

Ancient Art in Thailand

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Introduction

Aside from the prehistoric age, the ancient art of Thailand is primarily religious in nature. Sculptures of Hindu and Buddhist deities have been unearthed in the region, dated from as early as the 4th or 5th century AD. Although they originated from India or Sri Lanka, Thailand's indigenous people like the Mons and Khmers also developed their own localised art styles as well, from the 7th century onward. The different types of styles were named after the concurrent occupying forces in the area, for example the Dvaravati, Khmer-Lopburi, Sukhothai and Ayutthayan kingdoms. Thai ancient art includes mural and manuscript painting, temple architecture, ceramics, coins and sculpture.

This pathfinder serves as a guide to help you to source for information on ancient art and architecture in Thailand available at National Library Board libraries as well as on the Internet.

Search Terms and Call Numbers

For library materials, a corresponding Call Number is given for every search term. These Call Numbers are assigned based on the Dewey Decimal Classification system, which the library uses to categorise its books. Below is a selective list of subject headings that can be found in our catalogue that will help you locate materials on this topic:

| Search Terms | Call Numbers |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Art, Thai | 709.593 |
| Sculpture, Thai | 730.9593 |
| Painting, Thai | 759.9593 |
| Architecture Thailand | 720.9593 |

Books

You can use the search-terms listed above to search for library materials at our Web Catalogue, which is accessible at <http://vistaweb.nlb.gov.sg>. Listed below are some recommended works to help you begin your research. These are available in the National Library Board's network of libraries.

Title: **Art from Thailand**
Author: Brown, Robert L.
Publisher: Mumbai: Published for Marg Publications on behalf of National Centre for the Performing Arts, 1999.
Call number: RSEA q709.593 ART
Description: *A collection of scholarly essays on Thai art - sculpture, architecture and lesser-known artefacts such as coins, ceramics and votive tablets.*

Title: **Origins of Thai Art**
Author: Gosling, Betty
Publisher: Bangkok: River Books, 2004.
Call number: RSEA 709.593 GOS
Description: *A comprehensive study of Thai art history from the Neolithic period to the 13th century.*

Title: **Thai Ceramics: The James and Elaine Connell Collection**
Author: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
Publisher: Kuala Lumpur, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
Call number: RART 738.09591 THA
Description: *A catalogue and study of Thai ceramics in the notable collection of James and Elaine Connell, with scholarly articles on the ceramics of North & Central Thailand, and trade wares excavated from shipwrecks.*

Title: **Thai Images of the Buddha**
Author: Buribhand, Luang Bonbal, and A.B. Griswold
Publisher: Bangkok, Thailand: Promotion and Public Relations Sub-Divisions, Fine Arts Dept., 1990
Call number: RART 730.9593 BOR
Description: *A concise introduction to the different styles of Buddha images in Thailand - their iconography, styles and motifs.*

Title: **Thai Manuscript Painting**
Author: Ginsburg, Henry
Publisher: London: British Library, 1989.
Call number: RART 745.6709593 GIN
Description: *An overview of manuscript painting in Thailand based on surviving examples from the 17th century to the present, with a discussion on their themes, narratives and styles.*

Title: **Thai Temples and Temple Murals**
Author: Ringis, Rita
Publisher: Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Call number: RSING q726.14309593 RIN
Description: *A survey of the religious concepts influencing the traditions and themes of Thai architecture and painting.*

Title: **The Arts of Thailand**
Author: Van Beek, Steve
Publisher: Hong Kong: Periplus, 1999.
Call number: RART 709.593 VAN
Description : *A vast and introductory survey of the arts of Thailand - mainly its architecture, sculpture and painting from prehistory to the present.*

Title: **The Sacred Sculpture of Thailand**
Author: Woodward, Hiram
Publisher: London: Thames and Hudson, 1997.
Call number: RART 730.9593 WOO
Description: *An overview of the religious sculpture of Thailand from the 7th to 18th centuries, based on the comprehensive collection of American scholar Alexander B. Griswold.*

Journals

Title: **Arts of Asia**
Publisher: Kowloon, Hong Kong: Arts of Asia Publications, 1971-
Call number: RART 709.5 AA
URL: <http://www.artsofasianet.com>
Description: *Contains scholarly articles on Asian art and antiques.*

Title: **Asian Art News.**
Publisher: Wanchai, Hong Kong: Asian Art News, 1991-
Call number: RART 709.505 AAN
URL: <http://www.asianartnews.com/volume.htm>
Description: *Covers contemporary and ancient art of Asia, with reviews of art events.*

Databases

Grove Art Online

Grove Art Online provides web access to the entire text of *The Dictionary of Art* (1996, 34 vols.) and *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* (2001). It offers ongoing additions of new and updated articles, over 1,500 thumbnail art images and line drawings displayed in the text of articles, extensive image links, and sophisticated search and navigation tools. This database is available from the multimedia stations in the libraries.

Xreferplus

Xreferplus is an online reference library that provides you with access to the full text of a selection of reference books. Xreferplus includes encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauri and books of quotations, plus a range of subject-specific titles covering everything from art to accountancy and literature to law. This database is available from the multimedia stations in the libraries.

Art Full Text and Art Index Retrospective

Art Full Text contains abstracts, indexes and the full text of articles from art periodicals worldwide. Subjects covered include architecture, art history, advertising and graphic arts, costume and photography – from the Americas, Europe, Asia and other non-Western regions. Art Index Retrospective offers art-related articles found in museum bulletins, periodicals and selected yearbooks, from 1929-1984. These databases are available from the multimedia stations in the libraries.

Websites

There are a number of useful resources about ancient art in Thailand available on the Internet. This list includes selected website resources to assist you in further in-depth research on your own. The list was last accessed on 10 May 2005.

- Title:* **Asian Arts**
URL: <http://www.asianart.com/index.html>
Description: *A forum for the arts of Asia, the website offers articles by scholars on recent discoveries in ancient art. It also offers on-line museum and gallery exhibitions.*
- Title:* **Asian Historical Architecture**
URL: <http://www.orientalarchitecture.com/>
Description: *This website offers colour photographs, virtual tours and background information about ancient architecture across Asia, including Thailand, with maps of the different sites.*
- Title:* **The Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art**
URL: <http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/>
Description: *This digital information system includes 30,000 photographs of art and architecture across Asia, and a visual encyclopaedia of Buddhist iconography.*
- Title:* **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**
URL: <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/>
Description: *An online catalogue of artworks in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Includes an extensive collection of Southeast Asian artefacts, with a section on Thai art.*
- Title:* **Thai Antiques**
URL: <http://www.thaiantiques.info/>
Description: *A collector's website which gives a detailed overview of the history of Thai ceramics, especially of the Sukhothai era.*
- Title:* **Thai Arts**
URL: http://sunsite.au.ac.th/thailand/Thai_Arts/index.html
Description: *Contains a concise summary of the development of the arts in Thailand, from sculpture, to mural and oil painting, pottery, architecture, lacquerware, and more.*
- Title:* **Thailand: The Making of a Nation**
URL: http://www.escati.com/making_of_a_nation.htm
Description: *A website documenting the history of Thailand, from prehistoric times to the current age, with a short summary of art styles during the Sukhothai period.*

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For further assistance, please ask the Librarian.

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