerland.

oil on panel, 38 x 55 cm.
signed, ca. 1930

Thomas S. Kennedy was only twenty-one when he made the first ascent of the Dent Blanche and having made an aborted winter attempt on the Matterhorn that same year, he was supposed to have been part of Whymper's successful but tragic first Matterhorn climb in 1865 too. An early member of the Alpine Club, Kennedy must have remembered climbing the formidable Dent Blanche with great pride. And nor does the peak offer any undemanding routes up it. Seen from any angle, it is a stand-alone, beautiful high mountain that, rising to 4537 metres, dwarfs its surroundings. Contencin painted this majestic view from the other side of the valley, at the southern end of the Val d'Hérens. It is a remote location, especially in deep winter as per this mountainscape. The scene is also enhanced in this case by the painter's ability, time and again, to create a feeling of a receding panorama with his starkly shadowed foreground.

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.



Gabriel Loppé (1825-1913)

Sunset on Mont Blanc seen from le Brévent above Chamonix, France.
oil on panel, 24.8 x 16.5cm.
signed



Plinio Colombi (1873-1951)

The Lauterbrunnen Valley, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.

oil on canvas, 65 x 75 cm.
signed and dated 1941

The V-shaped col between the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn and the Tschingelhorn to its right seems to echo the outstretched branches of the solitary pine tree in this serene mountainscape by Colombi. The view was taken from above Mettlenalp just beyond Wengernalp where the Jungfrau descends into the steep Lauterbrunnen Valley. The thawing snow on the shed's roof suggests a late winter or spring in this accomplished sunlit panorama which relies on delicate areas of ultramarine violet to replicate both the mountain flanks and the shadows of the larger tree out of sight.

Colombi came from a Swiss Italian family in Bellinzona and having studied architecture in Winterthur, decorative art in Paris and Bern, he had become

an independent painter by 1900. Thanks to his apprenticeship as a designer and poster artist Colombi could turn his hand to engraving, lithography and woodcuts as well as oils and watercolours with equal aplomb. He began painting snow scenes in these early years when living near Lake Thun in the Bernese Oberland from where he made frequent forays into Graubunden and the Engadine.

Colombi was not a *peintre-alpiniste* but was particularly adept at painting wintry forests, wide snowbound meadows and usually worked with a bright palette. His work in oils veered more towards a lithographic look than his watercolours, which were more subtle.

Konrad Dielitz was a portrait and genre painter from Berlin who was perhaps best known for his history paintings. His Alpine landscapes were seemingly made as settings for illustration commissions from the early 1900s such as H. A. Guerber's *Rhine Maidens and the Spirit of the Alps*.

Aside from the striking composition, this picture offers a snapshot of Alpine life over more than one hundred years ago. Stacked up on a rock platform and with stone 'feet' at each corner to prevent rats and mice from accessing it, hay stores such as this one on the right were prevalent in the Valais region and many of them are still in use today.

The viewpoint from this lofty farmstead looks northeast and away from the Mischabel peaks. Looking from the left, the Jegihorn, Fletschhorn and Lagginhorn run into the chain of mountains dominated by the Weissmies to the right and not seen. The depiction of such a dramatic setting combined with the feeling of life carrying on around makes for an outstanding picture.




Alexandre Calame (1810-1864)

The Vierwaldstättersee seen from Seelisberg, (Lake Lucerne) Switzerland.
oil on canvas, 32.7 x 33.1 cm.
signed, circa 1861

PROVENANCE

Fischer, Luzern, 17 June 2004, lot 1275
Asbjørn Lunde (1927-2017), New York.

EXHIBITED

Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape, Williamstown, Clark Art Institute, 2006, no.13, repr. p. 61;
Den ville natur. Sveitisk og norsk romantikk. Malerier fra Asbjørn Lundes samling, New York, Tromsø, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum and Bergen Billedgalleri, 2007-8, no.15, repr. p. 85;
Forests, Rocks, Torrents: Norwegian and Swiss Landscapes from the Lunde Collection London, National Gallery, 2011, no. 39, repr., fig.15, p. 59.

LITERATURE

V. Anker, Calame Vie et oeuvre (1987), p.437, no.670

This is one of many known compositions by Calame painted near the cliffs at Seelisberg. The three peaks dominating the skyline are, from the left, the Gitschen, then Brunnistock and the snow-capped Uriotstock which is visible from many vantage points on the pristine 'Lake of the Four Cantons', (Vierwaldstättersee). Calame regarded this region as the spiritual and historical centre of his native land and from preparatory views such as this, he made more formal commissions. A few large format *Uriotstock* paintings now hang in Swiss museums such as the Kunstmuseum in Basel and Winterthur.


