



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Animal Art: Styles, Beliefs and Relationship in Luang Prabang Community

Wilawan Dasee^{1*}, Burin Plengdeesakul², Preechawut Apirating³

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Khon Kaen University, Muang district, Khon Kaen, Thailand 40002

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Nov 19, 2024	<p>The research "Animal Art: Styles, Beliefs, and Relationships in the Luang Prabang Community" examines the development, styles, beliefs, and community relationships surrounding animal art in Luang Prabang. This research employs a qualitative methodology to collect data from relevant documents, field studies, and interviews with experts, practitioners, and Relevant parties in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. The data are analyzed using theoretical frameworks and presented through descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that the development of animal art in Luang Prabang has evolved over different periods and has been influenced by political, religious, and cultural factors, as well as business dynamics. Some specific animals were traditionally associated with religious spaces but are now frequently used in other contexts, such as home decoration and tourism products. Regarding artistic styles, animal art in Luang Prabang features 2D and 3D characteristics. The techniques employed include Hooptam (mural paintings), Lai Fok Kham (gold stenciling), stained glass imagery, wood carving, and stucco sculpture. Materials used in these artworks encompass stucco, wood, gold or black lacquer, natural pigments, and powder pigments. The animal representations include common and mythical creatures primarily created by local craftsmen. In terms of beliefs, animal art reflects both Buddhist religious beliefs and local community beliefs. The religious elements are primarily influenced by Buddhism, Brahmin-Hinduism, and Theravada Buddhism, shaped by various cultural influences such as Indian, Chinese, Lanna, Traiphum cosmology, and Buddhist history. Community beliefs encompass ancestors' worship, Naga beliefs, Phaya Thaen beliefs, and the legends of Pu Yer Ya Yer, which have been integrated into individual beliefs, resulting in enduring traditions. The study also examined community relationships in Luang Prabang, revealing that animal art serves various spatial purposes as decorative elements, guardian figures, city symbols, and enhancements to the landscape. Socially, it plays a role in merit-making ceremonies and processions and acts as a medium for community activities. Ideologically, the people of Luang Prabang regard animals as ancestors, city guardians, Mekong River's protectors, rain and sustenance providers, and guardians of the city and life itself.</p>
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*Corresponding Author:	
Wilawan.d@kkumail.com	

INTRODUCTION

Luang Prabang is an important city in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Historically, the capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom boasts a rich and extensive history. The city has been known by various names, including Xieng Dong Xieng Thong, Sri Satanakhananhut Lan Xang, Muang Xava Mala Prathet, Muang Xava Sing, Luang Prabang Sing, Muang Sing, as well as Lan Xang and Lan Xang Rom Khao Luang Prabang. It served as a thriving center for both trade and cultural artistry. The early historical accounts are primarily based on legends, chronicles, and folktales, often intertwined with stories of the supernatural powers of Phaya Thaen. Luang Prabang has been a city of religious prosperity and Buddhism. As the former capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom, it has a deep-rooted connection between

Buddhism and its people, which has fostered beautiful lifestyles and traditions that reflect its historical elegance (Woralak Boonyasurat, 2012). For generations, Buddhism has been the spiritual foundation for local residents. While modern lifestyles have evolved, the community continues to uphold strong Buddhist beliefs, which is evident in the numerous temples that serve as spiritual centers and educational institutions. Although many temples have suffered damage from the war of conflict, the city remains dedicated to restoring and preserving the beauty of its temples and traditional customs. In 1995, Luang Prabang was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its cultural significance. This recognition has encouraged the preservation of traditional artistic works, especially animal art, which showcases unique beauty and reflects deeply rooted beliefs and faith.

Animals have long been intertwined with human life, inspiring human imagination. The relationship between humans and animals has led to the creation of art that transforms imagination into reality (Paweena Ueanomjitkul, 2010). In Luang Prabang, animal art draws from the animals present in everyday life, as well as from religious and communal beliefs. These animals are often transformed into various artistic forms and incorporated into religious expressions, appearing in sacred spaces and significant locations. The primary purpose of these artistic representations is to convey stories. These expressions infiltrate and influence community lifestyles in Luang Prabang, where religion and beliefs are central to people's lives. Therefore, the study of animal art examines the roles of these artistic expressions in terms of style, beliefs, historical and contemporary narratives, and the enduring relationship between animals and the people of Luang Prabang.

