

THE THOMSON COLLECTION

EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS

BENJAMIN CHEVERTON

born England, 1794
died London, England, 1876

In 1953, Ken Thomson began a lifetime of art collecting with the purchase of these two busts for \$45 (\$500 Canadian in 2023). The busts are duplications of larger sculptures. Inventor Benjamin Cheverton perfected a machine to trace the surface of the larger sculptures and create miniature copies.

Thomson later remarked about the two busts: "I thought they were wonderful...from that point, I started walking around the streets of London looking for small carvings and sculptures." Thomson would eventually acquire more than 200 busts made by Cheverton.



Benjamin Cheverton, English, 1794–1876
George Clarke, English, 1796–1842

Dr. Alexander Robert Sutherland

circa 1850

ivory

Inscribed on lower back: Cheverton Sc.

29435



Benjamin Cheverton, English, 1794–1876
Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey, English, 1781–1841

**Bust of Sir Charles Forbes (1773–1849),
First Baronet, Bombay Merchant, MP**

1843

ivory

Inscribed on back, carved: Chantry
fec.t/Cheverton Sc. 1843

29509

CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF

born Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1815
died Chicago, Illinois, United States, 1872

Thomson's collection of Canadian historical art began with Cornelius Krieghoff. He knew Krieghoff was Dutch-born and that he had spent the majority of his career in the United States and Europe, but he was delighted with the artist's ability to depict lively, narrative scenes of what would later become Quebec and Ontario in the mid-1800s. Thomson was a prolific collector of Krieghoff's work, amassing more than 100 paintings over the years.



The Winetasters (after Hasenclever)

circa 1846
oil on canvas
2009/397



Breaking Up of a Country Ball in Canada, Early Morning

1857
oil on canvas
68839

TOM THOMSON

born Claremont, Ontario, Canada, 1877
died Canoe Lake (Algonquin Park), Ontario, Canada, 1917

Autumn, Three Trout stands out from Tom Thomson's other paintings, which typically depict landscapes. In contrast, it alludes to his primary hobby: fishing.

The work was painted in Ontario's Algonquin Park, Thomson's regular haunt. He first painted in the park in 1912, and he would return every year until 1917, the year he drowned in Canoe Lake. During these years Thomson produced hundreds of oil sketches on small portable boards like the one you see here. Through these sketches he captured nature's movement against the changing light—fleeting moments he would explore in his larger paintings, and qualities which made him Ken's Thomson favourite artist.



Autumn, Three Trout

fall 1916
oil on composite wood-pulp board
69238

Despite sharing a last name, Ken Thomson and Tom Thomson weren't related.

WILLIAM KURELEK

born Whitford, Alberta, Canada, 1927
died Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1977

As with Cornelius Krieghoff, Thomson was impressed by William Kurelek's ability to paint detailed narrative scenes. In contrast to Krieghoff, however, Kurelek's scenes were autobiographical. *The Painter* is from Kurelek's *Happy Canadian* series, and depicts a bog near his parents' farm in Manitoba. During his 1963 painting trip of Western Canada, Kurelek ate, slept, and painted in the VW Beetle you see here.

Kurelek painted *The Batchelor* (his own spelling) after he was released from a psychiatric hospital for treatment of severe depression. It depicts the flat he rented in London's Hammersmith neighbourhood, before he returned to Canada several years later.



The Painter

1974

mixed media on hardboard

104135



The Batchelor

1955

mixed media on hardboard

103991