Alexandre Calame (1810-1864)

Below the Eiger, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.
oil on canvas laid on panel, 30 x 40 cm.
with a Vente Calame wax seal and inscription on the verso

Calame went on his first study trip to the Oberland in 1835. Famous for its spectacular mountains and valleys, he would spend his summers there for the next twenty-five years, often journeying and working on his own. With its steep valleys, waterfalls and views of lofty ridges and peaks, the region offered nearly all the motifs that recurred in his compositions.



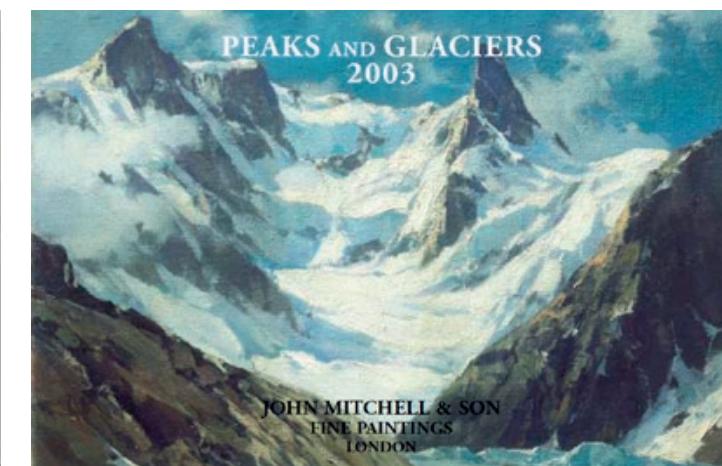
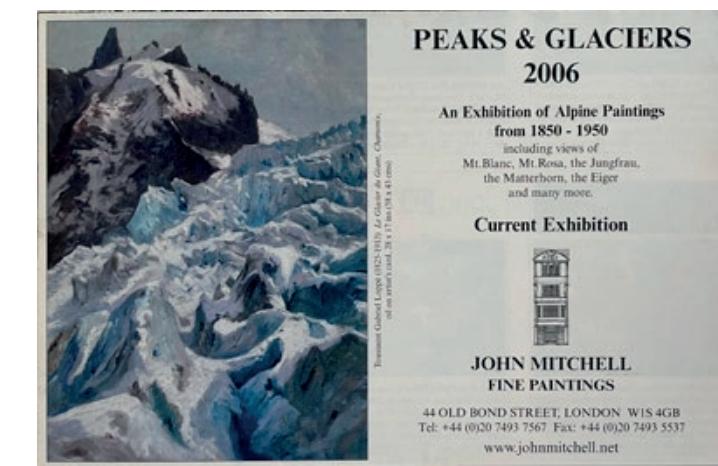
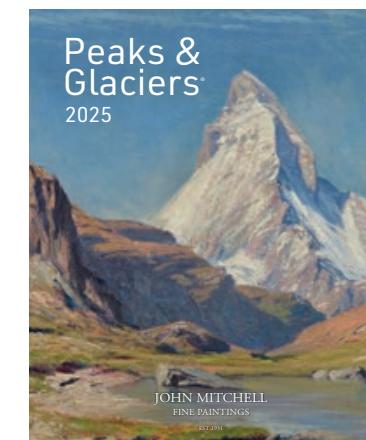
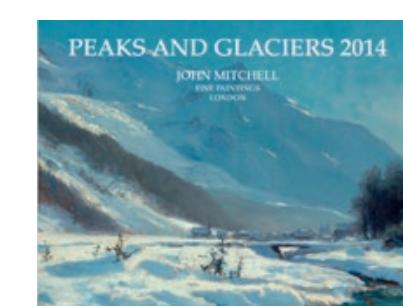
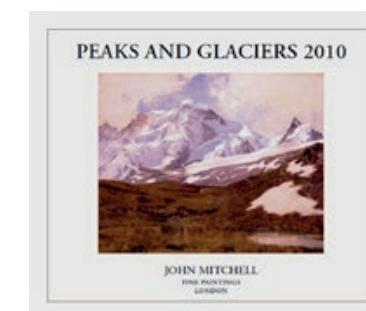
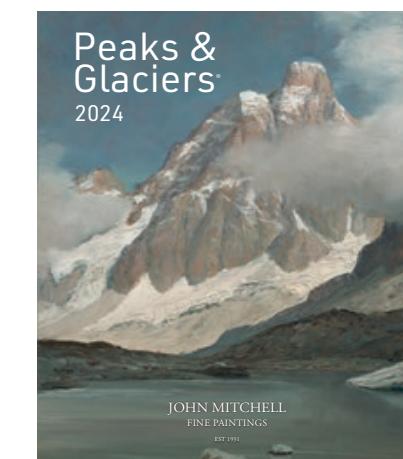
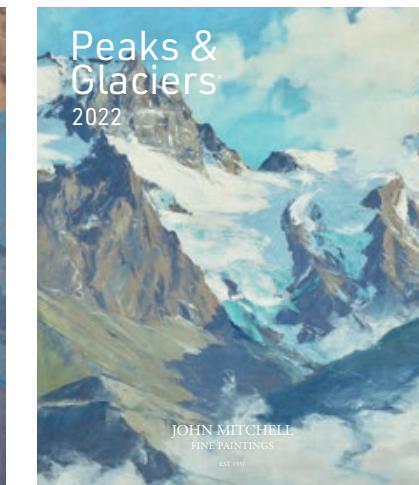
