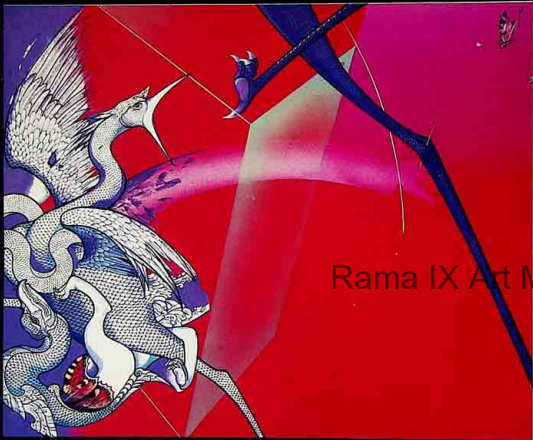


Pichai Lertsuwanasri
watta, Tempera
80 cm x 100 cm



HONG KONG ARTS CENTRE
14 JUNE - 1 JULY 1984



Panya Vjonthanasarn
Attack. Acrylic, 70 cm x 90 cm

From Cover Chalermschai Kositpipat
Meditation Place. Pastel, 48 cm x 57 cm

THAILAND'S NEW TRADITIONALIST PAINTERS

Hong Kong Arts Centre 14 June - 1 July 1984

Rama IX Art Museum Foundation

Sponsored by the Sophonpanich Foundation

Organised by the Hong Kong Arts Centre and the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Bangkok

INTRODUCTION

There are eleven Thai artists showing their works in this exhibition. They come from different backgrounds and generations (ages range from early twenties to mid-fifties). They have one thing in common however, in that they are working in participation with the latest movement in the Thai contemporary art scene : the coming back, or the new acceptability of Thai Traditional values and culture as themes for contemporary art.

This New Traditionalist movement has caught the Thai public attention in the last few years, and, coming after so much abstract art, it could be said to be a reaction to it. Instead of following the international trend of going 'figurative' in movements such as Neo and Photo-Realism, Thai artists have been able to come up with their own answer to these. This seems a surprising, and gratifying development, considering that Modern Art in Thailand has been synonymous with Western Art for some decades. The tradition of Thai mural painting has been relegated by 'serious' painters, and has been seen by them on the one hand as the domain of conservationists and on the other as a medium of interest for tourists. Thus it is incredible to see how the New Traditionalists have moved almost centrestage into the Thai contemporary art scene.

The New Traditionalists of course cannot possibly claim a first in what they are doing. There have been tensions between traditional Art and Western Art and there have been attempts at synthesis by quite a few Thai painters in the last 50 years or so of the Modern Art period in Thailand. The New Traditionalist movement one could say, is another manifestation of such tensions, but possibly as a movement, better organised and supported.

Perhaps here it is necessary to say something about the background of modern art in Thailand. Its introduction from the West is as much as anything the result of the deliberate westernisation of the country since the second half of the Nineteenth Century. The 1920's and 30's saw an extensive programme of building public edifices, monuments and avenues, along the Western model. Many foreign architects, engineers, painters and sculptors were employed to design and supervise the projects. An Italian sculptor, Corrado Feroci, set up a bronze-casting workshop to cast the now numerous public statues in Bangkok and other cities. Feroci, later to change his name to Silpa Bhirasri and become a Thai citizen, founded a school of art in 1938 which became the Silpakorn University ten years later. The Silpakorn has been training Thai artists along the western line, as opposed to the traditional Thai way of organising apprenticeship according to the ten recognised crafts. Bhirasri, a most open-minded and generous man, oversaw the training of the earlier generations of artists. Although he opened the door of immense possibility and freedom of Modern Western Art to his students, he did not neglect the fact that they must also learn about their own traditional art.

A recent move to bring Thai traditional culture into the contemporary art world was made from a surprising, but effective quarter in the form of the patronage of a major bank. The Bangkok Bank organised its first Bua Luang Art Competition for the promotion of Thai traditional art in December 1974 at the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art. Perhaps in response to this, the Silpakorn Painting School set up its Thai Traditional Art Department in 1976. Its students have since then been spearheading the New Traditionalist movement.

