

VIEWERS AND PICTURES IN PEST AND BUDA

Castle Garden Bazaar, Guards' Palace (H-1013 Budapest, Ybl Miklós tér 2.)

13 May – 7 August, 2016

Opening on 13 May 2016, the Gábor Kovács Art Foundation's show presents the history of art exhibitions in Hungary in some 120 paintings. A first of its kind, the exhibition opens on 13 May 2016.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Hungary had no academies, contemporary exhibitions, nor even a public collection of paintings, and artists were few and far between. It must have taken some courage therefore to organise the first Hungarian exhibition of contemporary art in May 1840. The first show featured over 300 pictures from Hungary and abroad. It was a real sensation because the Hungarian public had never seen anything similar before. Contemporary art exhibitions had been practically non-existent.

The show was organised by a civic association called the Pest Art Society, which had been founded in 1839 with a view to promote the Hungarian art scene and polish public tastes. Founded by a group of dedicated patriots, the Society was soon to become very popular. The only art institution in Hungary, it organised artistic life in Pest–Buda (as the city was then called).

Following the first event, for a quarter of a century the Pest Art Society hosted exhibitions (annually in the Reform Era and every month from 1853 onward), which served as exclusive forums for Hungarian art. Many of the works on display have survived in public and private collections in Hungary and abroad, including the best-known and celebrated works of Hungarian art, the chefs-d'oeuvre of national Romanticism. Hosted in the Bodyguards' Palace (Testőrpalota) of the Castle Garden Bazaar (Várkert Bazár) between 13 May and 7 August 2016, the exhibition features many of these masterpieces, as well as a few interesting popular works. The majority of the paintings (such as Mihály Zichy's *Lifeboat* and Viktor Madarász's *Lamentation of Ladislaus Hunyadi*) are key works of Hungarian public collections. Usually directly after the show the Pest Art Society – with the help of private dealers and various civic associations – would pass on the pictures to the National Museum. Accompanying their exhibitions were catalogues and annals, which also served as contemporary advertisements.

The exhibition is hosted with support from the Ministry of Human Resources, the Gábor Kovács Art Foundation and Várgondnokság Közhasznú Nonprofit Ltd. It is open until 7 August 2016.

Curators of the exhibition: Gabriella Szvoboda Dománszky, Orsoly Hessky and Gábor Marosvölgyi

Visitor Information:

Castle Garden Bazaar, Guards' Palace | 1013 Budapest, Ybl Miklós tér 2.

Website: www.kogart.hu | www.varkertbazar.hu

Facebook: [facebook.com/kogart](https://www.facebook.com/kogart)

Open: 10 am – 6 pm Tuesday to Sunday

Photographs for downloading:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tom9a0h8odqzy4v/AACxwPPb2mvUP9pWS2QRzJvBa?dl=0>

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