





## Gallery Notes

is published to acquaint readers with the paintings and drawings offered for sale by

# JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS

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# FOREWORD

Thank you to readers of *Gallery Notes* who came to our stand at Maastricht this year. We hope you had a rewarding visit to the fair. With the addition of further exhibitors and a 'Works on Paper section', the fair continues to enjoy an excellent attendance and TEFAF 2010 saw a record number of visitors.

A special edition of *Gallery Notes – Three Early Seventeenth Century Paintings*, featuring a *St. George* by Johann Koenig, a *Flowerpiece* by Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder and a *Winter Landscape* by Adam van Breen was written to coincide with Maastricht this year. Copies of the hard-bound book are still available therefore please contact us to receive one by post.

We were delighted that The National Gallery of Art in Washington acquired the very rare Adam van Breen painting (see right) in March, and it seems that the demand for important Old Master paintings remains as strong as ever in these uncertain economic times.

Next month our firm will be taking part in the first edition of *MASTERPIECE* (see dates opposite) to be held in the former Chelsea Barracks and, naturally, we hope you will come and visit us and explore the fair. (Please ring us for further tickets.) Evolving from the tradition of the discontinued Grosvenor House Art Fair, the aims of *MASTERPIECE* are to introduce the 'best of the best' from around the world and to promote London's dominant position in the global art business. As well as traditional and modern art and contemporary design, classic cars and fine wines will also be on show. With over twenty years of experience of designing and building TEFAF Maastricht each year, Stabilo will be the architects so it promises to be an exciting venture.



In early July we will be again participating in the second year of *Master Paintings Week* (see opposite). The first floor of our gallery will be showing Old Master pictures, with English eighteenth and French nineteenth century works on view on our second floor. A number of readers of *Gallery Notes* came to the gallery in *Master Paintings Week 2009* for the first time since we moved here over five years ago, as well as collectors who were new to us, and we were pleased with how effective the week proved to be in drawing in visitors from home and overseas. This time round, and as before, we intend to exhibit a carefully selected group of important pictures, as well as some more affordable items – a reflection of the philosophy behind many editions of *Gallery Notes*. With the auction houses holding their viewings and auctions at the same time, we will be focusing on quality over quantity – as always.

As well as sending out *Gallery Notes* throughout the year, from time to time we mail out A5 size postcards. Rather than an unnecessary, further 'mail-shot' we hope you will continue to enjoy receiving them even though they happen to advertise a single painting only. Our attention to framing and presentation remains meticulous, and, with a known family tradition in antique frames (and despite these costly and high standards), we believe that the framing of a picture is as important as ever in the 'look' we hope to create in a collector's home. The pairs of fine frames on the works by Pillement and Mazell in this edition are, we hope, testament to our efforts – but please come and see the originals and judge for yourselves!

Our colleague, David Gaskin, regularly updates our website with new acquisitions and details of exhibitions and fairs. Images can be emailed to you in varying levels of resolution, and our individual email addresses can be found in the back of this publication.

W.J.M.  
June, 2010



**Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728–1808)**

*Extensive 'capriccio' river landscapes – a pair (2)*  
both oil on canvas, 18½ x 26¼ in. (47 x 67 cm.)  
both signed, one dated 1792 and the other 1793  
with very fine eighteenth century southern Italian frames

Pillement was a prolific and versatile artist who worked throughout Europe in a long career of ceaseless activity and travel. He worked in most media with a huge and variable output and it is important to distinguish between his two roles, that of designer and decorator, filling pages with *chinoiserie* scenes, imaginary flowers and occupations for the four seasons, and his status as an important French Rococo painter, and arguably the finest exponent of the medium of pastel in eighteenth century landscape and marine painting.

Our family has been long involved in buying and selling the drawings, watercolours, pastels and oil paintings of Pillement, who developed his own interpretation of the landscape genre, derived from the work of Nicolaes Berchem, Claude and Joseph Vernet, François Boucher and a blend of observed nature and rococo fantasy. Once the success of this formula had been successfully established, the artist maintained the same style, unaffected by changes in taste. Thus, among his exhibits at the Society of Artists (1760, 1761, 1762) and the Free Society of Artists (1763, 1773, 1779) landscapes with cattle, travellers and coast scenes predominated. I have also published an article in *Apollo* and contributed his entry in the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, an academic acknowledgement of the fact that this much-travelled French artist (who worked in Spain, Portugal, Austria, Italy, Germany and Poland) made his longest stay in England. The same applies to the hundreds of works dispersed through auction in March, 1761, from the collection of the French print dealer and publisher Charles Leveig prior to Pillement's departure from London. Among a number of English patrons, the actor David Garrick was the most notable. In 1772, the artist painted eleven pictures for Garrick's villa near Hampton Court, and their surviving correspondence reflects the excellent relations that Pillement enjoyed with his English patrons. By chance, the best known works by Pillement in England were acquired, after the artist's death, by the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular campaign in 1814 and remain at the family seat at Stratfield Saye, Hampshire.