Based on this background, this research explores animal art development, styles, beliefs, and community relationships in Luang Prabang to understand how the development of animal art, its forms, beliefs, and community relationships have evolved and maintained their significance within the community in the context of being a World Heritage city.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 To study the development of animal art in Luang Prabang

2.2 To study the styles, beliefs, and community relationships of animal art in Luang Prabang

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research on "Animal Art: Development, Styles, Beliefs, and Relationships in the Luang Prabang Community" employs a qualitative approach that includes documentary research, a review of relevant literature, and field data collection. The researcher specifically selected target areas, which are: 1. Temple Areas which were selected based on their construction during politically significant periods, historical importance, and current active usage. These temples include: 1. Wat Xieng Thong, 2. Wat Wisunarat, 3. Wat Pa Huak, 4. Wat Pa Khe (Siphouthabab), 5. Wat Sen Sou Kharam, 6. Wat Phon Chai Songkhram, 7. Wat Aham, 8. Wat Manorum, 9. Wat Si Mongkhon, and 10. Wat Long Khoun. Additional research areas included 2. residential neighborhoods, 3. public spaces, and 4. government buildings.

The study focused on three main groups of informants. The key informants included academics, provincial leaders, community leaders, experts, and local scholars through a specific selection process for four Lao cultural academics. The casual informants consisted of four craftsmen: a sculptor, a painter, a gold stencil artist, and others. The general informants included ten local residents and tourists from the research area.

The researcher gathered data through document analysis, which involved reviewing relevant concepts, theories, and research documents. For field data collection, various tools were utilized, including preliminary survey forms to assess the general conditions and physical geography of the research areas, non-participant observation forms, structured interviews with practitioners and related parties, and unstructured interviews with key informants. All the collected data was categorized and summarized to meet the research objectives. A methodological triangulation approach was employed to verify and validate the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. The data analysis aligned with the research objectives, using cultural diffusion and symbolic interaction theories to draw conclusions and explain the findings.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

This research focused on two main aspects:

1. The development of animal art in Luang Prabang
2. The styles, beliefs, and community relationships associated with animal art in Luang Prabang.

The details are as follows:

4.1 Development of animal art in Luang Prabang

The study of the development of animal art in Luang Prabang combined research from historical documents and evidence with field surveys, interviews with local experts, and insights from Thai academics. The collected data was analyzed to understand the evolution of animal art from the past to the present. Due to the limited availability of in-depth evidence, this study gathered information from historical, social science, and anthropological sources. It referenced both archaeological documents and oral narratives to create a comprehensive understanding of animal art. The periodization of Lao society followed the academic framework established by Sunet Phothisan (2001) and Burin Plengdeesakul (2012), resulting in the following analytical findings:

4.1.1 Animal art before the Lan Xang period:

Archaeological evidence shows that animal art before the Lan Xang period reflected beliefs in natural spirits and ancestor worship, which were integral to tribal symbolism. Early animal art typically featured naturalistic representations of local wildlife. These arts evolved alongside advancements in tools and human development. During the Stone Age, cave paintings and animal motifs on bronze drums were prevalent (Kittikorn Bamrungboon, 2019). Additionally, animals were often used as symbols and combined to create new meanings, such as the Naga, which embodied the indigenous people's beliefs about nature and animals.

4.1.2 Animal art during the Lan Xang period:

During the Lan Xang period, Luang Prabang became the kingdom's center, particularly from the 19th to 20th Buddhist centuries. Animal art in this era arose alongside religious and spiritual beliefs, closely intertwined with the Luang Prabang community's lifestyle, deeply connected to nature and Buddhism. Political and cultural influences from the Mon, Khmer, and Lanna civilizations resulted in distinctive characteristics of animal art, including depictions of Nagas, peacocks, and mythical creatures commonly found in paintings and sculptures at Wat Xieng Thong. Although some works were destroyed during wartime (Kittikorn Bamrungboon, 2019), several pieces survived and were later restored.

