



The thrill of the landscape

Large-scale painting by local artist Martin Greenland has been bought by Tullie House



ART

By Mark Green

It was his painting of a perfect sky that won Martin Greenland a major national award and he admits that altering the sky on a follow-up canvas completely transformed it.

You can see the result for yourself if you visit Tullie House Museum in Carlisle.

Titled *National Park*, the artist took a first look at it hanging in place this week.

"It was one of the first pictures I did after winning the John Moores award," he says.

The importance of the award – a competition for contemporary artists at Liverpool's Walker Art Gallery – was immense for Martin.

"I had a great boost from that, it gave me great confidence to believe that I was doing something that people liked," he admits. "I did not feel I needed people's commendation to allow me to carry on, but when you do get that acknowledgement, it does

stamp some authority on what you are doing.

"I was full of ideas, spin-off ideas because that painting did so well."

That painting was titled *Before Vermeer's Clouds* and was chosen by a judging panel that included Sir Peter Blake and Turner prize winner Tracey Emin.

Martin's aim was to show how perfect the sky is compared to what happens on earth below.

Although he started work on *National Park* in 2007, it was only completed last year when he completely altered the colouring of the sky.

When the picture was originally shown, the sky was a glowering grey and Martin was never quite happy with it. Then last year, he realised



Pride of place: Martin Greenland with Melanie Gardner, Tullie House's keeper of fine and decorative arts

what needed to be changed.

"The sky was heavy and sullen and it was this time last year when I realised what was wrong with it," he explains. "It is a bit like doing a crossword, suddenly it was 'oh! that is what it is!'"

"It is really nice to see it here, next to the John Nash and other landscape pictures."

National Park was bought for £8,500 for Tullie House with funds from the Friends of Tullie House, The Art Fund and The V&A Purchase Grant Fund.

Its purchase is part of the museum's drive to collect major paintings by the county's foremost artists. Melanie Gardner, keeper of

fine and decorative arts says: "It was a real priority to acquire a major painting by Martin and we are delighted to have got this with the help of our supporters."

The painting is the Bowness-on-Solway artist's representation of the Lakeland District: his memory of the Coniston fells and Cawfell where he walks regularly, not an exact likeness.

"I kept seeing this pyramidal mountain, like Cawfell, and wanted to paint it. This is a complete invention, my interpretation of the landscape."

"I like my paintings to 'now', so I have included a quarry, a reservoir, a telecommunications mast and forestry. I wanted it to be a thrilling landscape, more the peripheral parts, the edgier bits rather than the romantic ideal."

"I haven't included a wind turbine because I did not want it to be an 'issue' painting."