(cont.)



After London, Pillement made a brief visit to Italy before working in Vienna, at the Hofburg (1763-4) and for the Prince of Liechtenstein, before moving on to further decorative interiors for the King of Poland (1766) at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, and the Ujazdow Palace. He was invited to work at St Petersburg but went with his family to Avignon (1768). Pillement's unconventional career deprived him of recognition in his native country, but he exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1776, and executed a suite of three paintings for Marie-Antoinette at the Petit Trianon, Versailles. By 1780, he was again in Portugal where he decorated a celebrated small dining room near Sintra, later recorded by the enchanted William Beckford. His five large canvases of elegant company in the gardens at Benfica, Lisbon (Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris) are unique achievements, and further emphasize the versatility of the artist. During a stay in Oporto, he established a teaching studio and taught a number of Portuguese painters, among whom Joaquim Marques is the most notable. Any reader of *Gallery Notes* who would like a photocopy of my entry in the *New DNB* will readily be sent one.

What is important in the prolific output of this remarkable and still neglected painter is the exceptional condition of this pair after more than two centuries. Had it not been for my academic and practical experience of the artist, I could not make this assertion so emphatically and confidently to our readers.

P.J.M.



*detail of Pillement landscape*



*detail of Pillement landscape*



**Jacob Van Staveren (c.1625 – c.1680)**

*Orpheus charming the animals*  
oil on copper – circular, 7½ in. (19 cm.)

Provenance: Sammlung van Wyngaardt, Amsterdam 1893, De Stuers, Voerden until 1965

Literature: *Meer und Land im Licht des 17. Jahrhundert*, Band 3, by Kurt J. Muellenmeister, pp.67 -68, no. 430 , ill.

Such was the power of Apollo's voice and the beauty of his lyre playing that various animals, birds and even trees would gather around to listen to him. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the son of Apollo, Orpheus, was a different character from the other Greek heroes. His acclaim lay not in warlike exploits but in his amazing musical talent that could seduce all he encountered, including the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece, and the Sirens. The idea of a depiction of Orpheus taming the beasts was as an allegory of harmony and peaceful rule, and the virtue of artistic talents.

The earliest depictions of Orpheus were made in the southern Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century and, although the subject was not commonly treated, Roelandt Savery painted numerous versions, often surrounding Orpheus with dozens of exotic as well as familiar animals - and the odd dodo! (see *Orpheus unter den Tieren* Staedelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt or *Landschaft mit Orpheus und den Tieren*, Staatliche Museen, Berlin). Savery's pictures influenced the Dutch artists namely Gillis Claesz. de Hondcoeter, Paulus Potter and Albert Cuyp, whose wonderful one-and-a-half metre wide canvas Orpheus ( Sotheby's, London, lot 8, July 1994, now private collection, Boston) is surely the definitive Old Master painting of the myth.

With its Dutch Italianate landscape setting our picture combines the pastoral charm of Cuyp's Orpheus subjects with the docile livestock and 'farmyard' look of a Paulus Potter painting, complete with a piebald horse. Nothing characterizes the peculiarly Dutch aspect and appeal of this little copper panel than the juxtaposition of the fancy macaws above the seated Orpheus with the homely mongrel and domestic rabbit at his feet. Van Staveren painted a hitherto untraced companion piece, *The Prodigal Son*, that was also documented in the De Stuers collection in Voerden, but apart from his *bamboccianti* genre scenes from his 1670s trip to Rome, little is known about his career in the Netherlands.

W.J.M.



attributed to **George Smith of Chichester (1714-1776)**

*The Duchess of Devonshire's Cat*

oil on canvas

15¼ x 19¼ in. (39 x 49 cm.)

with indistinct inscription

with very fine original 'Carlo Maratta' frame

Provenance: Elizabeth Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire  
(formerly Elizabeth Christiana Hervey, later Lady Elizabeth Foster), (1759-1824).

