

# Los Angeles Times

## Lawren Harris painting sells for record sum on heels of museum show



A detail of the Lawren Harris painting "Mountain and Glacier." (Heffel Fine Art Auction House)

**November 30, 2015**

**David Ng**

A painting by Lawren Harris has brought in a record auction amount for the late artist, fetching 4.6 million Canadian dollars (\$3.4 million) at a recent Toronto sale.

The auction garnered attention in the international art world as it comes on the heels of a major retrospective exhibition devoted to Harris at the

Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. The show, which opened in October, was curated by actor Steve Martin, who collects Harris' art.

Heffel Fine Art Auction House, which conducted the Thursday sale, said that "Mountain and Glacier" brought in the highest amount ever realized for a Harris work at auction. The painting exceeded estimates that it would sell for between 1 million and 1.5 million Canadian dollars.

Two other Harris canvases sold at the auction and beat estimates -- "Winter Landscape," which fetched 3.7 million Canadian dollars; and "Winter in the Ward," which brought in 1.1 million Canadian dollars. The selling prices include the buyer's premium, a charge typically added by auction houses.

A spokeswoman for Heffel said she was unable to reveal the identity of the buyers. A publicist for Martin didn't respond to a request for comment.

David Heffel, the auction house's president, told the Canadian Press last week: "Steve Martin generates a lot of attention in the media, for sure."

The actor's curatorial involvement in the Hammer exhibition [has drawn questions](#) from certain members of the art world over a potential conflict of interest with his collecting of Harris' art.

Nonprofit art museums frequently bill themselves as institutions devoted to scholarship that are free from commercial influence.

Harris is regarded as one of Canada's most important artists of the 20th century. But he remains little known in the U.S.

"The Idea of North: The Paintings of Lawren Harris" is set to run through Jan. 24 at the Hammer. The exhibition was created in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario.