



**240 LAWREN STEWART HARRIS**

ALC BCSFA CGP FCA G7 OSA RPS 1885 ~ 1970

***The Old Stump, Lake Superior***

oil on board, on verso signed, titled on the artist's label *Old Stump, Lake Superior Sketch, 144* and titled variously on several museum exhibition labels and inscribed C.S. Band in graphite on the artist's label, 1926  
12 x 15 in, 30.5 x 38.1 cm

**PROVENANCE:**

Collection of the Artist

Charles S. Band, Toronto, acquired from the above in 1946

Estate of Helen E. Band, Toronto

**LITERATURE:**

*Lawren Harris, Paintings 1910~1948*, The Art Gallery of Toronto, 1948, listed page 36

*Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Band*, 1953, National Gallery of Canada, listed and reproduced, unpaginated

Charles S. Band, "I Collect What I Like", *Mayfair*, April 1955, reproduced page 28

*The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band, Contemporary Canadian Painting and Drawing*, Albright Art Gallery, 1958, listed page 7

Charles S. Band, "Part II: The Private Collector", *Canadian Art*, May/June 1961, Issue #73, reproduced page 160

*The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band*, The Art Gallery of Toronto, 1963, reproduced page 13

Bess Harris and R.G.P. Colgrove, *Lawren Harris*, 1969, the 1926 canvas entitled *North Shore, Lake Superior* reproduced page 26 and on the jacket cover

Dennis Reid, *The Group of Seven*, National Gallery of Canada, 1970, reproduced page 216

Peter Mellen, *The Group of Seven*, 1970, the 1926 canvas entitled *North Shore, Lake Superior* reproduced page 149

Jeremy Adamson, *Lawren S. Harris, Urban Scenes and Wilderness Landscapes, 1906~1930*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1978, titled as *The Old Tree Stump, Lake Superior*, reproduced page 156, and the 1926 canvas *North Shore, Lake Superior* reproduced page 157

Peter Larisey, *Light for a Cold Land, Lawren Harris's Work and Life ~ An Interpretation*, 1993, the graphite drawing, circa as 1925, entitled *North Shore Lake Superior (Drawing)* reproduced page 92, and the 1926 canvas entitled *North Shore, Lake Superior* reproduced plate 24

Andrew Hunter and Ian Thom, *Lawren Stewart Harris, A Painter's Progress*, The Americas Society, 2000, the 1926 canvas entitled *North Shore, Lake Superior* reproduced page 33

**EXHIBITED:**

The Art Gallery of Toronto, *Lawren Harris, Paintings 1910~1948*, October ~ November, 1948, catalogue #127

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, *Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. C.S. Band*, 1953, catalogue #14

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, catalogue #23

Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, *The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band, Contemporary Canadian Painting and Drawing*, October 1 ~ November 2, 1958, catalogue #14

Vancouver Art Gallery, *Painting and Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band*, March 1 ~ 21, 1960, catalogue #14

Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor, *Canadian Paintings and Drawings from the C.S. Band Collection*, April 29 ~ May 29, 1961, catalogue #50

The Art Gallery of Toronto, *The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band*, February 15 ~ March 24, 1963, traveling to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, May 23 ~ September 1, 1963, catalogue #23

Art Gallery of Ontario, *Lawren S. Harris: Urban Scenes and Wilderness Landscapes, 1906~1930*, January 14 ~ February 26, 1978, catalogue #129



ARTHUR LISMER

Harris Exposition "How Perfectly Natural"  
graphite on paper, 11 3/4 x 9 in, 29.8 x 22.9 cm  
initialed and titled and on verso  
inscribed by Charles S. Band

Arthur Lismer was in Toronto for Lawren Harris's big exhibition at The Art Gallery of Toronto [now the Art Gallery of Ontario]! Arthur spent the night with us & he occupied a bed in our Emily Carr room! In this room was a piece of Driftwood (Red cedar) which exactly resembled the piece in this sketch! Arthur added glasses & a program & presented it to me in the morning at breakfast. ~ C.S. Band November 1949

The above Lismer drawing is included with this lot.



