



### THE SPIRIT OF MOUNTAINS – THE FRAGRANCE OF FLOWERS Traditional Chinese ink painting in the 19th and 20th century

**A special exhibition is on view at KOGART House: the Kovács Gábor Art Foundation presents the finest items from the Chinese ink painting collection of the Three Gorges Museum, Chongqing.**

The Three Gorges Museum is one of China's most important museums, whose collection of traditional ink painting boasts tens of thousands of outstanding works. This is not the first time KOGART has cooperated with the city of 34 million inhabitants, one of China's four direct-controlled municipalities, where almost half a million visitors saw a recent exhibit of Lajos Szalay's graphic oeuvre at the Museum. The 100 masterpieces borrowed from Chongqing were jointly selected by Hungarian and Chinese curators, and they include **85 vertical scrolls, 4 horizontal scrolls, 4 calligraphy scrolls, 6 painted fans, and 14 book illustrations.**

This exhibition offers local art lovers an opportunity to familiarize themselves with a **unique style of painting** that is seldom on view in Central Europe. Chinese ink painting has a **tradition of 2000 years**. In Chinese thinking, literature was considered the premier form of art and discipline, with painting being the second most important. The two, however, developed in close association: ink-and-brush calligraphy, and the almost unconscious movements associated with it, served as the basis of traditional ink painting.

The Chinese masters had a high regard for the work and knowledge of their predecessors, and as a result, **traditional Chinese ink painting changed little in the past centuries**. The most beautiful pieces associated with a subject or composition mode will feature a nearly complete catalogue of the characteristic elements of a given class of works. The "paintings," mostly of a tall upright format, usually represent lands, plants, flowers and birds, while humans appear less often, generally as small figures in the landscapes. The images are always accompanied by inscriptions – usually lines of poetry, aphorisms or quotes –, which enrich the meaning of the former.

Thanks to this special symbiosis of literature and painting, the same exhibition will **introduce visitors** not only to the technique of ink wash painting but **to important aspects of Chinese philosophy and literature** as well. These works bring to life the everyday reality of ancient China, the beautiful diversity of the natural environment, and through the realistic representation of birds and plants, they bear witness to **Chinese thought** and its deep **attachment to nature**.

In addition to presenting a traditional philosophy and art that are quite different from their European counterparts, the exhibit also shows **how this style influenced the development of European painting in the last third of the 19th-century**. Without an awareness of Japanese woodcuts and Chinese ink paintings, *Van Gogh*, *Gauguin*, *Toulouse-Lautrec* and the other masters of French post-Impressionism could not have arrived at the new vision of painting that was to lay the foundations of the modern approach.

KOGART's exhibition provides a rare perspective for the Central European visitor: with a view into the tradition of Chinese painting and an analysis of its influence on the modern painting of Europe, it throws a light on the secrets of a "different" mentality. To accompany the exhibition, the Foundation publishes a **96-page catalogue** in Chinese, English and Hungarian, which includes 30 reproductions and an overview of the history and salient features of Chinese ink painting.

**The exhibition is open from Monday to Sunday, between 10 am and 6 pm.  
KOGART House – 1062 Budapest, 112 Andrásy Ave.**

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