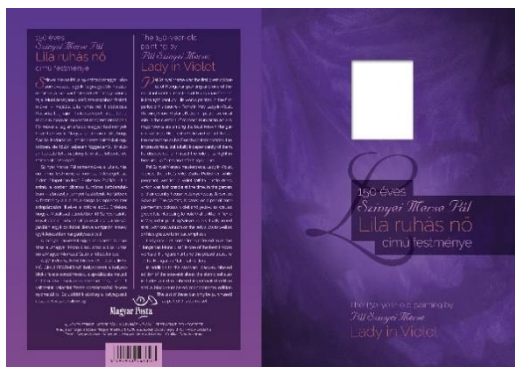


## THE 150-YEAR-OLD PAINTING BY PÁL SZINYEI MERSE: LADY IN VIOLET



Magyar Posta is commemorating the 150th anniversary of the completion of Pál Szinyei Merse's masterpiece, *Lady in Violet*, by issuing a special souvenir sheet. The special souvenir sheet and the associated philatelic products were designed by the graphic artist Imre Benedek. The souvenir sheet was produced by Pénzjegynyomda Zrt. The new issue goes on sale at Filaposta, philately specialist services, certain post offices and [www.posta.hu](http://www.posta.hu) from 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Pál Szinyei Merse (1845-1920) was a ground-breaking, pioneering figure of 19th century Hungarian fine art, the first colourist of Hungarian plein air painting, who – only having heard of the Impressionists' approach, but similarly to them – was the first in Hungary to use complementary colours to achieve an intensification of hues and to represent light values with luminance, thus taking the first steps in the creation of modern Hungarian painting. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich until 1869, when seeing an exhibition of Gustave Courbet's modern style of painting which challenged the principles of academic art prompted him to leave the Academy. The immediacy, individual voice and rich colouring of his art became evident even in his early works. In 1872, his friendship with the Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin also drew him towards a vibrant use of colour. He considered Böcklin's method of painting at twilight, i.e. without shadows, to be his model.

*Lady in Violet* is a painterly representation of the artist's wife, idealised in the manner of Böcklin. At first, the "Hungarian Mona Lisa" did not meet with universal approval, being criticised in the art world for having been painted in a studio. However, according to Szinyei, when it was first shown in Berlin in 1910, the portrait was compared to "a good Manet", which was a tremendous compliment. His wife, Zsófia Probstner, who was pregnant at the time, was depicted in the garden of their country house in Jernye (today Jarovnice, Slovakia), wearing a taffeta bustle dress, which was fashionable at the time and Zsófia had sewn herself. Today, *Lady in Violet* has become one of the most popular Hungarian paintings.

In addition to the standard, black-numbered edition, a red-numbered imperforated edition of the souvenir sheet and an exclusive stamp set are being issued. Alongside the two editions of the souvenir sheet, the stamp set also contains a monochrome version, which may only be purchased as part of the set and may not be used to pay for postage. The souvenir sheets and the monochrome print in the set are protected in mounts.

**Order code:**

2024200030011 (souvenir sheet)

2024200060012 (FDC)

2024201030013 (imperforated souvenir sheet)

2024202030011 (set)

**Issued on:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024**Face value:** HUF 2,300*(On the date of issue, this can be used as a supplementary denomination.)* / Selling price of the stamp set: 8,500 HUF.**Printing method:** offset**Number of copies:** 40,000 black-numbered souvenir sheets:

6,000 red-numbered imperforated souvenir sheets. The sets are compiled of sheets that have identical numbers ranging from 1 to 2,000. 2,000 copies of the monochrome print were produced. This is only available as part of the set.

**Imperforated size of the souvenir sheet:**

56 x 75 mm

**Perforated size of the stamp within the sheet:** 30 x 40 mm**Paper type:** White, wood-free, surface-treated, gummed stamp paper with optical whitener**Printed by** Pénzjegynyomda Zrt. (souvenir sheet), Codex Zrt. (cover), Pátria Zrt. (set)**Source:** Museum of Fine Arts – Hungarian National Gallery**Designed by** Imre BenedekINFORMATION: [belyeg@posta.hu](mailto:belyeg@posta.hu)ORDERS: Tel.: (+36 1) 318-3363 • [philately@posta.hu](mailto:philately@posta.hu) • [www.posta.hu](http://www.posta.hu)