Ancient Shores and Distant Peaks

Date
About 1770

Primary Maker
Ike Taiga

Medium
Ink on paper

Description
Ike Taiga and Yosa Buson (1716-83) were the most sophisticated, and eclectic second-generation Nanga school artists. They honored, as well as creatively reinterpreted, Chinese literati painting traditions to suit Japanese taste. Taiga became a paragon of eccentric literati-artists by often exhibiting an otherworldly disregard for convention. The inscription 'Ancient Shores and Distant Peaks' (Kogan yoshin) not only describes the subject of the painting but also playfully hints at its contrasting artistic techniques. The painting pays homage to the Chinese artist Ni Zan (1301-74) whose elegant, austere works often showed a foreground shore with a pavilion and a cluster of trees, with an expanse of water in the middle ground and a landmass in the distance. However Taiga also added peaks in the far distance using the eccentric finger painting technique, topped off by daringly artful, awkward calligraphy. Taiga was a skilled seal-carver and used as many as 115 known seals. He created the seal 'Pilgrim of the Three Peaks' (lower left seal) to commemorate having climbed the Fuji, Tateyama and Hakusan mountains in 1749.

Dimensions
129 x 28 cm (50 13/16 x 11 in.)