

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS



Albert Gos (1852 - 1942)

The Matterhorn looking from Riffelsee, Switzerland

oil on canvas

58 x 70 cm.

signed

Albert Gos came from an established Genevan family. He devoted his early 15 years to music and studied the violin under Alexandre Calame's wife, Amélie Munz-Berger. Despite acclaim at the Geneva Conservatory, Gos turned to painting when he was twenty-two and took lessons for several months from one of Alexandre Calame's leading pupils Barthélemy Menn. His instruction overlapped with Ferdinand Hodler who was also one of Menn's pupils. Gos's debut picture *Moonlight in the Lauterbrunnen Valley* was hung in the Lausanne Gallery in 1873 followed three years later by a first submission to the Paris Salon in 1876. Gos exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1880 and, subsequently, numerous private and official exhibitions, both in Switzerland and abroad, brought the young painter into prominence. His notable early exhibition was a solo one at the Georges Petit Gallery in Paris in 1895 and one which confirmed his reputation as a *peintre de montagne* and of the best known Valaisan painters of his generation.

Indeed, of all the subjects of which it could be said that Gos made his 'own', his prolific Cervin (Matterhorn) pictures were what he became famous for and in Alpine clubs and artistic communities, his name was frequently written as *Albert Gos, Le peintre du Cervin*. Unusually, he made many moonlit views of the mountain too and at the end of 2024, as Keeper of Pictures there, I arranged for the restoration of a large two-metre-high composition, *Claire de lune sur le Cervin*, on behalf of its owners, the Alpine Club.

The Gos family divided their time between Geneva and Zermatt and Albert's children became well-known in their respective artistic fields. They were accomplished mountaineers too, especially Charles

who made the first unguided ascent of the Zmutt Grat on the Matterhorn's north face. The eldest son, François followed on from his father as a painter, his brother Charles was a writer and the youngest, Emile a widely revered mountain photographer. The title: *Les Gos, une montagne en heritage* seemed a most suitable one for a retrospective exhibition held in Martigny a few years ago and starting with Albert, the Gos family's remarkable affinity with the Matterhorn continued for a few generations.

Our summertime *Matterhorn looking from Riffelsee* is as fine an example by Gos as I have seen in many years and a most welcome addition to *Peaks & Glaciers*.