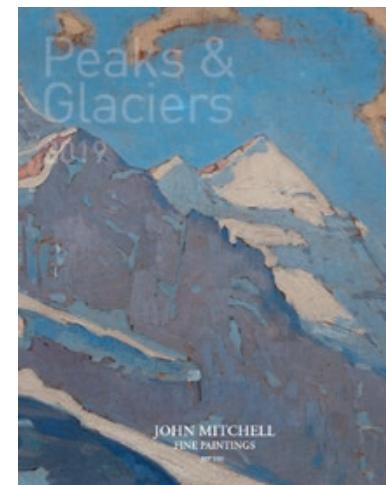
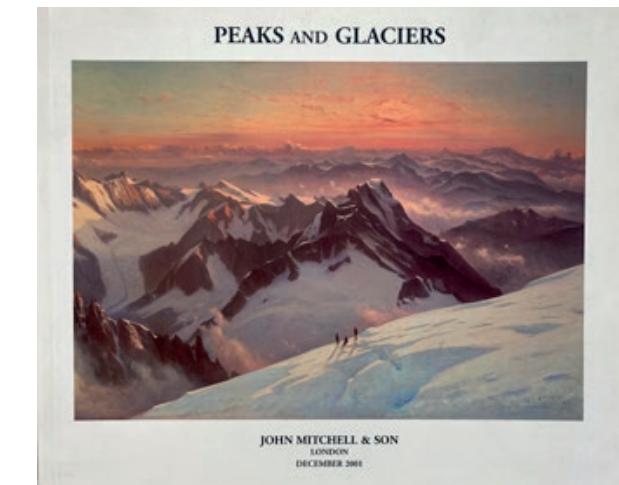
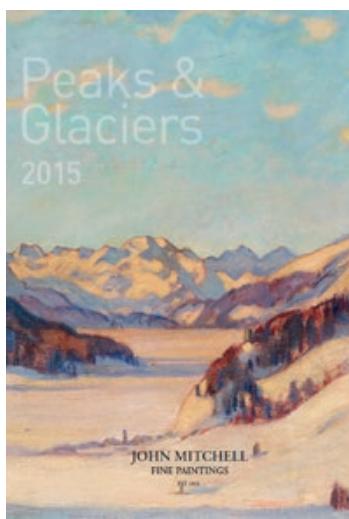
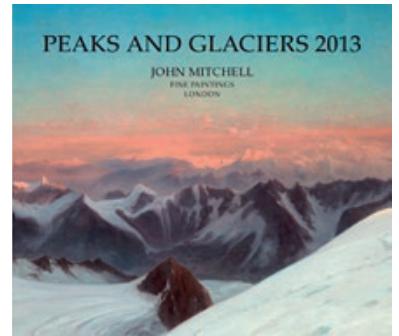
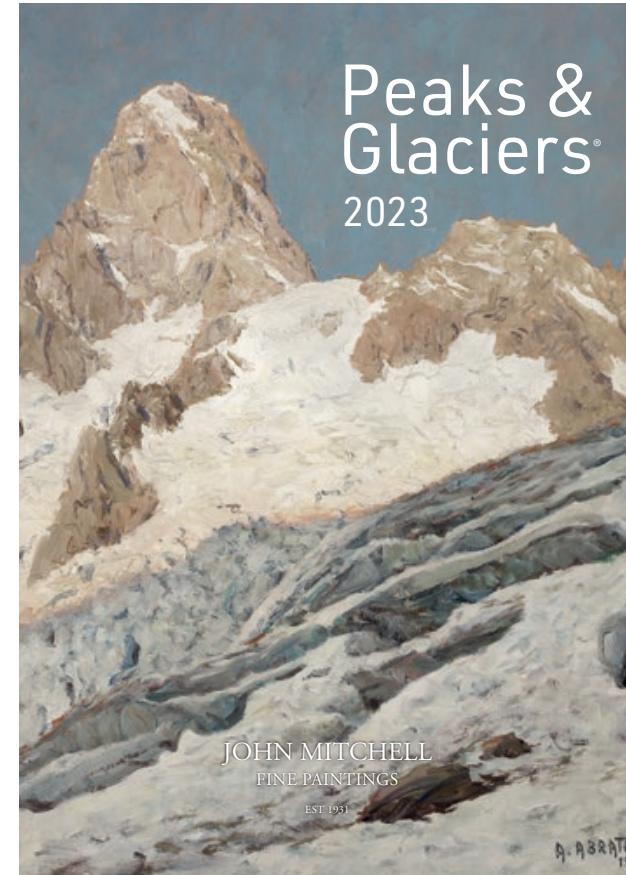
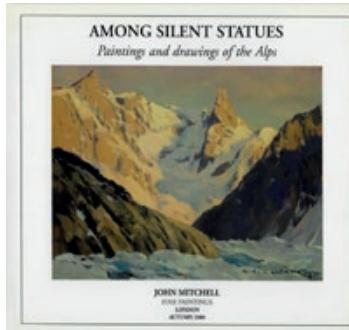
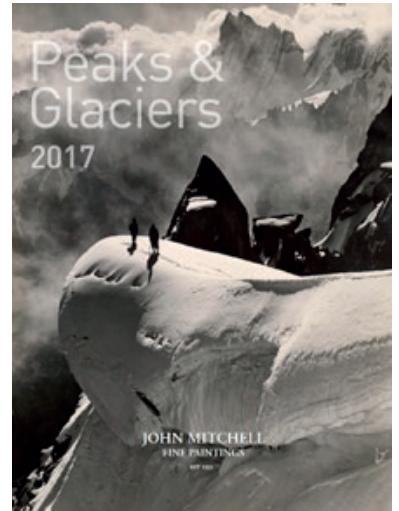
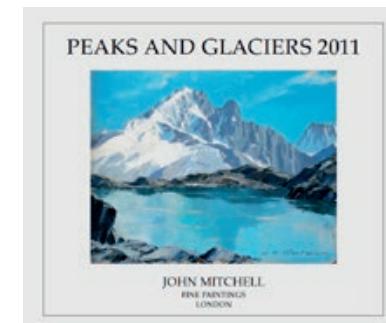
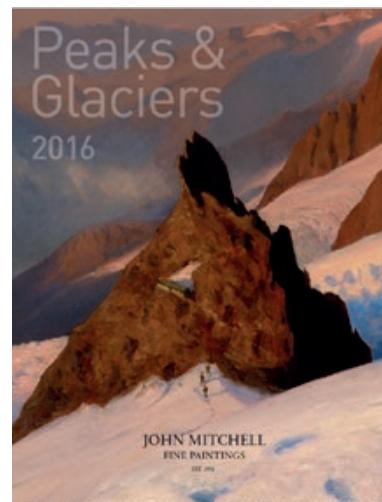
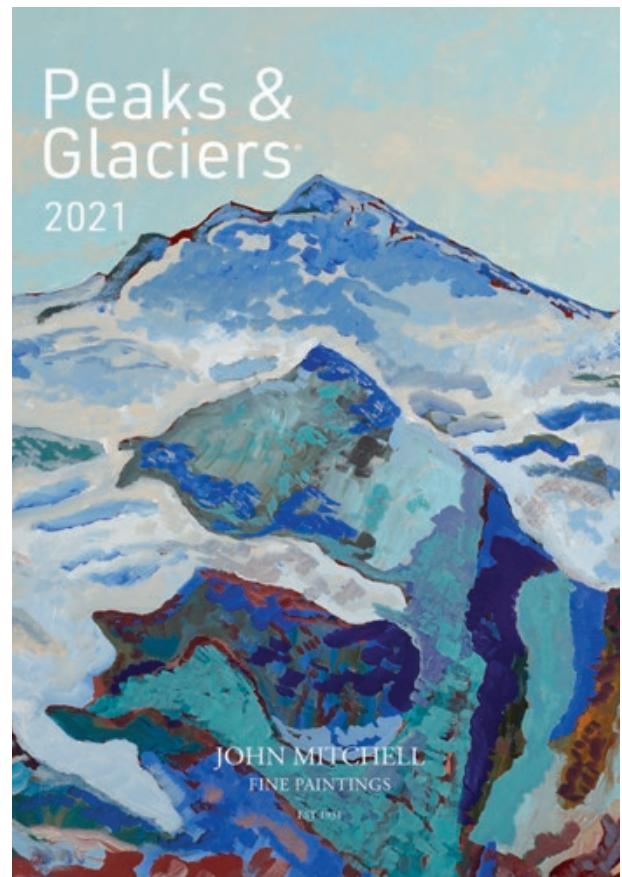
Charles-Henri Contencin (1898-1955)