LAWREN S. HARRIS

Preliminary drawing for *North Shore, Lake Superior*, circa 1924  
graphite on wove paper, 7 1/2 x 10 in, 19.2 x 25.4 cm  
Gift of Lawren P. and Anne Harris, Sackville, New Brunswick, 1975,  
in memory of Lawren S. Harris, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa  
Photograph © National Gallery of Canada  
Courtesy of the family of Lawren S. Harris

*The Old Stump, Lake Superior* is the oil sketch for one of Lawren Harris's most important works, the iconic *North Shore, Lake Superior*. It is a cornerstone piece in the Harris holdings of the National Gallery of Canada and a centerpiece in the series of *North Shore* works. Much has been written of *North Shore, Lake Superior*, and of its equally magnificent sketch, *The Old Stump, Lake Superior*. The generous lending practices of the Band family have resulted in its inclusion in several important exhibitions and catalogues, where curators, historians, collectors and the public have been able to admire and study it. Together with the graphite drawing, also in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, we can follow the beginning of Harris's vision through to its final expression. It is a fascinating journey.

The specific traits that make *North Shore, Lake Superior* such a renowned painting are worked through between the graphite drawing and *The Old Stump, Lake Superior*. In the drawing, a few additional stumps remain standing in the landscape, distant and stark. Having annotated the drawing with observations as to colour and light conditions, as are many of Harris's drawings, Harris no doubt carefully contemplated the drawing, measuring its effect, considering the strongest points within it, and then omitted these extraneous stumps and reworked the sky. More critically, the stump has been completely isolated in this oil painting and in the National Gallery of Canada's work. The tree is alone, rarified and dignified. Burned out from its interior, the scarred wood has been left silver~white and skeletal ~cleansed by fire. The great beauty in the work



LAWREN S. HARRIS

North Shore, Lake Superior, 1926

oil on canvas, 40 1/4 x 50 1/2 in, 102.2 x 128.3 cm

Purchased 1930, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Photograph © National Gallery of Canada

Courtesy of the family of Lawren S. Harris

is found in the sense of yearning life that we feel in the trunk; a sense of striving, of reaching and seeking, permeates the work. The light streaming in from the left enhances this feeling, seen in its final format in this oil sketch. Two large cloud formations on the left hand side of the drawing have been omitted, and the beams of light, repeating directionally in the beautifully billowing cloud formations, have become a focal point in this work and the National Gallery of Canada's canvas. They light *The Old Stump, Lake Superior* in sharp relief and whiten the upper surface of the clouds that float, weightless, high above the land. The earth is rounded and upthrust, bringing the stump closer to the sky. These two changes are critical to *The Old Stump, Lake Superior* and remain unchanged through to the canvas. All of the factors that make the canvas *North Shore, Lake Superior* such an iconic work are present in *The Old Stump, Lake Superior*, and are seen therein for the first time. Thus it marks the birth of a Canadian icon.

It seems in this marvelous work that we, looking at it, are the stump. Touched by the light's divine revelation, we can receive knowledge, truth

and clarity. And as the wizened stump, burned and alone, is touched by the light, so we too can achieve a state of transcendent being if we open ourselves to it. Where there is neither suffering, desire, nor a distracting sense of self, we can find nirvana. In Harris's theosophy, expression of the mystical was his mission. He sought it in his work, he sought it in his daily life and it was his duty as a painter to be an instrument of communication for greater ideas. Through his visionary skill, he has transformed the stump from its original state to that of a greater state, with the light and clarity of his vision.

Harris and Charles S. Band were friends as young men. After Band returned from working in New York, where he had begun to collect art seriously, Harris introduced him to his fellow Group of Seven painters, from whom Band would acquire work directly. *The Old Stump, Lake Superior*, through the estate of Charles's daughter Helen E. Band, is offered here for sale for the first time since Charles S. Band acquired this iconic work directly from the artist in 1946.

ESTIMATE: \$2,000,000 ~ 2,500,000