



Angelo Abrate (1900 - 1985)

The Rocher du Couvercle and the Couvercle Hut above Chamonix, Savoie, France

oil on panel, 34 x 44 cm.

signed, inscribed on verso:

Quando non si compiono scalate (Il Rifugio Couvercle) Agosto 1938

Exhibited:

Mostra personale di Bozzetti Alpini dell'alpinista accademico Pittore Angelo Abrate

CAI Milano (Centro Alpinistico Italiano) Milan. 20th November -5th December 1942, no. 48

Abrate's inscription on the back of his panel translates as: 'When there is no climbing'. It conjures an image of the painter waiting out a cloudy or inclement day but at the same time, happily working away with a paint box on his knees as was his preferred painting method. Like his forebear, Gabriel Loppé, the brief statement reveals the duality of his life in the mountains as half painter and half climber. When seen from the Couvercle Hut the enormous bowl of the Glacier du Géant lives up to its name in size and scale. In this instance most of Mont Blanc is covered in cloud but Abrate created here a superb impression of one of the best panoramas in the Alps.

At just under 2,700 metres the location 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. The first refuge - shown here- was built on the original bivouac site under the *Rocher du Couvercle*, the obelisk-like rock overhanging it. In 1932, a new refuge was built seventy metres away on a promontory overlooking the Mer de Glace and the Tacul and Talèfre glaciers.