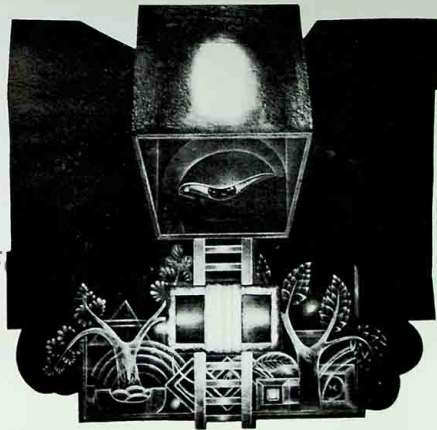
It should be noted that the New Traditionalists do not carry on the traditional Thai mural style. Certain aspects are however, taken from it, and each may be given a new emphasis by the artists. Thus the arabesque design used by Panbanlam for his abstract composition; the drawing technique of Chalermchai; the borrowing of secondary elements, such as mythical animals, by Lertsuwanasri; the tempera technique used by many. Others discover the source of inspiration in old values and beliefs : astrology, animistic belief, Buddhist themes both philosophical and ceremonial. Secular literary sources and traditional folk art are just beginning to be explored. Also included in the exhibition are works by Promindr, a genuine 'local' painter from the northern town of Chiangrai. The inclusions of his works in the exhibition can be seen as an attempt by the Traditionalists at coming to terms with other existing traditional artists. Included in the show for a very different reason is an artist of the Abstract generation, Thaotong, who regards his works as abstract patterns, though he uses Thai motifs.

The New Traditionalist's work is thus a number of things at once : a change in art style, a reaction to Western Art. On the broader, cultural perspective, it makes a rare achievement by letting traditional values come alive for the younger generation, and winning a lot larger audience for itself. For the artists themselves working within their own cultural milieu, they have never been on firmer ground.

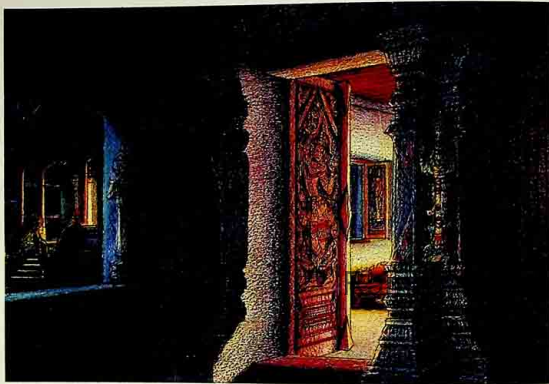
Chatvichai Promadhattavedi
Director
Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art