Our attribution of this intriguing painting may seem ambitious to some readers, but it may well belong to a small group of still lifes and, in two recorded instances, paintings of cats chasing mice which have been added to the known body of his landscape work in recent decades. Although a 'provincial' artist, George Smith was a prolific exhibitor at the Society of Artists in London and the circle of his patrons would have widened as a result. It is tempting to think that the Duchess of Devonshire, to whom the painting belonged, fell for this homely-looking creature in this manner. The cat might have belonged to the artist himself, a studio companion, and is portrayed with the same earthy provincial realism that characterises Smith's still lifes of bread, beer and cheese.

J.F.M.



**Julius Caesar Ibbetson (1759-1817)**

*Travelling folk in Wales – a pair (2)*

oil on canvas

12 ¼ x 15 ½ in. (30.5 x 39.5 cm.)

one signed with initials 'J.I.'

It is over ten years since our Ibbetson exhibition, and yet the excitement of having many of his most significant oils and watercolours hanging in our gallery is still palpable. For all Tate Britain's admirable efforts to reveal the extent of its holdings with frequent changes to the hang of the galleries, it is a shame that a permanent place cannot be found for their beautiful, limpid *Briton Ferry* by Ibbetson, a revelation in our show. For the best of Ibbetson's work in the 1790's rivals that of any of his better-known contemporaries in England for originality and interest.

In my grandfather's time Ibbetson was thought of principally as a watercolourist, and it was for his deft pen-and-ink work, subtle tone and restrained use of colour that he was sought after. His imposing panorama of skaters on the Serpentine was the highlight of a recent loan exhibition at a colleague's gallery of watercolours from the collection of Eton College: a benchmark of what connoisseurs of old saw in his work, and a poignant reminder that such fine quality watercolour drawings by Ibbetson almost never appear on the market today. Therefore in the absence of good works on paper, nowadays collectors are confronted with his oils which too often have suffered from clumsy relining, abusive cleaning and poor restoration, and as a result Ibbetson's modern reputation has dwindled.

(cont.)



How delightful it is, then, to be able to present this pair of small canvases which, other than being relined, are in a pristine state. They are light and airy throughout, free from the dark, bitumen foreground colours which bedevil too many of his paintings and with no wear at all. Their undisturbed condition enhances Ibbetson's skilful handling of the figure groups and the donkeys, creatures which he invariably drew with enormous empathy!

Like the great Dutch artist Aelbert Cuyp, whose work he closely studied, copied and forged, Ibbetson never travelled to Italy, but in his appreciation of the Dutch Italianate school assimilated their northern-looking figure groups in exotic settings. Hence at first we see groups of Welsh peasants with their distinctive tall hats and clothed in Ibbetson's trademark blue and red cloaks; but the classical urn and the hilltop villages in the distance suggest the 'warm South' rather than the dark mountains of Snowdonia. Ibbetson rarely gives us a better lesson in 'how to do' the small Dutch cabinet picture. They belong to his Welsh period in the 1790's – his best in my view – and in colouring, subject and feel compare closely to *Gypsies with an Ass Race* of 1792 (Birmingham, City Art Gallery, and also on loan to us in 1999). The figure groups eminently bear out one critic's observation on Ibbetson's pictures, writing in 1791, that, 'Since the death of Gainsborough the wandering tribes of itinerants have not fallen into so good hands.'

J.F.M.



**Peter Mazell (active. 1761-1797)**

*Flowers in Wicker Baskets with Shells – a pair (2)*

both pencil and gouache on paper,

13 x 18½ in. (33 x 47 cm.)

with fine antique English 18th century carved and gilded frames

As an engraver, Mazell worked principally for Pennant, Boydell and Gardiner and exhibited prints regularly at the Society of Artists from 1761- 1780, becoming a director in 1774. He also engraved plants for John Lightfoot's *Flora Scotica*, after drawings by Sowerby, and was among the many engravers employed by Robert Thornton. His one appearance at the Royal Academy in 1797 was, however, as a flower painter (nos. 1133 & 1134). Strickland says his exhibits on that occasion were *Flowers in Watercolour* and it is tempting to think that they were the present pair.

Mazell's style is a charming mélange of Monnoyer and the Dutch painters, with a lively touch and fresh colour.

P.J.M.





