



ALPS : MAMMOTH PHOTOGRAPHS

Thomas Crauwels

JOHN MITCHELL
FINE PAINTINGS

EST 1931

Thomas Crauwels

As a lover of mountains in the purest sense, Thomas Crauwels is a deserving and most welcome successor to our annual *Peaks and Glaciers* exhibitions held every winter in our gallery. As a craftsman making a living from photographing Leslie Stephen's '*Playground of Europe*', Thomas can be considered as a *photographe-alpiniste* in the rich tradition established by those pioneering painters, the *peintres-alpinistes*, who were the first to climb in the Alps intent on sketching and painting from life the views from high up.

In the wake of photography's early 'golden age' in the mid-1850s the medium readily appealed to extroverts who thrived on challenges and innovation. With technological advances in cameras and film by the early 1900s, mountain photography became a mainstay for tourists, scientists and climbers alike. It will come as a surprise to learn that in the mid-1860s Chamonix was France's second most photographed destination after Paris.

Having established himself as a professional photographer and accomplished mountaineer, Thomas Crauwels abandoned his day-long hiking trips to head further up into the mountains, replete with a bivouac bag and supplies. His diary entries accompanying the catalogued works reveal a dedicated, if perfectionist, approach to his subject matter. These photographs bear witness to countless days spent above 3000 metres and a thorough technical training combined with great reverence for the earliest practitioners of Alpine photography.

Nothing reflects the soul of this mountaineer better than the most obvious and elemental feature that runs throughout these works: the weather.

Looking at Thomas Crauwels' photographs from a climber's point of view, we are all too aware how a perceived sense of calm and serenity can rapidly give way to storms; to danger.

Thomas' camera lens eschews the high pressure day or the picturesque. His photographs tempt the very white-outs and storms that regularly force him back down the mountain. However, as the sunlight reappears, as the clouds recede, the cycle starts again: we trace his steps back up on to the glaciers and ridges as he searches yet another opportunity to share his vocation with us.

I am delighted to introduce Thomas Crauwels'
ALPS : MAMMOTH PHOTOGRAPHS

William Mitchell.

London
February 2017



All photographs illustrated here are for sale in the following formats :

60 x 90 cm. 70 x 105 cm. 80 x 120 cm. 100 x 150 cm. 120 x 180 cm. 150 x 225 cm.

Each Thomas Crauwels photograph is limited to 5 signed editions only, regardless of format, and sold with a certificate of authenticity on the verso.

The photographs are printed on Fine Art cotton rag paper and bonded to an aluminium DIBOND® panel. These panels are contained within aluminium border frames.

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Exhibition dates

Monday 20th March – Friday 7th April

9.30-5.30 Monday to Friday

Diary notes by Thomas Crauwels

Exhibition curated by William Mitchell

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The Weisshorn, Valais

100 x 150 cm.
February 2017

This view is from the Corne de Sorebois (2895 m). There is always a magical quality to seeing fresh snow plastered over an entire mountain face.



Echo of Chamonix – Aiguilles de Chamonix

60 x 90 cm.
February 2015

On a rare few occasions at sunrise, the mountains project their profiles into the sky. The phenomenon doesn't last very long but it is unforgettable to witness.



Aiguille du Chardonnet, Chamonix

60 x 90 cm.

January 2016

The Chardonnet: straight after a massive storm - looking from the Argentière side.



Angel- Matterhorn, Valais

80 x 120 cm.

September 2015

We spent the night by the Alphubeljoch (3769 m) to be on hand to take some Matterhorn photographs at sunrise and then climb the Alphubel. Sadly, the storm carried on through the night and we went down at first light. On the way back the clouds broke allowing me to get some long exposure shots capturing the mystical scene, like 'wings' of mist surrounding its summit.



Burning – Grand Charmoz, Chamonix

80 x 120 cm.
February 2015

Having spent a good deal of time in Chamonix during the 2015 winter my goal was to get the best pictures of the valley's famous Aiguilles. One morning the fiery dawn turned the Grand Charmoz and its attendant clouds into a beacon of flames.

Calotte Rochefort, Chamonix

60 x 90 cm.
June 2014

Photograph shot from above the Refuge du Couvercle at Chamonix (2687 m). The rock formations in the bottom of the composition were very intriguing and balance the picture perfectly.





Dent du Géant, Chamonix

70 x 105 cm.
May 2016

I was spending a few days acclimatizing in the Refuge de Torino (3375 m) when I was lucky enough to seize this photograph as the clouds parted. I routinely go high into the mountains when the weather is changing to try to get the best atmospheres. On one such day with heavy, shifting clouds and wind, I was amazed to see a cordée of climbers traversing the Aiguilles Marbrées.



Grand Combin, Valais

70 x 105 cm.
July 2012

By the time we reached the Cabane de Panossière (2641 m) the sky had clouded over and bad weather set in. Early the following morning the Grand Combin's summit poked out of the clouds like a smoldering volcano. I waited for the light to run over its impressive seracs before taking this dramatic photograph.



