



222 Cornelius David Krieghoff

1815 – 1872

Canadian Autumn, View on the Road to Lake St. John

oil on canvas, signed, dated 1862 and inscribed Quebec and on verso inscribed Mrs. Ross
22 3/8 x 37 7/8 in, 56.8 x 96.2 cm

PROVENANCE

John S. Budden Esq., Quebec City, before 1865
James Gibb, Quebec City
Mrs. David A. Ross (widow of James Gibb), Quebec City
Frank W. Ross, Esq. (no relation), Quebec City, gift in lieu of payment before May 1923
By descent to F. Donald Ross, Quebec City
By descent to Christopher Donald Frank Ross, Ottawa
Estate of Christopher Donald Frank Ross
By donation to Aqueduct Foundation, Vancouver

LITERATURE

W. Notman, *Notman's Photographic Selections, Second Series*, 1865, reproduced plate 35 and listed, unpaginated
H.B. Small, *The Canadian Handbook and Tourist's Guide*, 1866, titled as *Indian Camp on the Road to Lake St. John*, reproduced, unpaginated

Toronto Centennial Historical Exhibition: Paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff, Art Gallery of Toronto, 1934, titled as *Indian Camp on the Road to Lake St. John*, listed page 20
Exhibition of Paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff, 1815 – 1872, National Gallery of Canada, 1934, titled as *Indian Camp on the Way to Lake St. John*, listed page 18
Marius Barbeau, *Cornelius Krieghoff: Pioneer Painter of North America*, 1934, titled as *Indian Camp on the Way to Lake St. John*, listed page 137, noted as “One of the best”
Dennis Reid, *Kriehhoff: Images of Canada*, Art Gallery of Toronto, 1999, reproduced frontispiece (detail) and page 200, and listed pages iv and 307

EXHIBITED

Art Gallery of Toronto, *Toronto Centennial Historical Exhibition: Paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff*, January 5 – 29, 1934, titled as *Indian Camp on the Road to Lake St. John*, catalogue #254
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, *Exhibition of Paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff, 1815 – 1872*, February 1934, traveling to the Art Association of Montreal, March 19 – April 22, 1934, titled as *Indian Camp on the Way to Lake St. John*, catalogue #130
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, long-term loan, March 1988 – August 2025

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, *Kriehhoff: Images of Canada*, November 26, 1999 – March 5, 2000, traveling to the Musée du Québec, Quebec City, June 14 – September 10, 2000; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, October 12, 2000 – January 7, 2001; Vancouver Art Gallery, February 17 – May 21, 2001; and McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, June 22 – October 8, 2001, catalogue #118

IN THIS CHARMING autumn scene, Cornelius Krieghoff portrays a lively group of Indigenous hunters camped en route to Lac Saint-Jean in the picturesque Laurentian Highlands. One figure builds a fire, another skins a deer, while a third reloads their rifle. In his 1934 catalogue raisonné of Krieghoff’s paintings, Marius Barbeau justly describes this work as “One of the best.”¹ This judgment has withstood the test of time: a detail of *Canadian Autumn, View on the Road to Lake St. John* is reproduced as the frontispiece to Dennis Reid’s lavishly illustrated *Kriehhoff: Images of Canada*, the 1999 catalogue accompanying the most ambitious presentation of the Dutch-born Canadian artist to date. Traveling to the National Gallery of Canada as part of a cross-country tour, this exhibition confirmed A.Y. Jackson’s valuation of Krieghoff as the leading artist in mid-nineteenth-century Canada.²

Born in Amsterdam and raised in Germany, Krieghoff brought to his North American canvases a sensibility informed by the Dutch-inspired genre paintings popular in the Düsseldorf of his youth.³ Landing in New York in 1837, the artist enlisted in the United States Army. While serving in Florida, he documented the Seminole Wars in a body of work that was later lost in Quebec City’s great fire of 1881. Krieghoff would reprise his portrayal of Indigenous themes after deserting a subsequent tour of duty and relocating to Longueuil with a young Québécoise woman, Émilie Gauthier.

Kriehhoff’s encounters with the Haudenosaunee of Kahnawà:ke—a village located across from Montreal on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River—inspired his portraits of First Nations subjects during his early years in Canada. Many of these images adapted pictorial devices from popular lithographs by Coke Smyth and Currier and Ives, to which the painter added cultural belongings he had the opportunity to study in private collections, such as the cabinet of curiosities-like display of souvenirs amassed by A.A. Staunton, which Krieghoff depicted in *An Officer's Room in Montreal* (1846).⁴ After moving to Quebec City at the urging of his friend, the auctioneer John Budden, Krieghoff would develop a greater familiarity with members of the Wendat Nation that yielded increasingly dynamic and nuanced representations of Indigenous subjects, with *Canadian Autumn, View on the Road to Lake St. John* being a compelling example.⁵

Accompanied by Budden and their mutual friend James Gibb—both early owners of the present work—Kriehhoff undertook a number of journeys through the traditional territories of the Wendat and Innu surrounding Quebec City. Krieghoff’s record of one of these expeditions, *The Narrows on Lake St. Charles* (1859), notably incorporates the trio’s Wendat guide, chief Zacharie Vincent Telari-o-lin (1815 – 1886), an accomplished visual artist in his own right.⁶

In addition to their heightened individualization of Indigenous figures, works from Krieghoff’s Quebec City period are significant for how they amplify the artistry of Indigenous women.⁷ This dynamic is evident, for instance, in Krieghoff’s meticulous rendering of the beaded octopus bag worn by the seated figure at centre-left in *Canadian Autumn, View on the Road to Lake St. John*. In turn, Krieghoff’s work has more recently provided a point of departure for Indigenous artists to reimagine the canon, including Kent Monkman—a painter who shares Krieghoff’s penchant for comic anecdote.⁸

With its brilliant seasonal palette and dynamic interaction of individualized figures, *Canadian Autumn, View on the Road to Lake St. John* shows Krieghoff at the height of his powers as an observer of nineteenth-century life.

We thank Adam Lauder for contributing the above essay. Lauder is an art historian based in Toronto and an adjunct professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University.

1. Marius Barbeau, *Cornelius Krieghoff: Pioneer Painter of North America* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1934), 137.
2. A.Y. Jackson quoted in Marius Barbeau, *Cornelius Krieghoff* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948), 20.
3. See J. Russell Harper, *Kriehhoff* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), chap. 1.
4. See Harper, *Kriehhoff*, 49–52; Laurier Lacroix, “Les Autochtones tels que dépeints par Krieghoff,” *Le Devoir*, March 5, 2022.
5. See, for instance, François-Marc Gagnon, “Perceiving the Other: French-Canadian and Indian Iconography in the Work of Cornelius Krieghoff,” in Dennis Reid, *Kriehhoff: Images of Canada* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, in assoc. with Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), exhibition catalogue, 226–33.
6. See Louise Vigneault, *Zacharie Vincent: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute), 17; Reid, *Kriehhoff*, 77n125.
7. See Lacroix, “Autochtones.”
8. See Robert Amos, “Trickster in Drag Upends Colonial View,” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, BC), June 26, 2010, 45.

Proceeds from the sale of this work will benefit the Indigenous and Canadian Art Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, made possible by Aqueduct Foundation. Founded in 2006, Aqueduct Foundation is a Canadian public charitable foundation dedicated to facilitating significant personal philanthropy. With total assets exceeding one billion dollars (CAD), Aqueduct makes grants to any Canadian registered charity or qualified donee at the recommendation of its donors.

ESTIMATE: \$100,000 – 150,000