

Thomson sketch sells for \$369,600 at auction

BY JAMES ADAMS

It was the Kenneth Thomson show last night in Toronto at the Joyner Waddington auction of high-end Canadian art.

Canada's wealthiest man, and most famous art collector, spent more than \$1-million on just three paintings, including \$369,600 on a small (17.5 centimetre by 25 cm), little-known oil sketch by the legendary Tom Thomson.

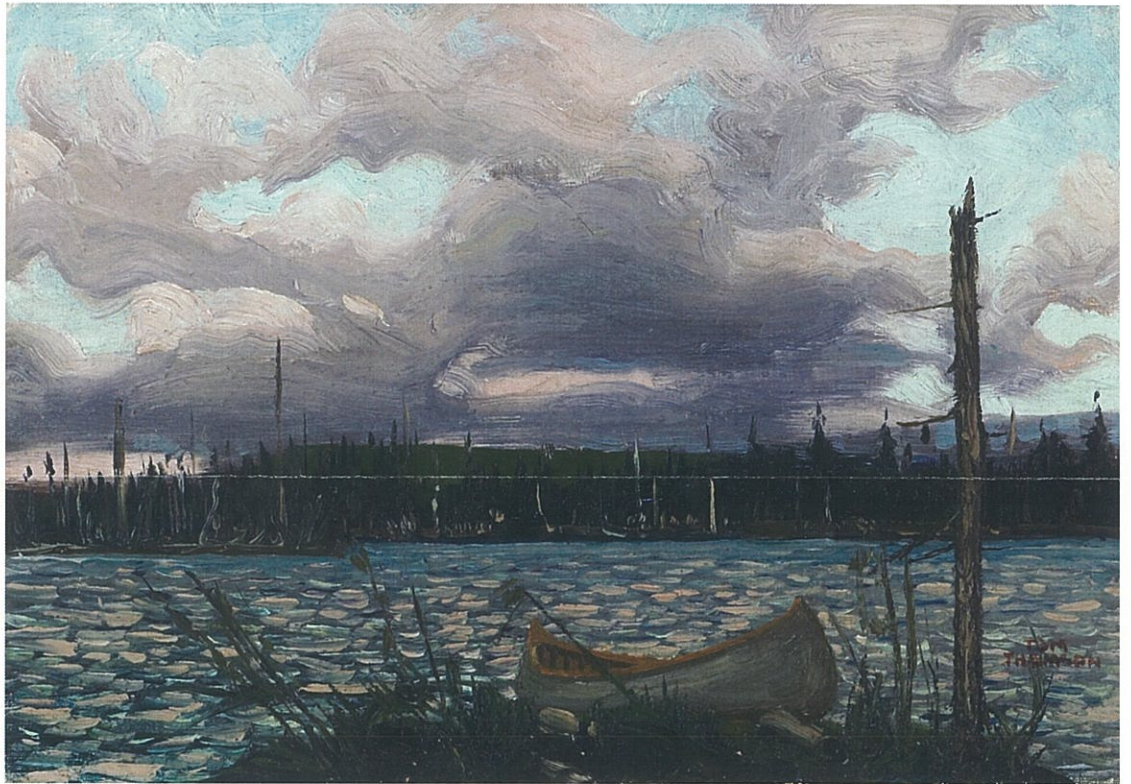
As usual, the publicity-shy Mr. Thomson wasn't in the room to witness his triumph. Instead, his agent of choice, Winnipeg art dealer David Loch, calmly placed bids on his behalf.

The Tom Thomson sketch *Canoe and Lake, Algonquin Park*, was completed just four years before the artist's death by drowning. It went into the auction conservatively valued at \$80,000 to \$100,000. But at least two other bidders chased Mr. Loch for the trophy. The contest began with a bid of \$50,000, then leaped by increments of \$5,000 and \$10,000 until Mr. Loch prevailed, to much applause, with the clinched \$330,000 (\$369,600 including the premium of 15 per cent on the first \$250,000 of the hammer price, 12 per cent on the remainder.)

Mr. Loch also succeeded in capturing a modest-sized (30 cm by 37.5 cm) oil sketch by Group of Seven founder Lawren Harris. Titled *Bylot Island*, this little work completed in the 1930s sold for \$380,000 — \$130,000 more than its high-end pre-sale estimate. Total tab for the Arctic sketch: \$425,600.

The purchase of a J.W. Morrice canvas that had been consigned by a European collector completed Mr. Thomson's million-dollar trifecta. *Sailing Boats* went into the hammer war valued at \$250,000 to \$300,000. With premium, the Morrice went to Mr. Thomson for \$264,500.

It's anticipated all the works bought on Mr. Thomson's behalf last night will end up in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario once the gallery completes its \$220-million renovation in 2008.



Tom Thomson's *Canoe and Lake, Algonquin Park* sketch on canvas was painted four years before the artist died.



Bylot Island by Group of Seven founder Lawren Harris was completed in the 1930s and sold for \$425,600.