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| **Pongdam, Prayat (1934 — 2014)** |
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| Deemed a National Artist in 1998, Prayat Pongdam was a Thai printmaker. Pongdam’s studies in painting began while working with Dr. Silpa Bhirasri. Pongdam continued his education at the Academia Di Belle Arti Di Roma in Italy in 1961. Upon returning to Thailand, he regularly created paintings and prints, and was among the first in a group of Thai artist to introduce printmaking techniques to the public. He was declared an artist of distinction for his printmaking in 1981, and was awarded the title Academico Onorario Classe Incisione from the Italian government through the L’Accademia Florentina delle Arte del Disegno. His artworks explored ideas of nature, ways of life, and the Thai rural spirit through simple human and animal symbols expressing themes of warmth, affection, and love. Usually foregrounding his paintings with animal subjects, his backgrounds consisted of landscapes such as temples, churches, vihara, heritage sites, local villages, fields of rice, gardens, and forests. Prayat harmonised these themes and techniques within the unique character of his woodcut techniques. Using line, colour, and composition, Prayat blended plainness, purity and sincerity with nature, religion, and the folk cultures of rural societies. |
| Deemed a National Artist in 1998, Prayat Pongdam was a Thai printmaker. Pongdam’s studies in painting began while working with Dr. Silpa Bhirasri. Pongdam continued his education at the Academia Di Belle Arti Di Roma in Italy in 1961. Upon returning to Thailand, he regularly created paintings and prints, and was among the first in a group of Thai artist to introduce printmaking techniques to the public. He was declared an artist of distinction for his printmaking in 1981, and was awarded the title Academico Onorario Classe Incisione from the Italian government through the L’Accademia Florentina delle Arte del Disegno. His artworks explored ideas of nature, ways of life, and the Thai rural spirit through simple human and animal symbols expressing themes of warmth, affection, and love. Usually foregrounding his paintings with animal subjects, his backgrounds consisted of landscapes such as temples, churches, vihara, heritage sites, local villages, fields of rice, gardens, and forests. Prayat harmonised these themes and techniques within the unique character of his woodcut techniques. Using line, colour, and composition, Prayat blended plainness, purity and sincerity with nature, religion, and the folk cultures of rural societies.  Image: rooster.jpg  Figure 1 Prayat Pongdam, *The Morning*, 1981, woodcut, 60 x 80 cm, Collection of Experty Holding Co., Ltd.  http://www.rama9art.org/artisan/6decade/work/decade4/w4\_35.jpg  Prayat is known for his use of animal figures. His works frequently featured animals related to rural Thai existence, including horses, cats, birds, hens, geckos, bats, and owls. His animal characters display a range of emotions and characteristics including happiness, enjoyment, or horror as they move or gaze at the viewer. In his later works, Prayat projected human characteristics onto his animal subjects, often arranging them to resemble a close-knit family. Most of his artworks are set at dawn, evening, and/or twilight. Using rollers with various soft and dark colours, Prayat frequently created atmospheres of soft sunlight on a dark sky.  The animal figures in his prints often reflect the peace and warmth of family. Prayat consistently utilised symbols of Thai traditional identity in his work, including folk costumes, architectural structures, Thai traditional patterns, daily equipment, water jars, and northern weaving clothes. Reflecting the influence of Eastern art on his works, Prayat often incorporated collages of golden leaves into his printmaking. |
| Further reading:  (Hi-Class Magazine)  (Phongdam)  (Mukdamanee) |