



119 Franklin Carmichael

CSPWC G7 OSA RCA 1890 – 1945

Leaf Pattern

oil on canvas, signed and dated 1922 and on verso titled on the exhibition labels and inscribed with the University Club of Toronto inventory #UCT-0000-C001 on a label
40 1⁄8 x 48 1⁄4 in, 101.9 x 122.6 cm

PROVENANCE

Estate of the Artist
R.S. Waldie, Toronto
A gift from the above to the University Club of Toronto, 1947

LITERATURE

Group of Seven Exhibition of Paintings, Art Gallery of Toronto, 1922, listed, unpaginated
M.O. Hammond, “Salon of ‘Group of Seven’ Reflects Canadian Impulse to Glimpse Beyond Skyline,” *Globe* (Toronto), May 10, 1922
Augustus Bridle, “Pictures of the Group of Seven Show ‘Art Must Take the Road,’ ” *Toronto Daily Star*, May 20, 1922
Helen Appleton Read, “Triple Group at Brooklyn Museum,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 25, 1924, section B, page 2
“Canadian Art at the Bradford Gallery,” *Yorkshire Post*, July 23, 1926
“Canadian Art: Exhibition at Cartwright Hall,” *Yorkshire Observer*, July 23, 1926
Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Members of the Group of Seven, 1919 – 1933, National Gallery of Canada, 1936, listed, unpaginated
Franklin Carmichael Memorial Exhibition, Art Gallery of Toronto, 1947, listed, unpaginated
Megan Bice, *Light and Shadow: The Work of Franklin Carmichael*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1990, reproduced page 41 and listed pages 30, 32, 35, 40 – 41 and 116
Joan Murray, “Carmichael’s Triumph?” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, Summer 1990, page 156
Charles C. Hill, *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation*, National Gallery of Canada, 1995, reproduced page 106 and listed pages 150, 313, 316 and 317

EXHIBITED

Art Gallery of Toronto, *Group of Seven Exhibition of Paintings*, May 5 – 29, 1922, catalogue #1
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, *An Exhibition of Modern Canadian Paintings*, November 1 – 30, 1923, traveling to the Kansas City Art Institute, *Works by Canadian Artists*, December 1923; Omaha Public Library, Omaha Society of Fine Arts, January 9 – 31, 1924; Milwaukee Art Institute, February 1924; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, March 8 – 25, 1924; Massachusetts Art Institute, Worcester, *Exhibition of Paintings by Canadian Artists*, April 6 – 27, 1924; and the Brooklyn Museum, New York, May – August 15, 1924, catalogue #4
British Empire Exhibition, London, *Canadian Section of Fine Arts*, May 9 – October 31, 1925, catalogue #FF.11, traveling to the



FRANKLIN CARMICHAEL
Autumn Woods (Sketch for Leaf Pattern)

oil on board, 1921
10 x 12 in, 25.4 x 30.5 cm
Collection of the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery
Sarnia Industries Art Fund Purchase

Not for sale with this lot

Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, *Exhibition of Canadian Art*, November 26 – December 23, 1925, catalogue #19;
York City Art Gallery, January 16 – February 13, 1926;
Corporation Art Gallery, Bury, February 20 – March 20, 1926, catalogue #9; Blackpool, March 27 – April 24, 1926;
Corporation Art Gallery, Rochdale, May 1 – 29, 1926, catalogue #9; Corporation Art Gallery, Oldham, June 12 – July 10, 1926, catalogue #9; Cartwright Memorial Hall, Bradford, July 17 – August 14, 1926; Queen’s Park Branch Art Gallery, Manchester, *Exhibition of Canadian Pictures*, August 28 – October 9, 1926, catalogue #154; Sheffield, October 15 – December 11, 1926; and the Municipal Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth, January 12 – February 12, 1927, catalogue #29
Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, *Exhibition of Paintings by Canadian Artists*, September 14 – October 14, 1928, catalogue #7
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, *Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Members of the Group of Seven, 1919 – 1933*, February 20 – April 15, 1936, traveling to the Art Association of Montreal, April 17 – May 3, 1936; and the Art Gallery of Toronto, May 15 – June 15, 1936, catalogue #10
Golden Gate International Exposition, San Francisco, *Contemporary Art*, February 18 – October 29, 1939, Canada catalogue #3