**Pierre-Toussaint Dechazelle (1752-1833)**

*A posy of roses, daisies and other wildflowers, with a butterfly*  
oil on panel, 14¼ x 10¾ in. (36.2 x 27.4 cm.)  
signed and dated 'Dechazelles 1796'  
with fine antique Restoration period frame

Even in an age of remarkably gifted men, Pierre-Toussaint Dechazelle held his own. Destined at first to a career in industry, his love of art led him to draughtsmanship and painting, and eventually to flower painting. This is hardly surprising when Lyon had the largest school of flower painting in France, supporting the world famous silk industry, and Dechazelle wrote extensively about the role of flower painting in this context. His paintings of flowers, like the present example, showed a reverence for exotic detail in the tradition of Van Huysum and, indeed, the earlier Dutch masters. This panel certainly rewards an examination under the magnifying glass because it has survived since 1796 without any damage or restoration. This is our first painting by Dechazelle and we shall try to seek his work out in future.

P.J.M.



**Antoine Guillemet (1841-1918)**

*Saint-Mammès*

oil on canvas, 15 x 21 in. (38 x 54.4 cm.)

signed

For the traditional landscape painter like Guillemet it was essential to master the ever changing light of the landscape, especially a coastal one. The light controls the colours with infinite, subtle changes which challenged artists working en plein air. Guillemet's concern was borne out by his letters to friends and fellow painters and to his great friend Zola, to whom he once wrote from the south of France, '*..there is too much sun, too much light everywhere which causes a lack of mystery and charm without which there is no work of art*'. Although he came from a comfortable background and was very generous to fellow artists in dire need, Guillemet felt a need to hold his own against his friends and fellow landscape painters, particularly Charles-François Daubigny, his senior and an important influence on him during his early career. Indeed Guillemet had to keep up with the competition afforded by the annual Salon, where his work hung side by side with that of his fellow artists.

Included in our 1981 and 1998 loan exhibitions of Guillemet's work, this is a marvellous and spontaneous view of Saint-Mammès near Moret-sur-Loing, situated at the confluence of the Seine and Loing, forty miles upriver from Paris. The picture is a perfect example of how a composition takes the eye back into the middle distance through the skilful use of clouds and the single figure on the roadway, almost as tall as the church steeple. If this is, perhaps, less of a characteristic Guillemet landscape, the free and sketchy rendering of the breezy sky and midday sun on the path proves just how accomplished he was, despite his documented modesty about his abilities. Moreover, it reminds the viewer how little separated his work from that of his 'Impressionist' friends and contemporaries, and how the lineage between Corot and the *plein air* artists working outdoors half a century later had never really been interrupted.

P.J.M.



**Antoine Guillemet (1841-1918)**

*La baie de Cul du Loup, Morsalines, Normandy*

oil on canvas

21¼ x 28 ¾ in. (54 x 73 cm.)

signed

We often wonder how it comes about that painters have their favourite locations to work at, returning there year after year, decade after decade. Norman by birth, Guillemet came from a Rouen family and divided his life between Paris and the north coast of Normandy, especially the east coast of the Cotentin peninsula (and even Jersey). Even if he travelled widely in France often to visit fellow painters, somehow, he was soon back in the places where he was happiest painting.

Depicted close up from the shore, the Cul de Loup inlet in Morsalines Bay was one of the recurring subjects in Guillemet's paintings. The sky grows lighter away to the right and the strong reflection of the sun on the small white building comes off the shallow tidal water to the centre right of the composition. Mussel gatherers potter along the shoreline under a classic 'Guillemet' sky and the brushwork is confident and fluent with plenty of impasto, still so visible on this unlined canvas that has never been cleaned until now. At Morsalines Guillemet produced some of his finest pictures, important two-metre Salon pieces as well as dozens of smaller compositions and we are proud to have been able to acquire, publish and sell many of these through our exhibitions and *Gallery Notes*. However, familiarity with these scenes never detracts from our enthusiasm in acquiring such competent and strong examples of his work.

P.J.M.



