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Vancouver Art Gallery Acquires Major Painting by Group of Seven Artist Arthur Lismer at Auction

VANCOUVER, BC – The **Vancouver Art Gallery** acquired a major canvas by Group of Seven artist **Arthur Lismer** at a Heffel auction on the evening of **May 26**. The large canvas, ***The Sheep's Nose, Bon Echo***, 1922, was purchased by the Gallery for a total of \$1,244,880, to be paid from the proceeds of the Winn Trust, a bequest left to the Gallery specifically for the purpose of acquiring works by original members of the Group of Seven. Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator, Ian Thom bid on behalf of the Gallery for the work, which was endorsed for purchase by the Gallery's director, Acquisition Committee and Board Chair.

The painting was recommended by Gallery senior curator Ian Thom after considerable research into this important work. A larger painting at 101.6 x 114.3 cm, the canvas was originally included in the Group of Seven's annual exhibition of 1922. It is thought to be the best of the group of major canvases Lismer produced as a result of his trip to Mazinaw Lake in Bon Echo Provincial Park, Ontario – a major destination for artists for its dramatic rock formations and nearby artist colony.

"This work is by far the most important Lismer to come to auction in many years and will be a key component in the Gallery's ability to tell the many stories related to the development of modern art in Canada," said Thom about the importance of adding the painting to the Gallery's collection.

The slightly horizontal canvas has a vigour, grandeur and ambition beyond anything the Gallery already holds in its collection by the artist, which includes 19 works—12 oils and 7 works on paper. The majority of the Gallery's works by Lismer date from the 1950s and 60s, a period when the artist visited British Columbia on several occasions. The Gallery possesses one other canvas by the artist, a late painting from 1952.

The acquisition of *The Sheep's Nose, Bon Echo* allows the Gallery to present Lismer at his finest. The work will make a fitting companion to major Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson paintings in the Gallery's collection also dating from the 1920s. The Lismer painting is the second to be purchased with the Winn Trust. It follows the purchase of A.Y. Jackson's *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926 last fall.

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