Disputed Painting Is a Real van Gogh, Researchers Say

A painting at a Connecticut museum that has long been thought to be by Vincent van Gogh has been authenticated by Dutch researchers.

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford announced Friday that “Vase With Poppies,” a still life oil painting, has been verified by researchers at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam as having been made by the Dutch artist in 1886, just after he moved to Paris. It has been in the Atheneum's collection since 1957.

The painting's authenticity was called into question in 1990 by the art historian Walter Feilchenfeldt, who raised concerns about many purported van Goghs around the world, the Hartford Courant reported. The artwork was taken out of museum displays and shelved.

Years later, with advances in technology and knowledge of van Gogh, the museum decided to revisit the painting.

It was examined initially at the Atheneum, where a digital X-ray revealed an underpainting that looked like a self-portrait, which added to confidence about its authenticity.

The museum in Amsterdam analyzed the artwork's paint, materials and style to conclude it was indeed done by van Gogh.

“One can say that slowly but surely, real progress is being made in van Gogh studies,” said Louis van Tilborgh, a senior researcher at the Van Gogh Museum. “Some of these floaters even turned out to be firmly anchored in van Gogh's oeuvre, and ‘Vase With Poppies,’ I am happy to say, is one of them.”

The artwork fits stylistically with other floral paintings the artist made shortly after arriving in Paris.

The Atheneum now officially has two van Goghs in its collection. The other is a self-portrait painted in 1887.