4.1.3 Animal art in the kingdom period:

After the Lan Xang Kingdom split into three kingdoms in 1699, political changes, shifts in governance, and warfare led to the evolution of styles in animal art. This art was influenced by the artistic traditions of Siamese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese, and French cultures. During the French colonial period, animal art appeared not only in temples but also in significant buildings. These structures utilized diverse construction techniques and materials that were previously reserved for religious buildings, expanding their use into residential, commercial, and government buildings (Supachai Singyabut, 2010). For example, the Royal Palace, which has now been converted into the Luang Prabang Museum, features animal art that symbolizes the importance of space and conveys meaning within cultural and governmental contexts through symbolic representations.

4.1.4 Animal art in the new imagination period:

The New Imagination Period began after Laos gained independence from 1988 to the present. A major change in the governing system occurred when the left-wing forces gained complete control and established a government under the Lao People's Revolutionary Party on December 2, 1975. This transformation led to the shift from the Kingdom of Laos to a communist-socialist regime in the New Imagination era (Theera Nuchpiam, 2015). Animal art underwent significant changes, particularly religious-themed art, which was partially destroyed or halted. However, animal art

survived through handicrafts such as silverware, silver bowls, and other decorative items, reflecting its evolution beyond temples and sacred spaces into everyday products.



Figure 1: Chinese Lion Sculpture at Wat Siphouthabhat

4.1.5 Animal art in the world heritage period

After Luang Prabang was designated as a World Heritage site in December 1995, significant changes occurred, particularly in its economy. While religious buildings and structures were preserved without alterations, urban zoning regulations were strictly implemented. One of the most noticeable changes related to animal art was the increase in hotel construction to accommodate tourists. Animal art soon began to feature prominently in hotels and commercial buildings to attract visitors. It also appeared in handicraft products sold as souvenirs. Furthermore, animal art was used in home decoration, symbolizing beliefs in luck and protection for the premises.

In Summary, in the pre-Lan Xang period, animal art reflected beliefs about spirits, nature, and tribal identity through symbols such as serpents and Nagas, which were closely tied to human life. During the Lan Xang period, these artistic expressions evolved with the influence of Buddhism and were shaped by Mon, Khmer, Lanna, and Chinese cultures. This evolution was evident in temples and religious buildings. After the French colonial period, animal art played a more significant role in decorating important buildings and handicraft products, such as silverware, supporting the tourism economy. Following the registration of Luang Prabang as a World Heritage site in 1995, these artistic expressions continued to develop through handicrafts and architectural decoration, reflecting the local identity and attracting tourists.