Chalermchai Kosipipat
The Nun. Tempera on rice paper, 80 cm x 80 cm

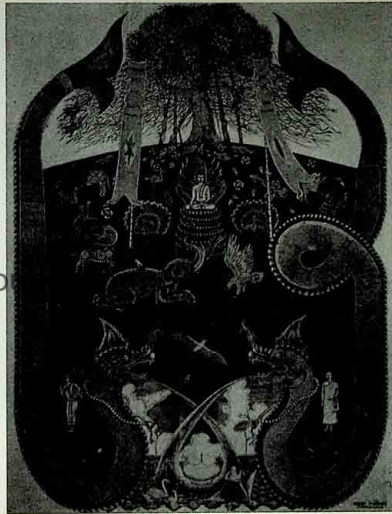


Panya Vijinthanasarn
Tree & Eye. Etching, Mezzotint, 41 cm x 51 cm

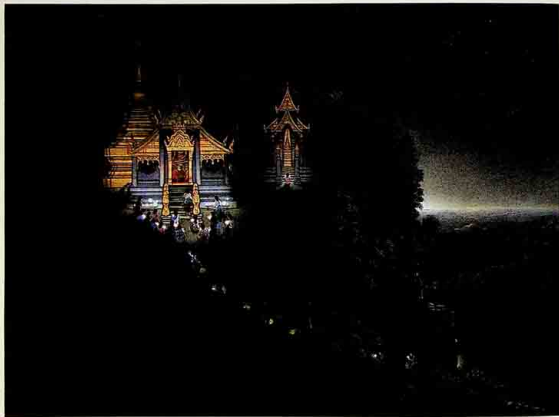


Surasit Saouakang
Peace. Coloured pencil drawing, 43 cm x 54 cm

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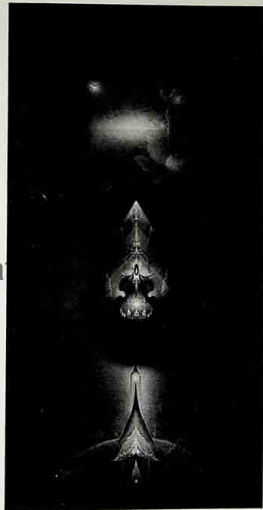


Plack Kijuangfoo
Buddha. Ink drawing, 105 cm x 81 cm



Somyot Trisanee
Candle Light Procession. Tempera, 180 cm x 150 cm

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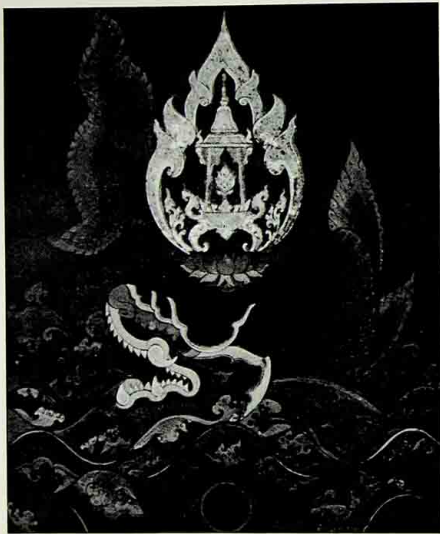
Samart Thongsom
Paradise. Mixed Media, 73 cm x 132 cm



Preecha Thaotthong
Painting 200th Anniversary. Acrylic, 150 cm x 170 cm



Wancharoen Japakang
Imagination. Wood, 106 cm x 164 cm



Pichai Lertsuwannasri
Fish 2 Aquatint, 63 cm x 80 cm



Sommai Panbanlam
Birth. Tempera, 90 cm x 100 cm



Chamras Promindr
Northern House. Oil, 91 cm x 149 cm



Chamras Promindr
Celebration in the North. Oil, 125 cm x 185 cm

BIOGRAPHIES

CHALERMCHAI KOSITPIPAT

BORN

: 15 February 1954

EDUCATION

: Poh-Chang College.
Fine Art Department, Silpakorn University.

EXHIBITIONS

: 1979 President Hotel, Bangkok.
1980 Lionel Wendi Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.
Montien Hotel.
1981 Two-man Show at Luneburg and Travemunde, West Germany.

PARTICIPATED IN

: The National Exhibition of Art.
The Bualuang Art Exhibition, Bangkok Bank.
The Exhibition of Art, Thai Farmers Bank.
Asian Art Exhibition in ASEAN and JAPAN.
Exhibition of Thai Contemporary Art.
Rochester, New York, U.S.A.
Asian Art Exhibition in Bangladesh, Decca

PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1976 : Award in stamps design competition and poster design
Tourist Organization of Thailand.
1977 : Award in Mother's Day Competition.
1978 : 1st Prize for 3rd Bualuang Art Exhibition, Bangkok Bank.
3rd Prize for National Art Exhibition.
1979 : 2nd Prize for 4th Bualuang Art Exhibition, Bangkok Bank.
1980 : Granted a stay in Colombo, by the Contemporary Art group of Ceylon.
1981 : Granted a stay and a scholarship by Johannes Schultz-Tesmar in the Federal Republic of Germany and received a British Council invitation to England.

