

Art market shows its strength at Heffel’s marquee sale, led by Riopelle and Motherwell

- **Record-breaking Heffel auction** achieves **\$16.5 million**, driven by heated global bidding
- Masterworks by **Jean Paul Riopelle** and **Robert Motherwell** stole the show, each surpassing \$2 million
- **Alex Colville, Lawren Harris** and **Emily Carr** each broke the million dollar mark with sought-after examples

TORONTO, June 1, 2022—Monumental works by powerhouse artists Jean Paul Riopelle and Robert Motherwell underscored the strength of the art market today, as the [Heffel Fine Art Auction House](#) spring sale wrapped up an intense global auction season. Records were shattered across all areas of the market in the highly-anticipated live auction, which was presented to a remote and spirited audience through Heffel’s Digital Saleroom. Heated bidding by passionate collectors drove the sale total to an impressive result of \$16.5 million (All prices are in Canadian dollars and include a buyer's premium.)

The market for works by Jean Paul Riopelle proves stronger than ever, as Canada prepares to celebrate his centenary. *Sans titre*, a colourful canvas characteristic of his iconic palette-knife and drip techniques, stole the show among an outstanding selection of *Post-War & Contemporary Art* in the Heffel auction. The 1953 showstopper saw bidding participation from around the world, which drove the final selling price to \$2,881,250, more than doubling its pre-sale estimate.

A grouping of exceptional works consigned from the esteemed *Joan Stewart Clarke Collection* were led by a showstopper canvas by American Abstract Expressionist giant, Robert Motherwell. The striking, yet serene canvas [August Sea #5](#) was a highlight at Heffel’s auction previews across the country and is truly museum-quality. The 1972 masterpiece surpassed the \$2 million mark and sold for \$2,161,250.

“To spend time with so many artworks of such high calibre this season was truly an honour for our team across the country,” says Robert Heffel, Vice President of Heffel Fine Art Auction House. “Steady interest and global participation in our auction today underscore the growing appetite for exceptional artworks by collected artists.”

Highlights from the Spring 2022 Live Auction

- An incredible result was achieved for Jean Paul Riopelle’s phenomenal 1953 *Sans titre*. Bidding ramped up quickly and ended in a heated battle for the masterpiece canvas, which ultimately achieved \$2,881,250 on the auction block (est. \$1,000,000 – 1,500,000).
- Robert Motherwell’s remarkable *August Sea #5*, a treasure among the artworks on offer this season, sold for an impressive \$2,161,250. The abstract masterpiece, commanding in scale and rich in colour, is a museum quality example by the internationally collected artist (est. \$2,000,000 – 2,500,000).
- *Swing Gay* by Jack Bush achieved twice its estimate after garnering heavy competition in the *Post-War & Contemporary Art* session. The dynamic and highly collectible canvas went to a lucky bidder for \$721,250 (est. \$250,000 – 350,000).

- Rita Letendre's exceptional *Reffet d'Eden*, a prime-period 1961 canvas, stole the hearts of many passionate collectors in the Heffel auction, following her recent passing in 2021. The monumental painting deservedly set a new artist record when it sold for \$451,250 (est. \$100,000 – 150,000).
- A superb canvas by renowned contemporary artist Takao Tanabe shattered the artist record in the Heffel auction. *Crossing the Strait, Sunset*, a largescale and moody BC landscape, sold for an impressive \$277,250 (est. \$70,000 – 90,000).
- *Coastal Figure*, a blockbuster painting by Alex Colville sold for an explosive result of \$1,561,250 (est. \$650,000 – 850,000). The peaceful, expressive and sizeable work was painted in 1951, shortly after Colville's return from World War II.
- Lawren Harris shined bright in the Heffel auction, with the sale of four outstanding examples spanning important periods from his incredible career. The works were led by the glowing Rockies scene, *Mountain Sketch*, which broke the million dollar mark and sold for \$1,021,250 (est. \$500,000 – 700,000).
- Emily Carr's quintessential and musical forest depiction, *Singing Trees* was a standout at the Heffel auction. The prized mature-period canvas sold for \$1,261,250 (est. \$500,000 - 700,000).

Heffel is currently accepting consignments for the fall 2022 auction season, inclusive of international works of art. The deadline for spring consignments is August 2022.

For more information on the works included in Heffel's spring live auction, visit www.heffel.com.

About Heffel Fine Art Auction House

Since 1978, Heffel has connected passionate collectors across the world with outstanding works of art, with sales totaling three quarters of a billion dollars. With offices in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa and Calgary, Heffel has the most experienced team of fine art specialists in Canada and provides superior client service to both sellers and buyers internationally.

For additional information, to schedule an interview, or for images and b-roll, please contact:

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