*Le refuge des Grands Mulets,
Mont Blanc, France.*

oil on panel, 27 x 35 cm.
signed with inscription on label on verso:
*Exposition Contencin nov 1938,
no.47 Les Grands Mulets*

The Grands Mulets Refuge has an illustrious history. Perched in a spectacularly *haute-montagne* environment atop the pyramidal Rocher des Grands Mulets at 3,051 metres, the hut is located at the junction of the two Bossons glaciers coming down Mont Blanc's north flank. The first cabin was constructed in 1853 and, incidentally, much frequented by Gabriel Loppé and his companions. The rudimentary wooden shelter was replaced in 1896 by a larger hut with a balcony which lasted until 1960 when a modern building was inaugurated, capable of sleeping 70 people.

The *voie des Grands Mulets*, or the *route historique*, was the original way to the summit, first completed by Balmat and Paccard in 1786, and remained the only recognized route until the Goûter Ridge, *voie Royale*, was first climbed in the 1860s. The forbidding flake of rock to the left of the glacier and the imposing Dôme du Goûter seen upper right is the Rocher Pitschner. A long way up and behind it, the glacier steepens and becomes heavily crevassed. From there on upwards it leads to Mont Blanc's north face and the ridge to the summit.





Gabriel Loppé (1825-1913)

Sunset at the Grands Mulets refuge on Mont Blanc, Chamonix, France.

oil on canvas, 48 x 73cm
signed and dated 1878

Looking northwest, towards Geneva, Loppé painted this beautiful sunset from studies made up at the Grands Mulets seen to the lower right. In the middle of the composition, the distinctive shoulder of the Aiguille du Varan stands above the clouds. The Grands Mulets and its eponymous hut played an important role in Loppé's life as a painter and as a mountainer. He first climbed up as far as the refuge from Chamonix in July 1853 and by 1873, twenty years later, few people apart from the most seasoned mountain guides knew Mont Blanc better than he did. With over thirty successful ascents of the mountain during his lifetime, nearly all via the Grands Mulets Route, Loppé's diaries also record many extended stays there, when he would paint for days on end, relying on his family and guides to replenish supplies from the valley below.

It was from this same hut above the Grands Mulets glacier, that this author and a small group of climbers took the painter, James Hart Dyke, to Mont Blanc's summit in July 2022. In emulating Loppé's *Sunset on Mont Blanc*, two paintings done in August 1873, the painting expedition spent three nights at this spot and were treated to the most remarkable and vivid sunsets just like the one reproduced here.



Benjamin Recordon Morel (1845 - 1938)

The Aiguilles Dorées, Mont Blanc Massif, Switzerland.

watercolour on paper, 19 x 62.5cm
signed and dated: 15.X.1916

Facing south across the Glacier du Trient, Morel painted the rocky needles of the Aiguilles Dorées from the Cabane de Saleinaz. Marking the border between France and Switzerland, the Aiguilles offer some challenging climbing, both ridges and couloirs, and are still considered part of the Mont Blanc range. The two highest peaks are the Aiguille de la Varappe (occidentale) at 3,516 metres and the Tête Biselx, 3,509 metres (to the left of centre in the composition). In *Peaks & Glaciers 2020*, a fine Morel watercolour of the Dent Blanche was on show also dated from 1916. Records show that this was the year he retired. Morel was an architect from Vevey who became a professor of engineering and construction at the public university in Zurich, ETH. It would certainly be rewarding to learn more about his appealing work as watercolourist.

