



16 Jack Hamilton Bush

ARCA CGP CSGA CSPWC OSA P11 1909 – 1977

Bend

acrylic polymer on canvas, on verso signed, titled,
dated March 1970 and inscribed *Toronto* and
Acrylic Polymer W.B

76 × 76 in, 193 × 193 cm

PROVENANCE

André Emmerich Gallery, New York, July 22, 1970

Kenworth W. Moffett, Connecticut

By descent in the Moffett family, USA

LITERATURE

Jane Holtz Kay, "Modern Times at Boston's Art Museum,"

The Boston Globe, February 13, 1972, reproduced page 8

Susan Drysdale, "Bush's Glowing Art Opens New MFA Gallery,"

The Christian Science Monitor, February 23, 1972, page 5

Kenworth Moffett, *Jack Bush Exhibition for the Inauguration
of the New Contemporary Gallery*, Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, 1972, unpaginated

Caron Le Brun Danikian, "Museum on the Move," *The Boston
Herald Traveler*, February 27, 1972, page 7

Hilton Kramer, "Boston Museum Develops Contemporary
Art Section," *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pennsylvania),
February 27, 1972, page F21

Barrie Hale, "Still Knocking Them Out of the Park: Jack Bush
at 66: A Fully Original Master," *The Canadian*, December 27,
1975, reproduced page 13

Brian Stock, "The Vicissitudes of Nationalism," *The Times*,
May 14, 1976, page 6

Roger J. Mesley, "Jack Bush in Retrospect: Art Gallery of Ontario,"
artmagazine, vol. 8, no. 29, October / November 1976,
reproduced, page 43

Terry Fenton, *Jack Bush: A Retrospective*, Art Gallery of Ontario,
1976, reproduced unpaginated

David Burnett, "The Art of Jack Bush: Taking 'Another' Look,"
The Ottawa Journal, June 4, 1977, page D76

Theodore Heinrich, "Jack Bush: A Retrospective," *artscanada*,
vol. 34, no. 1, March / April 1977, reproduced page 5



Kenworth Moffett, curator of contemporary art, with Jack Bush at the opening,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, February 16, 1972
Courtesy of *The Museum Year: Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston*, vol. 96, 1971 – 1972

Henry Lehmann, "Silent Entertainment," *The Montreal Star*,
April 2, 1977

QC on the Arts, *Terry Fenton on Jack Bush*, 1980 film

Karen Wilkin, editor, *Jack Bush*, 1984, reproduced page 139

EXHIBITED

André Emmerich Gallery, New York, 1970

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Jack Bush Exhibition for the
Inauguration of the New Contemporary Gallery*, February 17 –
March 26, 1972, catalogue #18

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, *Jack Bush*, September 17 –
October 24, 1976, traveling in 1976 – 1977 to the
Vancouver Art Gallery; Edmonton Art Gallery; Musée d'art
contemporain, Montreal; and National Gallery of Canada,
Ottawa, catalogue #38

AN ART CURATOR is traditionally defined as a “keeper” of collections, and yet the private collection of this custodial conduit in the art world is not often considered a subject for study. Perhaps curators wish not to be subjected to their own practice.

Kenworth Moffett purchased Jack Bush’s *Bend* for his own personal collection upon seeing the painting exhibited at the André Emmerich Gallery in the fall of 1970. Throughout Moffett’s career, first as a professor of art history at Wellesley College in Massachusetts and later in the museum world as a curator, director and avid art writer, he was enthusiastic about modernist art and Colour Field artists in particular. Notably, Moffett was the first curator of twentieth-century art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. It was Moffett who curated the new contemporary art wing at the MFA in 1972. He mounted a solo exhibition of abstract paintings by Bush, highlighting the best of his past 12 years of work to, as he stated, “demonstrate the level of quality that Bush has achieved.” The exhibition was the artist’s first one-person show at a major museum in the USA.

While it was a significant step for Bush, it was also an act of revolution for Boston’s 100-year-old art museum. As Susan Drysdale articulated in a review of the show, “[Jack Bush’s] paintings are themselves the result of a decision almost as courageous as that of the museum which, last May, took a deep breath before announcing the formation of the new department of contemporary art within its hallowed walls[,] which for more than a century have been lined mainly with traditional art.” Moffett, wrote Drysdale, “picked a glowing selection of abstract paintings” and *Bend* was amongst them.

