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Minnesota Museum Gets Washington Crossing Delaware Painting



Collection adviser John Driscoll points out some of the details in Emanuel Leutze's 1851 painting of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum on Sunday, March 22, 2015, in Winona.
(AP Photo/The Winona Daily News/Matthew Seckora)

One of two surviving versions of the painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" has a new home at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum in Winona.

The famed 1851 painting depicting George Washington was recently acquired by the museum's founders from a private collector, who had loaned it to the White House for the

past 35 years. Another larger version is owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

The Winona Daily News reports the painting was unveiled at a private event Sunday, and that it was set to go on display when the museum about 120 miles southeast of Minneapolis opened Tuesday.

"It looks just terrific," museum co-founder Mary Burcher told the Star Tribune. "We had people crying in the audience last night when we unveiled it. People were gasping and didn't know what to say."

The painting now in Winona measures more than 3 feet tall and nearly 6 feet wide, smaller than the one in New York that's roughly 12-by-21 feet. The work shows Washington standing in a rowboat as it traverses the icy Delaware River, in a surprise attack during the American Revolution.

German-born artist Emanuel Leutze, who grew up in the U.S., painted the works in part to move Germans to rebel against their rulers. A third version of the painting was destroyed by British bombs at a German museum in 1942.

Burcher and New York-based art dealer John Driscoll, who arranged the purchase, declined to tell the Star Tribune what the Washington painting cost.

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum was founded by Burcher and her husband, Bob Kierlin, who founded Winona-based company Fastenal, valued at \$15 billion. The museum with water-themed works opened in 2006 and has about 1,400 paintings, including ones by Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Georgia O'Keeffe.