Louis Gianoli (1868-1951)

The Dent Blanche seen from Les Haudères, Val d'Hérens, Valais, Switzerland.

oil on canvas, 43 x 55 cm.
signed

The Swiss painter Gianoli painted this late afternoon view of the Dent Blanche from the other side of the valley, at the southern end of the Val d'Hérens in a small hamlet called les Haudères




Angelo Abrate (1900-1985)

The Grandes Jorasses and the Dent du Géant, Mont Blanc, France.
 oil on canvas, 34 x 44 cm.
 signed, inscribed and dated on verso: *Le Jorasses e il Dente
 del Gigante dalla base dell'Aiguille du Midi (1944)*

In 1942 the C.A.I. ('Centro Alpinistico Italiano' or the Italian Alpine Club) held a winter exhibition of Abrate's pictures. Reviews of the exhibition portrayed him as always having 'one hand on his ice-axe' and extolled his unusual ability to paint above 3,000 metres. Born in Turin, Abrate was, in fact, an acknowledged and accomplished climber by the time of the C.A.I.'s exhibition. He had joined the club in 1923 as well as the *Club Alpin Français* few years later making his mark in several notable climbs in the Mont Blanc region. He is best known for his first ascent in July 1923 of the south-west ridge of the Aiguille de Leschaux (3370m) made with two fellow Piedmontese alpinists.

In the same manner as Gabriel Loppé a generation before, Abrate would force his climbing companions to loiter around whilst taking advantage of what he deemed the ideal conditions to paint in, regardless of the altitude and temperature. Abrate kept his painting kit to the minimum by using a specially constructed aluminium paint box strapped to his thigh. Putting his feet inside his rucksack and propping the open box on his knees, he could make rapid sketches using a palette knife to block in colours. In 1954 the art critic Joseph Budin wrote in *Le Patriote* about Abrate capturing the essence of high-altitude scenes, in particular his treatment of glaciers and crevasses: 'He sees the mountain as a climber would before looking at it from a painter's perspective and transmits his vision onto canvas with a masterly touch and finesse. In his studies, one feels the breeze and poetry from the summits, the purity of the air and the limpid light. His canvases diffuse a solemn silence.'

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Abrate moved to Sallanches below Chamonix and built a studio from where he made countless painting trips into the Mont Blanc massif. He continued to climb, paint and exhibit his pictures throughout the war, with this *Grandes Jorasses* view being no exception. At some stage Abrate became a French citizen and subsequently divided his time between the Chamonix valleys and the Val d'Aosta where his pictures were much sought after, especially in Courmayeur. He painted almost continuously until the late 1970s and exhibited his pictures in Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Turin, Milan, Bologna, Aosta and Zermatt.

In the eighty-odd years since Abrate made this high-altitude view of the *Grandes Jorasses* emerging from the cloud across the Glacier du Géant, the seracs and crevasses directly to the right in the foreground have now completely disappeared. The location is at the foot of the path up to the Cosmiques Hut facing due south and again, the volume of the surrounding glaciers across to the Italian border by the Rifugio Torino has reduced enormously in the interim.



Alexandre Calame (1810-1864)

The Wetterhorn and Wellhorn seen from Rosenlau, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.
oil on canvas, 69 x 58 cm.
signed

LITERATURE

V. Anker, *Calame Vie et oeuvre* (1987), p.407, no. 512
and lithographed as whereabouts unknown.

Calame painted the Wetterhorn more than any other mountain in the Alps.

One of the reasons was the unbeatable viewpoint from Schawarzwaldalp, Rosenlau and further away towards Meiringen. The bulk and complexity of the Wetterhorn and the smaller Wellhorn allowed the painter to juxtapose the high peaks and their permanent glaciers, and the steep drop of the north

face against a foreground of wilderness and often running streams. The Wetterhorn has three summits and seen from low in the valley, surrounded by forests of larch and fir trees, Calame had no need for artistic licence or exaggeration in rendering the majesty of the mountainscape. This beautiful canvas is Calame at his best. The poetic and romantic vision coupled with a highly skilled and realist depiction of the scene on canvas. When one hears Calame referred to as the 'Jacob Ruisdael of the mountains' it should not be forgotten that the young artist went to the Louvre to copy Ruisdael's paintings.



Wilhelm Friedrich Burger (1882-1964)

Lake Zurich seen from the Mythenquai, Zurich, Switzerland.
oil on canvas, 35.5 x 60 cm.
signed

Painted just outside the city centre on the western side of Lake Zurich, Burger was looking from where the Rietberg Mansion and gardens are now laid out. The large sloping mountain in the far distance is Glärnisch which is only visible on clear days. Burger's home was further along the lake to the south at Rüschlikon but he sketched and painted the city in all seasons and nearly always looking east and south over the lake.