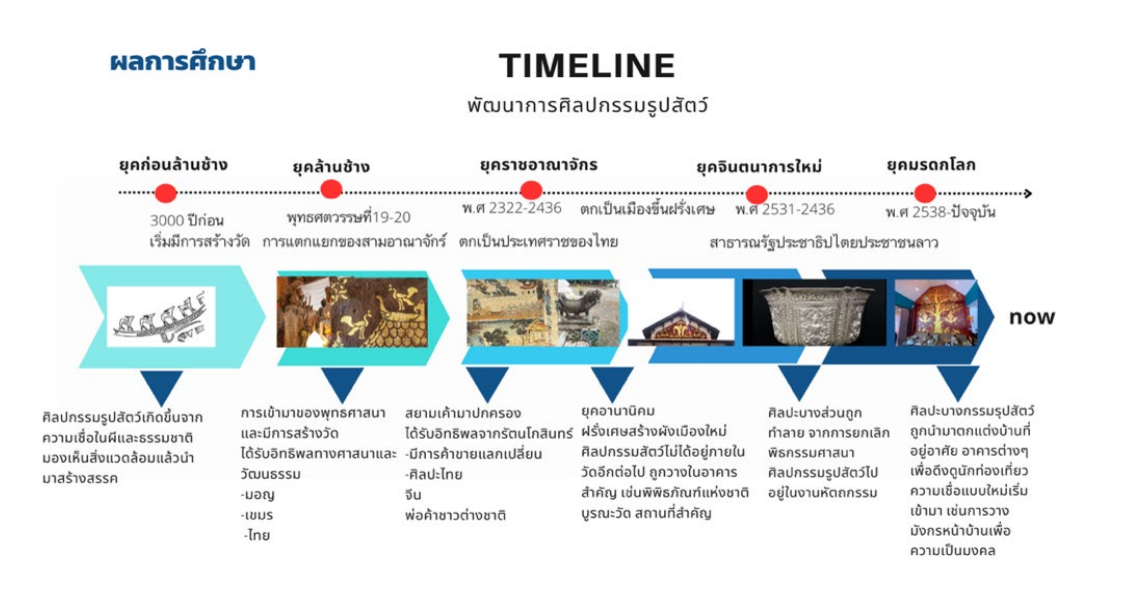


Figure 2: Timeline of the evolution of animal art in Luang Prabang

4.2 Styles, beliefs, and community relationships of animal art in Luang Prabang

4.2.1 Styles of animal art in Luang Prabang

The study of animal art styles in Luang Prabang examined various locations, including temples, residential areas, public spaces, and government buildings. Based on Pitak Noiwangklang (2000), the analysis framework focused on form, shape, materials, techniques, colors, and spatial usage. The researcher specifically selected target areas, which are: 1. Temple Areas, which were selected based on their construction during politically significant periods, historical importance, and current active usage. These temples include: 1. Wat Xieng Thong, 2. Wat Wisunarat, 3. Wat Pa Huak, 4. Wat Pa Khe (Siphouththabat), 5. Wat Sen Sou Kharam, 6. Wat Phon Chai Songkhram, 7. Wat Aham, 8. Wat Manorum, 9. Wat Si Mongkhon, and 10. Wat Long Khoun. Additional research areas included 2. residential neighborhoods, 3. public spaces, and 4. government buildings.

Forms: Animal art can be categorized into mythical creatures and common animals. Most decorative animals are connected to Buddhism, beliefs, Jataka tales, and folk stories, while common animals are depicted in scenes to reflect the local context.

Shape and structure: The forms display a distinctive beauty, primarily characterized by local craftsmanship that showcases unique shapes. There is a blend of foreign cultural influences, including Lan Xang, Khmer, and Chinese styles. Most artwork reflects a sense of freedom in folk art expression, featuring naturalistic forms and intricate ornamental patterns that incorporate the craftsmen's imagination to create detailed pieces.

Materials: The materials used include Stucco, Wood, Gold or black lacquer, Natural colors, Natural powder pigments, and Colored glass.

Techniques: Various creation methods include Carving or sculpture, Gold stenciling (Lai Fok Kham), Mural painting (Hooptam), 2D and 3D sculpture, Stained glass work

Colors: Animal art typically features red and black as base colors in the lacquer technique, with gold, black, and white predominant in 2D and 3D sculptures. Multiple colors appear in mural painting, primarily cool tones used with natural pigments. In government buildings, public parks, and residential areas, silver and gold predominate, along with natural animal colors and material colors such as wood tones and marble.



Figure 3: Techniques and colors of animal art in Luang Prabang

Animal art in Luang Prabang is utilized in various areas:

Temples: Animal art is commonly used in decorating various architectural elements, including roofs, gables, pillars, archways, doors and windows, walls, and guardian figures at entrances.

Government buildings: Animal art is used in exterior decorations, such as fountains.

Public spaces: Animal figures indicate the importance and reflect the beliefs associated with specific areas.

Residential areas: Animal art appears at entrance gates, featuring auspicious animals according to Feng Shui principles, intended to bring good fortune and promote business prosperity.

Additionally, animal art reflects relationships with the local area, such as elephants symbolizing the Lan Xang kingdom and Nagas representing the beliefs of Luang Prabang residents.

4.2.2 Beliefs associated with animal art in Luang Prabang

The analysis of beliefs related to animal art in Luang Prabang focused on two main categories of prevalent animals. The first category comprises mythical creatures, including the Naga, Lion, Erawan Elephant, Swan, Dragon, Kinnari, Hatsadiling Bird, Mom, Garuda, Hanuman, and Gajasinha. The second category includes common animals such as elephants, peacocks, tigers, monkeys, deer, and cattle. Using Lanchakorn Nilkhan's (2020) analytical framework, the study explores these beliefs through the lenses of religious and community beliefs.