**François Bonvin (1817-1887)**

*La cuisinière*

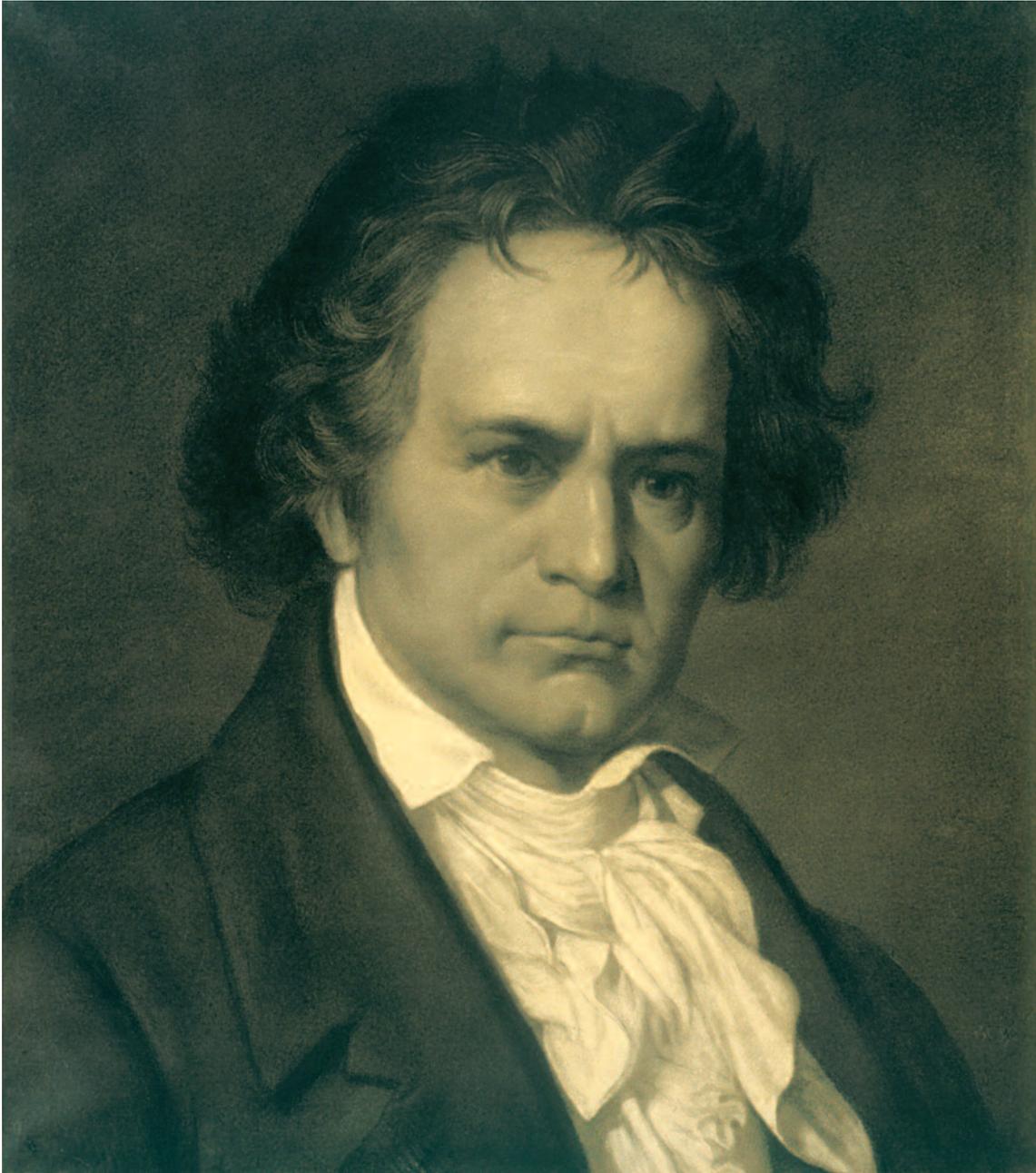
oil on panel, 12¾ x 9½ in. (32.4 x 24 cm.)

signed and dated 1856

The composition of this Bonvin painting is as much about the inanimate as it is about the animate: the serving girl and the visitor to her sparse kitchen no more dominate the picture than the stool, the shiny bowls and the spoon. Bonvin was primarily interested in still-life and his technique and style were built upon close study of the Dutch and Flemish paintings in the Louvre and the other great influence on Bonvin's development was the general revival of interest from about 1845 in the work of Chardin, the Le Nain brothers and other great French artists from the preceding century. There is more than an echo of Chardin's serving girls in the figure in this painting, and as the simple wooden stool foretells *Vincent's Chair* (Tate Britain), so we are reminded that Van Gogh was another fervent admirer of Chardin. Following the favourable reception of an earlier version of *La Cuisinière* (Mulhouse, Musée des Beaux-Arts) at the Salon of 1849, Bonvin was dubbed the 'nouveau Chardin'.

As a member of Courbet's 'Realist' movement and as a friend to younger painters such as Fantin-Latour and Whistler, Bonvin became an influential figure, and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur in 1870. A greater understanding of the extraordinary period in which he lived has led to a renewed appreciation of the quieter, more subjective paintings of the whole 'Chardin revival' movement, whose other exponents, notably Antoine Vollon, Ribot and Philippe Rousseau, are familiar to readers of our *Gallery Notes*.

