

# Matthew Wong – Vincent van Gogh

## Painting as a Last Resort

14 February until 22 June 2025

The work of the Chinese-Canadian artist Matthew Wong (1984-2019) is created in a dialog that transcends time: it connects the past with the present and represents the relevance of outstanding artists such as Vincent van Gogh for the individual development of a unique oeuvre.

Wong explores expressionism and modernist positions such as Henri Matisse and Gustav Klimt as well as contemporary varieties of expressive art. Not only Western, but also Eastern art history, in particular the work of important Chinese artists such as Shitao, are an important influence for Wong. The exhibition, conceived as a dialogue with works by van Gogh, makes it clear that Wong's artistic ping-pong game with selected artists is a form of referentiality far removed from imitation, appropriation or blind homage.

Wong absorbed the entire spectrum of historical and contemporary art like a sponge, mediated by digital media and image archives. His preference for imaginary landscapes, interiors and the interweaving of interior and exterior spaces reflects the need to express psychological dispositions. His paintings move through emotional immediacy, a dynamic, pastose application of paint and different hatchings, which the artist interweaves ornamentally.

As a self-taught artist, Wong only discovered his passion for painting late in life, but the short time he had – eight years in which he worked almost obsessively – was all the more intense. He shares with Vincent van Gogh not only the depiction of a direct and uninhibited expression of emotion, but also the topos of “painting as a last resort”. For both of them, art

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is a place of retreat and a safe refuge for free expression. In his examination of van Gogh's work, Wong created works that are characterized by a deeply felt melancholy and address the isolation of the modern individual in the midst of natural and urban landscapes. Wong only became better known shortly before his tragic suicide in 2019.

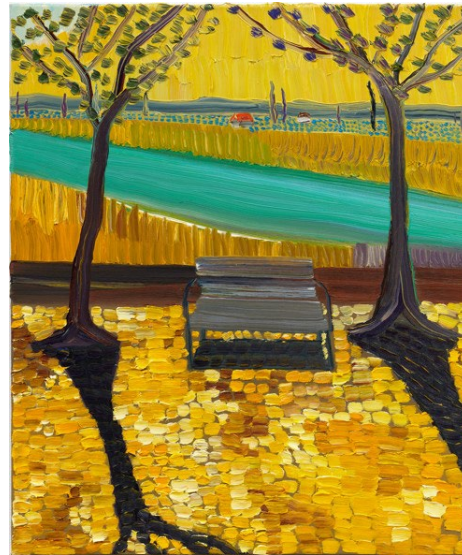
The exhibition at the ALBERTINA Museum is being organized in collaboration with the Matthew Wong Foundation, the Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam and the Kunsthaus Zürich. It presents a dialogue of around 60 paintings and numerous works on paper by Wong and selected works by Van Gogh.

# Press Images

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Matthew Wong  
End of the Day, 2019  
Oil on canvas  
200 × 180 cm  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of  
Monita and Raymond Wong in memory of their son,  
Matthew Wong, 2023  
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2024, Cheim & Read, New York, Foto: Alex Yudzon



Matthew Wong  
The Space Between Trees, 2019  
Oil on canvas  
60 × 50 cm  
Collection of Judith and Danny Tobey  
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Vienna 2024



Vincent van Gogh  
Field with Irises near Arles, 1888  
Oil on canvas  
55 × 65 cm  
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