4.2.2.1 Religious beliefs

The religious beliefs associated with animal art in Luang Prabang reflect a rich blend of Buddhism, Brahmin-Hinduism, and Theravada Buddhism, along with influences from Indian, Chinese, and Lanna cultures. Animals hold significant roles in various religious contexts, often appearing in Buddhist history and Jatakas, representing the Buddha and conveying moral teachings. Particular animals, such as the Naga, symbolize protection, abundance, and power and are commonly depicted in religious art and architecture. Guardian figures like Nagas and Lions protect temple gates and important locations, safeguarding these sacred spaces. Animal art can be found throughout religious buildings, from rooftops to entrances. It references beliefs about the Traiphum (Three Worlds) and the Himavanta Forest. Both common and mythical animals are featured, reflecting qualities such as strength and the sanctity of these spaces. In this way, animal art in Luang Prabang not only serves as a religious symbol but also highlights the deep connection between the residents' faith in the sacred and their Buddhist-oriented lifestyle.

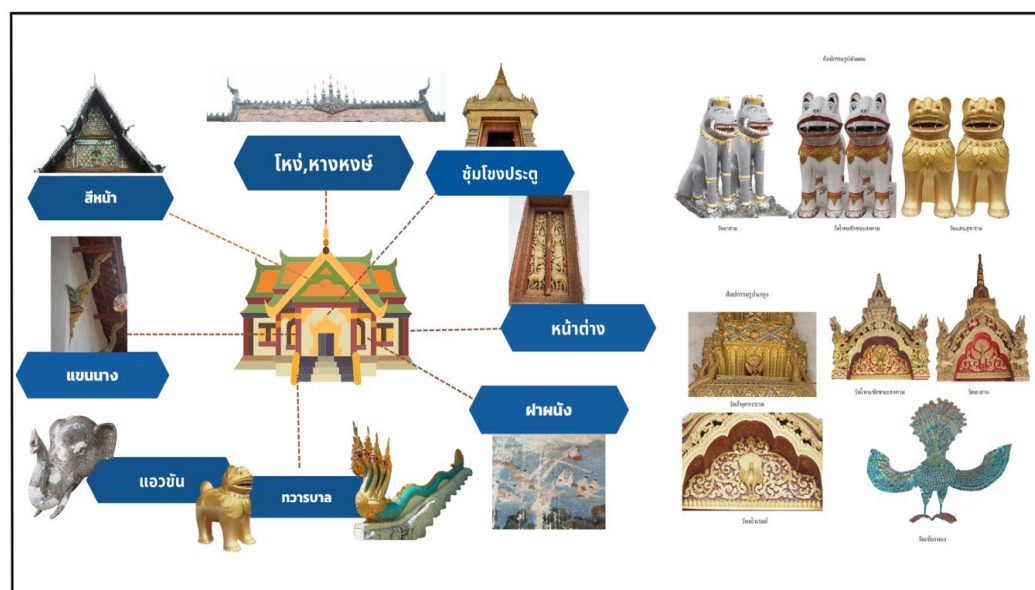


Figure 4: Decorative patterns of animal art in Luang Prabang temple areas

4.2.2.2 Community beliefs

Animals play a crucial role in the belief systems of the Luang Prabang community, encompassing myths, folktales, and local traditions. In the Mekong River region, Naga is a sacred creature that holds particular significance according to the "Suwan Khom Kham" legend. Lao people believe that the Naga created the Mekong River and acted as the guardian of people in the community. The Naga symbolizes abundance and protection, especially during the twelfth lunar month festival, where fifteen Naga families are worshipped as an expression of respect and faith. Elephants also have a special significance in Luang Prabang's beliefs, particularly as symbols of the unity of the Lan Xang kingdom. The three-headed Erawan elephant, displayed beneath the **Great Tiered Umbrella** at the

