

Painted Lotus



Thailand and its painting



Information sheet no. 2

Welcome! We hope you find reading this information sheet helpful. We know our artists work are beautiful, and we want you to understand a little about why their art may feel as peaceful and serene as it does.

Background

As the only Southeast Asian country that's never been colonized by a foreign power, Thais have a strong sense of their own identity, and that it is multiple, built up over the hundreds of years of the Siam Kingdom.

Within their own country, there are regional cultural differences, for example, the introduction of Islam into an overwhelmingly Buddhist culture in the south.

Fun facts from Thailand



1st and 16th day of each month is lucky day for Thais – it is when the national lottery is drawn



Thai people really do like karaoke and they love their muay Thai – boxing!



Contact us for more information at:
 E: info@paintedlotus.biz
 M: +61418219407
 P: +6195718727



Art in Thailand has had many influences - its strong Buddhist culture, European masters, and in recent times, pre-eminence as a tourist destination for many Europeans, Americans & Aussies.

About 75% of the population is ethnic Thais, predominantly Buddhist, with a number of cultural subgroups with their own dialect, regionally based. People of Chinese ancestry are 14% of the population, and fill the shopkeeper niche in southern Thailand. The 2nd largest minority ethnic group living in Thailand is Muslims of Malay origin (4%).



result of the influence of westerners in the southern part of Thailand, as well as the role that northern Thailand played in the history of Thailand).

Painting history of Thailand

Theravada Buddhism is the version of Buddhism practiced by the majority of Thais, and this practice translates into a belief that every individual is responsible for their own enlightenment. There is no specific day of worship for Buddhists; instead, the faithful go to temple on certain religious holidays, when it is convenient or to commemorate a special family event

Except for prehistoric and cave paintings found in the south of the country, not much ancient formal painting exists, partly due to the devastating Burmese invasion of 1767.

Book illustrations, temple and palace interiors are where classical Thai painting, as we often think of, began. Convention perspective was ignored, shadows were unknown and space was neutral rather than atmospheric.

The regional cultural differences become evident when one sees paintings from the north and south of Thailand. The north still continues to produce painters in the classical Thai tradition, while the south, with the influence of tourism, produces painters with a European master painter tradition (this may be the



Abstract expressionism, popular with the younger generation of Thai painters, using the Thai sense of complementary colours

Depending on their importance, figures in the paintings were either large or small. Depictions of Buddhist heaven and hells, Jataka stories, episodes from Buddha's life and scenes from contemporary Thai life are the subject domain of classic Thai paintings. This influence can still be seen today in many contemporary Thai paintings.

The traditional Thai painter uses five primary pigments. These colors, scarlet red, yellow ochre, ultramarine blue, pipe-clay white and pot-black, were used to produce many other colors. During the Bangkok period, pigments were imported from China, thus making colors richer. Chemical pigments and Western perspective were brought into use during the middle of the 19th century. The rise of the watercolour painting by Thai artists is representative of this integration, similarly their experimentation with pure abstract art and expressionism in the late 20th century.

This capacity to adapt new techniques or perspectives has changed much of Thai painting, and in recent times, Thai artists have taken the influences of texture and incorporated them with more contemporary Thai work.

Modern Art in Thailand

When Thai modern art started is often debated, but most art historians say that it began around 1924, when Corrado Feroci, an Italian sculptor was invited to Thailand by King Rama VI (1910-1925). He produced bronze statues of the exploits of Thailand's past heroes. In 1933, one year after the Revolution, which established a constitutional

monarchy, Feroci was asked to establish an institute of fine arts within the department of Fine Arts. The purpose of this new school was to instruct a new generation of sculptors and painters in modern art.

Feroci devoted his energies up to the time of his death in 1962 to this purpose. The school was eventually elevated to the status of a university and changed its name to Silpakorn (Fine Arts) University. Feroci's own name was changed to be Silpa Bhirasri, the name by which he is known today. Silpa Bhirasri is regarded as the Father of Modern Art in Thailand. With the introduction of modern art techniques, Thai painters began experimenting with Impressionism and to a lesser extent, Cubism. Thai painters had an initial tendency to choose nature themes or depicted rural scenes, usually devoid of people. In subsequent times as the country has become more developed, this has influenced this approach, and more often, you will see abstract images drawn from city life, but still devoid of people. Angkarn Kalayanapongsa, Misiem Yipintsoi and Tawan Duchanee led Thai modern art into different forms of art than seen in Thailand to that time. Some of Tawan and Prateung Emjaroen's works displayed Buddhist themes rendered in exquisite detail. One of the outstanding Thai artists of this later period was Chakrabhand Posayakri, a portraitist interpreting classical themes in soft colors. Another highly regarded Thai artist of this period who excelled in realistic depictions of Thai scenes was Acharn Saard. His paintings, which are primarily in oils, offer a richness of color and a realistic depth of presentation which few Thai artists before or since have equaled.