

EDGAR ALWIN PAYNE (1883-1947)

Peaks of St. Gervais

(Rhone-Alps, France)

Signed lower right, "Edgar Payne" oil on canvas 28 x 34 in. (37 1/2 x 43 1/2 x 3 in.) c. 1945

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PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, California

Peaks of St. Gervais is one of the artist's classic landscapes, with his distinctive swift brushstroke and charming town and structures — half of which he rendered in the shade — dwarfed by the snow-capped mountain. In most of his paintings, Payne used structures and figures not as subject, but to communicate the dramatic scale of mountain landscape. Drawn to the mountains of Europe, Payne trekked and painted the Swiss Alps, the colorful harbors of Brittany and France, and the sailing vessels in Italy.

American Impressionist painter Edgar Payne grew up in Missouri, but spent the most productive part of his career captivated by the majestic scenery of the West. Primarily self taught, he did study briefly at the Art Institute of Chicago and began his career designing and painting scenery for the stage and murals for homes and theaters. Crisscrossing the United States, Mexico, Canada and Europe, the American West appealed most. Lured by the quality of light and freedom to paint open spaces and possessing a reverence for nature, he especially loved the mountains and frequently took packhorses into the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range to paint and sketch the upper lakes. Recognized as one of California's leading landscape artists, Payne earned the respect of his peers and critics for his Impressionistic landscapes painted in plein-air. His works are in the permanent collections of the Laguna Art Museum, Chicago Art Museum, Southwest Museum of Los Angeles, Pasadena Art Institute, and the National Academy of Design.

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