This is without doubt one of the finest pictures by Fourcy to be offered in *Peaks & Glaciers* since these exhibitions began. It combines all the best aspects of this *peintre-alpiniste's* prowess at capturing atmosphere, the colours of the ridges and the sense of ever-present drama to be felt when among the high Alps. Looking west from near the Torino Hut, there are not many more thrilling sights in the Alps than the Peuterey Ridge. The south face of the mountain as painted by Fourcy leads up to the Italian summit of Mont Blanc. It is one of the classic rock climbs and ranks amongst the purest on the Mont Blanc Massif.

As an engineer by training, Fourcy had a successful career working for the French railway network, *Compagnie Paris-Méditerranée* Lyon- or PLM, before enlisting in the army. Despite losing an eye in WWII in 1940 and spending five years in a Rhenish prisoner of war camp, he was the longest active member of the *Société des Peintres de Montagne*, exhibiting there nearly every year from 1925 to 1990. Fourcy learnt to paint by himself and relied exclusively on a palette knife generously loaded with paint to recreate the seracs, glaciers and couloirs so familiar to him as an experienced climber. It took considerable skill to avoid over saturating the colour and tone.





Alexandre Calame (1810-1864)

Cliffs near Seelisberg, Lake Luzern, Switzerland.

oil on paper, 32 x 40 cm.

signed and inscribed on the verso: *A mon ami Eugène Félix souvenir affectueux Calame. circa 1861*

LITERATURE

V. Anker, *Calame Vie et œuvre* (1987), p.453, no.762

This fine study in oils comes from the studio sale of the artist's works held a year after Calame's death in Paris's Hôtel Drouot. The sale was conducted over two days and included 650 lots, mostly oil studies with two hundred or so drawings. It bears repeating that Calame never sold his studies and drawings in his lifetime and the rediscovery of this daring and modern sketch reveals to what extent he was devoted to working *en plein air*. In this instance, perched high up above Lake Luzern the painter was even risking life and limb. Defying the elements, the trees growing at the edge of the cliffs – one dead and one alive – correspond to Calame's vision of man's place in the world, dwarfed here by the twin peaks of the Mythen in the far distance to right. This composition is similar in style and execution to his vertiginous view of cliffs entitled *Falaises de Seelisberg* from 1861 now in the Oskar Reinhart Sammlung in Winterthur (see fig 13). The latter oil study was one of the highlights of the 1993 exhibition held in the National Gallery, *Caspar David Friedrich to Ferdinand Hodler: A Romantic Tradition Nineteenth-Century Paintings and Drawings from the Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur*. It was here that this writer first encountered Calame.

Fig. 13

Falaises de Seelisberg, oil on canvas on card, 32 x 52 cm.
The Oskar Reinhart Foundation, Winterthur, Switzerland.





Adolfo Rolla (1899-1967)

Winter near St. Moritz with Piz Margna, Engadine, Switzerland.

oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm.
signed and inscribed on verso:
Brina-Mattino a St. Moritz

Rolla was born to an Argentinian family who had relocated to Piedmont. He was a direct contemporary of Contencin and he too fought in the Great War from 1915-1918. As a regular participant in exhibitions and salons in Turi, Rolla, like Maggi, Oreste and Albertini spent a lot of time painting in the Aosta valley as well as further afield in the Engadine. Inscribed as a 'frosty morning in St. Moritz', this picture was painted near La Punt and shows Piz Margna beyond the tree line. Over half of all known paintings by Rolla are of snowy subjects although there are no records of him as a climber.



Edward Harrison Compton (1881-1960)

The Matterhorn as seen from Riffelsee, Zermatt, Switzerland.

watercolour and gouache on paper, 24 x 31 cm.
signed and dated : 25.7.27

E. H. Compton often did his Alpine watercolours on light brown or ochre coloured papers as seen here. The white gouache is applied sparingly but to great effect over technically superior drawing and washes of watercolour. Incidentally, this Matterhorn study was drawn just two weeks before the Breithorn (see p. 6).



