

PROPERTY OF THE UNIVERSITY CLUB OF TORONTO



The University Club of Toronto, 380 University Avenue, 1930

HEFFEL IS HONOURED to bring these extraordinary masterpieces to auction, marking a rare and significant moment in the Canadian art market. Each of these exceptional works—Lawren S. Harris’s *Northern Lake* (1926), Franklin Carmichael’s *Leaf Pattern* (1922), and Arthur Lismer’s *McGregor Bay Islands* (1925 – 1927)—boasts an illustrious museum exhibition history and is offered at auction for the first time.

Large-scale Group period Group of Seven canvases of this quality are exceedingly rare to market, making this an incredible opportunity for collectors and institutions alike. These artworks have remained in the esteemed collection of the University Club of Toronto for decades, contributing to an important chapter in Canada’s cultural and artistic heritage.

Founded in 1906, the University Club of Toronto has long been a distinguished institution fostering intellectual and cultural engagement. Since 1929, it has been housed in a striking neo-classical building on University Avenue, where it has maintained

a deep commitment to the arts. Harris himself was a member of the club, and his influence helped shape its remarkable collection, adding to the historical significance of these works.

The three masterworks presented here have particularly impressive exhibition histories outside of Canada, having been internationally exhibited at prestigious venues. Among other notable exhibitions, Harris’s *Northern Lake* (lot 118) was a Gold Medal winner at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia (June 1 – December 1, 1926) and was additionally showcased at *Exposition d’art canadien* at the Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris (April 10 – May 10, 1927), where it was listed as *Lac du Nord*.

Carmichael’s *Leaf Pattern* (lot 119) was shown internationally in *An Exhibition of Modern Canadian Paintings* at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (November 1923), traveling in 1923 – 1924 to the Kansas City Art Institute, Omaha Society of Fine Arts, Milwaukee Art Institute, Rhode Island School of Design, Massachusetts



118



119



120

Art Institute and the Brooklyn Museum in New York. It was further exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition in London (May 9 – October 31, 1925) and the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo (September 14 – October 14, 1928).

Lismer’s *McGregor Bay Islands* (lot 120) shares a similarly distinguished international exhibition record. It was likewise exhibited at the British Empire Exhibition in London in 1925, subsequently traveling to numerous galleries across the UK including the Whitechapel Art Gallery, York City Art Gallery, and Manchester’s Queen’s Park Branch Art Gallery, among others, between 1925 and 1927. It was also featured at the Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris in spring 1927 and the National Gallery of Canada’s *Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Members of the Group of Seven* in 1936, among many other notable exhibitions.

These early international exhibitions not only brought acclaim to the Group of Seven but also paved the way for their lasting influence on future generations of artists. Peter Doig, one of the most celebrated contemporary painters, has often cited the impact of the Group of Seven, having grown up in Canada immersed in their legacy. Their contribution to modern landscape painting continues to resonate, most recently explored in the Fondation Beyeler’s acclaimed exhibition *Northern Lights: Scandinavian and Canadian Landscape Painting*, held from January 26 to May 25, 2025, where Doig’s connection to this lineage was thoughtfully highlighted.

Harris’s *Northern Lake* exemplifies the artist’s mastery in distilling the Canadian wilderness into a strikingly modernist vision, with bold volumetric forms and a spiritual resonance that defines his mature style. Carmichael’s *Leaf Pattern* is also a strikingly modern composition, almost abstract in its treatment of natural forms, demonstrating his innovative approach to colour and structure in oil on canvas. Lismer’s *McGregor Bay Islands* captures the raw energy of the Georgian Bay landscape, with expressive brushwork that embodies the movement and vitality of the natural world.

These three works represent a defining moment in Canada’s founding modernist movement, the Group of Seven, which sought to establish a distinct national artistic identity. They are a testament to Canada’s cultural identity, championed with great acclaim both nationally and internationally, and embody the vision and innovation of these legendary artists. Their presentation at auction is a landmark occasion, offering collectors the chance to acquire works that are both historically and artistically significant, forever linked to Canada’s rich artistic legacy.