In 1972, the everyday American gallery-goer may not have been familiar with the work of Bush, but he was widely admired by those entrenched in the art world—he was a painter’s painter, a critic’s painter and, as evidenced by the provenance of this painting, a curator’s painter. *New York Times* arts editor Hilton Kramer found Moffett’s choice to exhibit Bush at the MFA to be downright daring, as he wrote:

It was a gamble, to say the least, to initiate the activities of a new and controversial department with a show of his work. But it is a gamble that has in my view, paid off handsomely. The show Moffett has mounted in Boston... is not only better than the show I saw in Brazil five years ago or any I have seen in New York but a show that establishes Bush as one of our best living painters.

Bend is closely related to Bush’s road mark series. It boasts a strong shape in opaque paint across an unevenly rolled ground

colour that is finished off at the bottom with a few comparatively tidy, brightly coloured stripes. Like the painting *Strawberry* (sold by Heffel in spring 2018), which Bush painted within the same month as *Bend*, some breathing room was left for the image by allowing the unpainted edges of the canvas to show; it was an exemplary move in the language of modernist painting, pointing to the inherent parameters of a picture. But Bush’s approach to “pure” abstraction was also successfully aberrant. His road mark paintings were inspired by a literal referent; the real-life roots were especially overt in the first two paintings of this series—*Irish Rock #1* and *Irish Rock #2*—which depicted the whitewash road marks Bush had seen painted on rocks during a trip to Ireland in 1969.

In 1976, *Bend* was selected by curator Terry Fenton for inclusion in the artist’s first major retrospective exhibition, which was organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario. The exhibition toured nationally, during which time Bush suddenly and tragically died in Toronto, shortly after the show’s tour stop in Edmonton. Still, Moffett held tight to *Bend* and did not sell the canvas. Moffett passed away in June 2016 at the age of 81 and *Bend* has remained with Moffett’s family to this day, 49 years after it was first purchased by the curator as a vote of confidence and mark of personal admiration for the artist.

We thank Dr. Sarah Stanners, director of the *Jack Bush Catalogue Raisonné*, contributor to the Bush retrospective originating at the National Gallery of Canada in 2014, and assistant professor at the University of Toronto, Department of Art History, for contributing the above essay.

This work will be included in Stanners’s forthcoming *Jack Bush Paintings: A Catalogue Raisonné*.

ESTIMATE: \$300,000 – 400,000



17 William Kurelek

ARCA OC OSA 1927 – 1977

Abandoned Goulettes

mixed media on board, initialed and on verso titled and dated 1976 on the gallery labels
20 x 28 in, 50.8 x 71.1 cm

PROVENANCE

The Isaacs Gallery Ltd., Toronto
Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto
Private Collection, Toronto
Sold sale of *Important Canadian Art*, Sotheby’s Canada in association with Ritchie’s, November 18, 2002, lot 186
Private Collection, Calgary

LITERATURE

Joan Murray and William Kurelek, *Kurelek’s Vision of Canada*, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1983, page 60, reproduced page 60

EXHIBITED

The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, *Kurelek’s Vision of Canada*, June 14 – August 14, 1982, traveling in 1982 – 1984 to the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery; New Brunswick Museum, Saint John; Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown; Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax; McCord Museum, Montreal; Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon; Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary; Manitoba Museum of Man, Winnipeg; Norman Mackenzie

Art Gallery, Regina; Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John’s; Musée régionale de Rimouski; and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, catalogue #36

WILLIAM KURELEK WROTE about this work:

This painting is meant to convey the sadness of a way of life that has passed. For over a hundred years these small timber transports plied the St. Lawrence River between the Saguenay and Quebec City carrying lumber and pulp logs to the mills at Quebec City. They were family boats. The mother was a cook, the father the captain, the children the sailors, and all lived on board during the shipping season. In winter the boats were winched up on to the land and stored on the dry dock rails you see in the foreground of the painting. Then new methods of transport, notably trucking spurred on by timber stands retreating inland, began to put these boats out of business. The last ones, some of which Jim and I found at St. Joseph de la Rive, were not even put in dry dock but simply dragged up on the beach.

Kurelek painted Canada from coast to coast, and his vision was documented in the 1982 exhibition *Kurelek’s Vision of Canada*, which this evocative painting was a part of.

This work is in the original frame made by Kurelek.

ESTIMATE: \$20,000 – 30,000