

Sale Name: Hodgins - Spring 2025 Fine Art

LOT 111 - Takao Tanabe



Estimate \$ 15000-20000

Description

Takao Tanabe

Canadian OC, RCA [b. 1926]

THE LAND 2/80; 1980

acrylic on canvas

28 x 43 in. (71.1 x 109.2 cm)

signed lower right; signed, titled and dated verso

Provenance: Estate of Carolyn Tavender, Calgary AB, by descent to family

Born in the small fishing village of Seal Cove, British Columbia, Takao Tanabe's decades-long distinguished career has established him as one of Canada's most important contemporary painters. He was one of seven children born to Japanese immigrants. His father operated a commercial fishing boat and his mother worked in the local cannery, before the family moved to Vancouver in 1937. In 1942, at the height of World War II tensions, the Tanabe family was interned, along with 22,000 Japanese-Canadian. Following the war, Takao Tanabe spent several years as an indentured labourer before applying (and being accepted) to the Winnipeg School of Art, from which he graduated in 1949. He continued his studies at the Brooklyn School of Art (New York); Central School of Arts and Crafts (London); and later studied Sumi-e and calligraphy at Tokyo University.

Takao Tanabe began experimenting with abstraction early in his art education (inspired by instructors Joseph Plaskett and Hans Hofmann). During the 1950s and 1960s, his work progressed through various forms of abstraction, and he began to achieve financial and critical success. In 1971, while living in New York, Tanabe was

invited to teach at the Banff School of Fine Arts, as a summer instructor. In 1973, he became head of the Art Department and Artist-in-Residence. He remained at The Banff School of Fine Arts until 1980, when he moved to Vancouver Island. During his Banff decade, Takao Tanabe focused intently on the prairie landscape, the vastness of which he experienced during his road trip there from New York. He began his celebrated series of minimalist prairie landscapes, now recognized as one of his most significant bodies of work.

"The Land", painted in 1980, is a quintessential example of Tanabe's prairie scenes. The artist strips away non-essential details to create a serene composition that rewards prolonged, contemplative viewing.

"I am a Minimalist type of painter," he noted in 2014. "But I avoid the manmade stuff, which is the railway lines, the telephone poles, the grain elevators, and cows... It's stripped-down human intervention to the basic."

See the [Legacy Obituary](#) for more information on Carolyn Tavender.

View [additional information](#) on Takao Tanabe.

Quantity: 1

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