CONCEPT

: The artist wishes to reveal through the visual means the blissful state of mind obtained through meditation and the study of the Buddhist doctrine Dhamma. To share with the spectators the world of serenity and tranquility depicted in his paintings.

PREECHA THAOTHONG

BORN

: 1948

PLACE

: Bangkok, Thailand

EDUCATION

: B.F.A. Hons. Painting, Silpakorn University
M.F.A. Painting, Silpakorn University

OFFICE

: The Faculty of Painting Sculpture and Graphic Art Silpakorn University

EXHIBITION

1971 - 20th, National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
1972 - 21th, National Exhibition of Art Bangkok
- 2nd Contemporary Thai Artists, Copenhagen, Denmark
1973 - Bangkok Arts Festival '73 Bangkok, Thailand
1974 - 22th, National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
- 1st, Bua Luang Art Exhibition, Bangkok, Thailand
- Asean Art Exhibition, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippine, Thailand
- 1st, Anniversary the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art Bangkok
1975 - 23th, National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
- 2nd, Anniversary the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Bangkok
1976 - 3rd, Anniversary the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Bangkok
- The Bangkok, Metropolitan Bank Art Exhibition Bangkok
- Contemporary Art of Thailand At Cologne, Munich Berlin, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Frankfurt west Germany
1977 - 1st Art Exhibition by The Members of The Faculty of Painting Sculpture and Graphic Art Bangkok
- 1st Art Exhibition "Silpakorn 20" Group, Bangkok
1978 - Singapore Festival of Art 1978, Singapore
1979 - One Man Show, The Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art, Bangkok
- One Man Show, At President Hotel, Bangkok
- Contemporary Art Competition 1979, Bangkok
1980 - 26th National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
- Contemporary Art Competition 1980, Bangkok
- Asean Exhibition of Painting And Photograph Jakarta and Bali, Indonesia
- Singapore Festival of Arts, Singapore
1981 - Exhibition of Thai Contemporary Art Selected for the Festival of Contemporary Asian Art 1980 in Fukuoka, Japan
- Contemporary Art Competition 1981

- Asean Exhibition of Painting, Graphic Arts and Photography, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Philippines.
- 10th Annual Festival of Arts, Singapore
- Asian Contemporary Art in Bangladesh
1982 - 28th National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok

AWARDS

1971 - Won the Prize Art Exhibition of Christian Center Student, Bangkok
1974 - 2nd Prize Painting, 22th National Exhibition of Art Bangkok
1975 - 1st Prize, Painting, 23th National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
- 3rd Prize Bua Luang Art Exhibition, Bangkok
1976 - 3rd Prize Bangkok Metropolitan Bank Art Exhibition, Bangkok
1977 - 1st Prize Painting, 24th National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
3rd Prize Bua Luang Art Exhibition, Bangkok
1979 - 1st Prize Painting, 25th National Exhibition of Art, Bangkok
1979 - Grand Prize, Contemporary Art Competition 1979, Bangkok

PANYA VIJINTHANASARN

BORN

: 25 May 1956, Prachuab-Khi-ri-khan

EDUCATION

: B.F.A. Silpakorn University.

EXHIBITION

: Exhibition of Art in Chiangmai and Bangkok
Bualuang Art Exhibition III; IV Sponsored by Bangkok Bangkok, 1977.
National Exhibition of Art 25th, 26th 1978, 1979
Contemporary Art Competition 1979, 1980
Exhibition of Christian Centre Student 1979
2nd Painting Group Exhibition
1st Art Exhibition of Thailand
1980 Thai Artist Exhibition
Art Exhibition at the Oriental Hotel 1981
An exhibition of Thai Contemporary Art at TISCO 1981
Theses Exhibition, National Library 1979
Asian Contemporary Art Exhibition in Bangladesh 1981
Asian Contemporary Art Exhibition in Japan 1980
Art Exhibition in Perth, WA.
Asian Group Art Exhibition in Indonesia 1980
Slade Summer Show in London, 1983
Christie's Gallery Art Exhibition, 1983