Castle Rock - Brenva Ridge, Mont Blanc Massif, Chamonix

70 x 105 cm.
March 2015

I took this photograph from the Petit Flambeau (3407 m). All day long clouds spilled over from the Italian side of Mont Blanc. This is a more detailed picture of the Brenva Ridge which leads to Mont Maudit.

Ober Gabelhorn, Valais

80 x 120 cm.
September 2013

I was up by 4 a.m to capture the moonlight above the Cabane du Mountet (2886 m) as my climbing partner stayed asleep in the hut. I got as far as the Mountet glacier before pausing and some climbers passed me on their way to do the Zinalrothorn. I took photos until sunrise before going back to the hut to see if my friend was awake yet. As I reached the Mountet hut I saw climbers coming onto the Ober Gabelhorn summit from the Zermatt side as well as two groups on the east ridge. I was lucky to get the clouds over the summit aligned with the ridge, echoing the north face's distinctive lines etched into the snow.





Dent Blanche, Valais

80 x 120cm.
September 2013

Just after daybreak the icy face of the Dent Blanche emerged from the clouds as if set ablaze by the sunrise. Shot from the Cabane du Mountet (2886 m), the lines formed by the melting snow over the previous days stand out. We are reminded as to what a special season autumn can be in the Alps.



Zinalrothorn, Valais

60 x 90 cm.
August 2013

I took this photograph from the Cabane de Tracuit (3258 m). I had left the hut just after 4 a.m to catch the stars and the Milky Way. I had hoped for some cloud cover to mingle at dawn ; none came. I toyed with the Zinalrothorn's distinctive shape to create a kind of ying/yang feeling in my picture.



Zinalrothorn, Valais

70 x 105 cm.

June 2016

There were some unbelievable snow conditions in June 2016. I went up to the Cabane de Tracuit (3258 m) right after the snow had settled, making tracks up to 30 cm deep in the fresh powder. When waiting at the hut I managed to take this picture just before sunset.



Ober Gabelhorn, Valais

70 x 105 cm.

June 2016

I can often spend for over a month in the mountains without getting decent photographs; ones with sufficient inspiration, atmosphere and the right conditions. And yet on certain days, when everything comes together, I can get several pictures in a relatively short window of time.

I shot this Ober Gabelhorn photo from the Tracuit Hut straight after the Zinalrothorn series.

I was waiting for a climbing friend to join me before setting off to climb the Bishorn.



Pollux and Roccia Nera (Breithorn), Valais

60 x 90 cm.

April 2016

Souvenir photograph from a bivouac made on the Hohtälligrat near Gornergrat.

Temperature down to -15 c in the night.



Matterhorn, Valais

60 x 90 cm.

February 2017

This was worth the long wait to catch the texture and right balance of light between the mountain's east and north faces. The east flank is shown in full sun with the inspiring north face plunged into darkness. As the snow storm abated the summit continued to puff with clouds.



Alphubel, Valais

60 x 90 cm.

June 2016

This was made at the remote Fletschhorn Hut (3040 m). Cumulonimbus clouds were billowing up behind the mountain.



The Path, Valais

70 x 105 cm.

September 2015

Climbers photographed as they turned back below the Rimpfischhorn summit. The weather was turning bad as I made this photograph from the Alphubel glacier.



Mont Besso, Valais

70 x 105 cm.
February 2017

In this photograph the Besso, the crowning peak of the Val d'Anniviers, appears fully snowed and frozen in. I shot this as the mountain poked through the clouds after the first proper snowfall this winter.



Matterhorn and Dent d'Hérens

60 x 90 cm.
March 2016

This was my third ascent of the Pigne d'Arolla to capture this stunning panorama.

On the first go it was clouded over all the way; the second attempt was a totally clear sky but the light was too flat and yet on the third climb, there was just the right amount of cloud to make it work.



Storm on Mont Blanc, Chamonix

80 x 120 cm.
January 2016

As I began photographing the weather was about to deteriorate and Mont Blanc had its famous 'hat' forming over the summit. All the time the wind was stirring; drama seen from Chamonix.



The Alps seen from Mont Blanc's summit

60 x 90 cm.
July 2016

A new day broke as I took this summit photograph (4809 m) looking towards the Pennine Alps. We were the first climbers to the top that morning ahead of our plan by 1h30. We sat out the dawn until there was enough light for me to work with. A long wait in the cold.

Thomas Crauwels

Born in Belgium in 1983.

Moves full-time to Switzerland in 2009.

Lives and works in Geneva.

Exhibitions:

2017

Midnight Sun Gallery - Morges, Switzerland

Galerie Krisal - Geneva - Carouge, Switzerland.

Librairie des Alpes - Paris, France.