Installation view of the *Canadian Section of Fine Arts* at the British Empire Exhibition, London, 1925, with *Leaf Pattern* indicated
Photo: A.C. Cooper, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives

Art Gallery of Toronto, *Franklin Carmichael Memorial Exhibition*, March 8 – 28, 1947, catalogue #4
Vancouver Art Gallery, *Group of Seven*, March 29 – April 25, 1954, catalogue #2
McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, *Light and Shadow: The Work of Franklin Carmichael*, May 4 – August 6, 1990, traveling to the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, December 14, 1990 – March 3, 1991; Winnipeg Art Gallery, April 13 – June 10, 1991; and Art Gallery of Windsor, July 20 – August 18, 1991, catalogue #23
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation*, October 13, 1995 – January 7, 1996; traveling to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, February 17 – May 5, 1996; Vancouver Art Gallery, June 19 – September 2, 1996; and Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, October 3 – December 1, 1996, catalogue #54

A NATIVE OF Orillia, Ontario, Frank Carmichael first worked as a carriage striper, painting decorations in his father’s carriage shop. In 1911, he moved to Toronto to take evening classes at the Central Ontario School of Art and Design (from 1912 the Ontario

College of Art) and Toronto Technical School, working days as an office boy at the graphic design firm Grip Ltd. There he met J.E.H. MacDonald, Tom Thomson, Arthur Lismer and Fred Varley.

Both Lismer and Varley had studied at the Académie des beaux-arts in Antwerp, Belgium, and in September 1913, Carmichael enrolled there to further his training. The outbreak of war the following August cut short his European studies and he returned to Toronto, where he shared a studio with Thomson in the Studio Building during the winter of 1914 to 1915. In 1915, he exhibited his first painting with the Ontario Society of Artists. Carmichael remained associated with the Studio Building artists and became a charter member of the Group of Seven in the spring of 1920.

While Carmichael would become one of Canada’s finest painters in watercolour, he first made his reputation as a painter in oils. Unlike his colleagues, at this period in his career he did not travel north to sketch but worked around the undeveloped Don Valley, near his home in Lansing, now part of Toronto. In several canvases painted around 1920, trees, sketched in spring and autumn, are arranged on a rise at the right of the composition, allowing an expansive view down into or across a valley at the left. In *Silvery*



Tangle (collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario), included in the 1921 Group of Seven exhibition, Carmichael further developed this composition of trees, valley and hills, but the leafless trees are arranged diagonally across the foreground, not massed at one side.

Leaf Pattern was worked up from an oil sketch painted in the fall of 1921 (now in the collection of the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery in Sarnia). The brilliantly coloured autumn foliage, distanced by the dark foreground trunks, fills the canvas, allowing only a glimpse of the valley and hill beyond. The vertical patterning and dense composition create a more fluid and less static reworking of *Autumn’s Garland* by Carmichael’s friend Thomson (collection of the National Gallery of Canada).

Leaf Pattern was widely praised when shown in exhibitions in the 1920s. In 1922, M.O. Hammond wrote in the *Globe*, “Mr. Carmichael has given most attention to close-ups of tangled underbrush wherein beautiful patterns of autumn colors are frequently given play.” And in the *Toronto Daily Star*, Augustus Bridle identified Carmichael as the finest colourist of the Group, writing, “‘*Leaf Pattern*’ is a charming flat tracery of chintzlike effects.” When *Leaf Pattern* was shown in Brooklyn in 1924,

Helen Appleton Read described the canvas as “a dappled pattern of red and gold autumn foliage against green trees which have not yet turned,” and she identified Carmichael as “one of the strongest painters in the group.” During the English tour of the Canadian art section from the 1925 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, in which this canvas also appeared, the *Yorkshire Post* wrote, “One of the happiest instances of fine design being achieved without any sacrifice of realism is Franklin Carmichael’s ‘Leaf Pattern’ (88), in which the dark stems of the trees are seen against the rich tones of the foliage through which the sunlight is streaming, a beautiful composition, admirably carried into effect.”

More recently, Joan Murray, writing in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, identified *Leaf Pattern* as Carmichael’s “masterpiece.”

We thank Charles C. Hill, former curator of Canadian art from 1980 to 2014 at the National Gallery of Canada and author of *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation*, for contributing the above essay and researching this lot.

This work is in its original handcrafted period frame.

ESTIMATE: \$700,000 – 900,000