J.E.M.



**German School c.1870 circle of Carl Jaeger (1833-1887)**

*Ludwig Van Beethoven*

black chalks and pencils on paper laid on linen

30 x 26 in. (76 x 66 cm.)

with indistinct signature 'K. Jaeger'

As one of the most recognized images of Beethoven the lack of a clearly legible signature on this remarkably well-preserved 'pastel' has frustrated attempts to be more specific in our cataloguing. Our dating is based on the more practical look and age of the paper laid on linen and the mid-nineteenth century stretcher. Jaeger's prototype portrait, albeit posthumous and whose original is now probably lost, was based loosely on an 1820 portrait by Joseph Stieler, and it seemed to fulfil the widespread national demand for an 'official' and lasting likeness of the composer. Although Jaeger repeated his compositions he was no Gilbert Stuart, who produced around a hundred likenesses of George Washington and made himself a fortune in doing so! To date and pending research, it would be unwise to state that this is or isn't an original by Carl Jaeger.

W.J.M.



**Benjamin Eastlake Leader (1877-1916)**

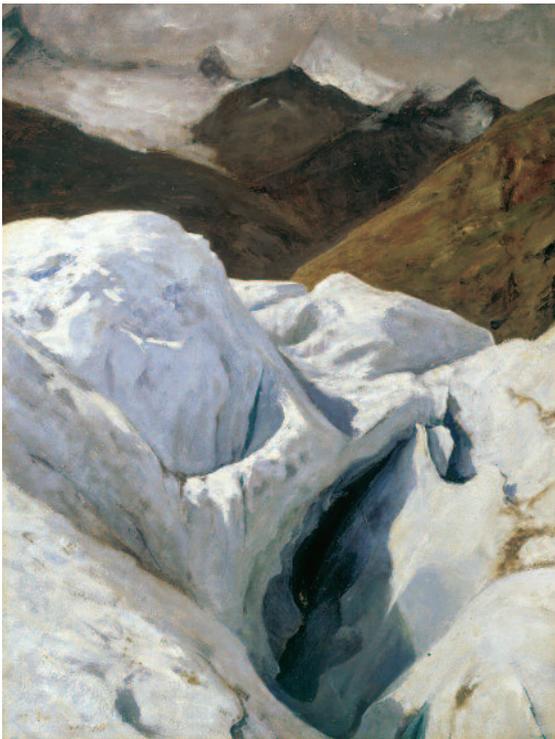
*The Dents du Midi seen from Villars*

oil on board 14¼ x 20 in. (36 x 51 cm.) signed and dated 1910, with inscription *Villars* on verso

*Peaks and Glaciers 2010* was well received, judging by the amount of pictures sold from the catalogue and with the exhibition now an annual feature of winter in the gallery. There are always around thirty paintings, drawings and watercolours of Alpine subject matter to be seen here in Old Bond Street and I continue to look

for work primarily by the *peintres alpinistes*. Loppé's superb glacier study will be perhaps more familiar to our regular readers and visitors, but Leader's view of the Dents du Midi painted from Villars in 1910 is a very welcome addition to my stock in this expanding area of collecting.

W.J.M.



**Gabriel Loppé (1825 -1913)**

*Crevasses on the Gorner Glacier, Zermatt*

oil on artist's board

19¾ x 14½ in. (50 x 37 cm.)

signed and dated '9/8/1888' on verso

with rosewood and gilded 19th century frame

# JOHN MITCHELL

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Each issue of Gallery Notes is carefully researched for accuracy of comment and the reproductions are as faithful as possible. However, often there is considerably more material on an artist than can be included here and colour transparencies may be a better guide to the original, so please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of help in this respect. We would also ask for your help in avoiding wastage. If you do not care to remain on our mailing list or if you change your address or wish Gallery Notes to be sent to an address other than the present one, please advise us. May we, in return, offer our guidance on the acquisition, sale, conservation and framing of paintings, and on their valuation for probate, insurance, C.G.T. or other purposes. An independent view of buying and selling at auction has always been advisable.

Our policy remains unchanged. Across all schools, periods, and values, we seek, with rigorous selectivity, a high standard of quality in what we buy. Once satisfied, we feel able to offer works with confidence, backed up by long experience, integrity and scholarship. The business is one of long term friendship, not short-term advantage.

We hope that in receiving Gallery Notes you will share the interest and enjoyment which they have brought to collectors throughout the world for over fifty years.

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