2016

Moser Gallery - Montreux, Switzerland

Festival International Namur, Belgium

Swiss Art Space - Lausanne, Switzerland

Centre de l'espérance - Geneva, Switzerland

Krisal galerie - Geneva, Switzerland

Le bal des créateurs - Geneva, Switzerland

Galerie 361 - Annecy, France

2015

Festival photo - Montier-En-Der, France

Salon de la création - Evian les Bains, France

Black Box Galerie - Lausanne, Switzerland

Art'spot - Lausanne, Switzerland

Galerie 361 - Annecy, France

Awards:

Nature Talks photo contest 2016 (Amsterdam) - Fred Hazeloff Award - 1st place

Nature Images Awards 2016 - 2nd place

1x photo awards 2016 - 3rd place

Moscow International Foto Awards 2015 - 1st place in landscape category

Neutral Density Awards 2015 - 3rd place

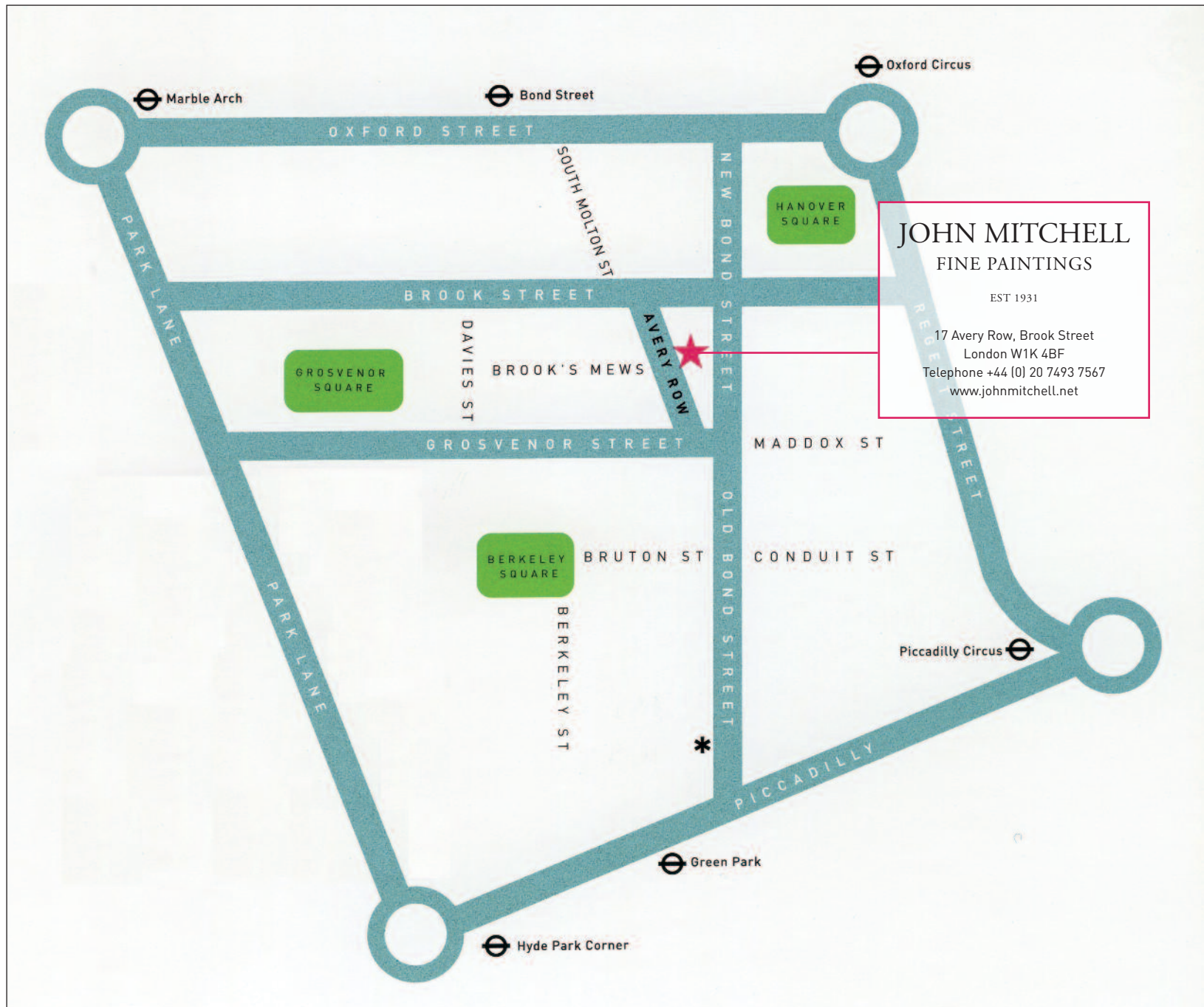
Memorial Maria Luisa 2014 - 1st place in category mountain



Thomas at work for *The Alps seen from Mont Blanc's summit.*, see p. 20.



Geneva Airport, 2m x 5m panel



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