Hans Maurus (1901-1942)

The Matterhorn seen from Findlerhof above Zermatt, Valais, Switzerland.

oil on canvas, 60.5 x 80.5cm.
signed



Gabriel Loppé (1825 -1913)

Sisikon in winter with the Uriotstock, Lake Luzern, Switzerland.

oil on panel, 28 x 40cm.
signed

Loppé painted the Uriotstock many times from the shores of Lake Luzern and mostly in winter. In January 1877 Leslie Stephen and Loppé met in Bern for their first winter trip to the Bernese Oberland. They headed for the Lauterbrunnen Valley and afterwards to Meiringen where they visited the 'King of the mountain guides' Melchior Anderegg who was not only Leslie Stephen's favourite guide but also one of Loppé's preferred travelling companions too. For over two weeks, with Melchior Anderegg in tow for the harder passages, Loppé and Stephen roamed the secluded valleys, passes and glaciers of the Oberland, getting as far south as Grimsel. Loppé discovered the charms of Interlaken, Meiringen, Engelberg and small villages on the shores of Lake Luzern such as Sisikon and Seelisberg. For the next twenty-five years, hardly a January or February passed when Loppé did not revisit that part of Switzerland with his family and friends, often retracing those same itineraries from that initial voyage.



Johann Gottfried Steffan (1815-1905)

The Handeck Valley, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.

oil on paper on canvas, 25.5 x 45 cm.
signed and dated 1850

Although he was born in Zürich, Steffan moved to Munich as a young man where he became known by his contemporaries as the 'German Calame'. Over the course of his long working life, he undertook countless painting trips throughout Switzerland, concentrating on lake and mountain landscapes with a fondness for raging waterfalls. In this regard his subject matter overlapped with the more famous Calame's paintings, yet even though he was only five years younger, he outlived him by over fifty years. Like Calame, Steffan had a wealthy clientele and produced many hundreds of finished oil studies, particularly in the Bernese Oberland like our Handeck Valley study, to convert back in his studio into easel paintings. These formal pictures, whilst often majestic and highly finished, often lack the subtlety and originality of his studies. In comparison to the *plein-air* studies, the passages of impasto and atmospheric freshness tended to be more subdued principally because Steffan was more than always working to a specific agenda for a client.

This *plein-air* oil sketch was made looking due west up to the Steinlauihorn from the hamlet of Handeck near the Gelmersee and its secluded, heavily wooded valleys



E.T. Compton (1849-1921)

The Breithorn and the Klein Matterhorn, Zermatt, Switzerland.

watercolour, 33 x 53.5 cm.
signed

This first-rate watercolour by E. T. Compton shows the north face of the Breithorn as seen from Gornergrat. To its right is the pyramid-like Klein Matterhorn and then the Theodul Pass on the Italian border. For generations, many a mountaineering career has begun with a short ascent of the 4,160-metre peak from the cable car station at the Klein Matterhorn or, yet more rewarding, a traverse of its five summits.

Opportunities to collect watercolours by Compton of this quality and finesse are increasingly rare. With a preference for lavender or violet colours and light washes of bodycolour, their delicacy can be susceptible to fading. Nonetheless, a perfectly preserved drawing such as this Zermatt panorama thoroughly reiterates how superior Compton's skill was in this medium. Few painters could match his gift for conveying the high mountain atmosphere and light in these watercolours.



Carl Kessler (1876-1968)

The Bergkirchli in Winter, Arosa, Switzerland.
watercolour, 30 x 47 cm.
signed

The *Bergkirchli* – little mountain chapel – is a well-known landmark which was built at the end of the fifteenth century. Arosa's oldest surviving building, it is still a consecrated Protestant church and a sought-after venue for weddings and concerts.



Carl Kessler (1876-1968)

St. Nikolaus church in Lech with the Widderstein, Vorarlberg, Austria.
watercolour, 30 x 47 cm.
signed

Kessler was a specialist watercolourist of mountain scenery and worked throughout the Tyrol and the Engadine. Although his pictures seem deceptively simple and softly executed, the wide expanses of snow are formed of many subtle washes, graded to convey the distribution of light on the blanketed meadows and slopes. Kessler favoured clear, cold days and his skies are often dappled with yellow ochre clouds. This wintry watercolour depicts the view along the Lech River, looking northeast with the 2,533 metre Widderstein forming an imposing backdrop to the village's church and hamlet.



James Hart Dyke (b.1966)
Matterhorn, evening, Zermatt, Switzerland.
 oil on acrylic on canvas, 180 x 240cm.
 signed and dated 2025



James Hart Dyke (b.1966)
Last light on Eiger, Mürren, Switzerland.
 oil on acrylic on card, 42 x 42cm.
 signed and dated 2025

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