Luang Prabang National Museum, represents the unification of Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champasak under a single rule. **The Great Tiered Umbrella** Buddhism highlighting its religious importance. Regarding rituals and ancestor beliefs, legends such as "Sing Kham" and "Sing Kaew" reflect the community's beliefs in ancestor spirits and guardian angels. The worship ceremony of Pu Yer Ya Yer during Songkran festival processions illustrates the community's relationship with protective deities and sacred entities. Animals are also featured in astrological beliefs, such as the twelve zodiac animals that appear in traditional ceremonies. In modern times, Feng Shui beliefs have influenced daily life, with Chinese lions often serving as guardians at doorways to bring good fortune, protection, and prosperity in business



Figure 5: Tung in Luang Prabang traditions and Chinese lions at building entrances

In conclusion, animals play vital roles in the religious and community beliefs of Luang Prabang. In religious contexts, animals are depicted in art and architecture that blends Buddhist, Brahmin-Hindu, and other cultural influences. For instance, The Naga symbolizes protection and abundance and frequently appears in temple art as a guardian figure, reflecting religious devotion and moral principles. Regarding community beliefs, animals are integral to legends, folktales, and traditions. The Lao people regard the Naga in the "Suwan Khom Kham" legend as the creator and guardian of the Mekong River, and it is honored during the twelfth lunar month festival. The three-headed Erawan elephant symbolizes the unity of the Lan Xang kingdom and represents protection and greatness. Additionally, animals hold significance in astrological beliefs and contemporary practices, such as the twelve zodiac animals and Feng Shui. Sacred animals, like Chinese lions, act as protectors and bringers of good fortune. Overall, the role of animals in Luang Prabang's belief systems extends beyond mere religious and symbolic significance; it reflects deep faith, a connection with nature, and cultural continuity across generations.

4.2.3 Community relationships of animal art in Luang Prabang

The researcher employed Henri Lefebvre's (2006) framework to examine the relationships between animal art and the Luang Prabang community in three aspects:

1. Animal art and spaces in Luang Prabang
2. Animal art and Luang Prabang society
3. Animal art and the mindset of Luang Prabang residents

4.2.3.1 Animal art and spaces in Luang Prabang

Animal art goes beyond religious beliefs and architectural decoration but also highlights animals' importance within local cultures. For example, the elephant symbolizes the Lan Xang kingdom, reflecting a historical period when elephants were plenty in the region. The Naga, which has legendary ties to the city's founding and location along the Mekong River, is also profoundly revered by the residents of Luang Prabang. This significance is expressed through various forms of animal art throughout the area. Additionally, particular animals are depicted as symbols of good fortune and are used to enhance the landscape according to Feng Shui principles.



Figure 6: Naga and elephant art decorations in Luang Prabang

4.2.3.2 Animal art and Luang Prabang society

Animal art in Luang Prabang is deeply connected to society through its traditions and rituals. This art form influences daily life, beliefs, folktales, legends, and religion, creating lasting symbols communicating cultural values. For instance, animal-shaped fire boats are crafted for the End of Buddhist Lent festival, and during the Songkran parade, animals serve as vehicles for the festival's symbolic figures. Additionally, Nagas are revered as sacred creatures. Animal art acts as an element within the community, encouraging interaction and bringing people together to honor their ancestors and engage in traditional practices. These artistic expressions foster communal engagement and help preserve the shared cultural heritage.



Figure 7: Animal art in traditions and rituals of Luang Prabang

4.2.3.3 Animal art and the mindset of Luang Prabang residents

The relationship among animal art, mythical animal beliefs, ancestors' traditions, and, in particular, Naga beliefs has been deeply embedded in Luang Prabang's culture for generations. From birth to adulthood, these beliefs are incorporated into various aspects of life, including religious practices, traditions, rituals, and artistic expressions. The Naga belief holds special significance in urban life, influencing everything from worship practices for rain and abundance to cultural remembrances related to travel. Additionally, animal beliefs play an astrological role, such as the Eight Tua Phueng displayed at Wat Xieng Thong, which continues to be a part of local traditions. This reflects the enduring faith that passed down through generations, forming the cultural roots of the residents of Luang Prabang.

Summary of community relationships with animal art in Luang Prabang

Luang Prabang is a Buddhist city where people immerse themselves in animal art from childhood through adulthood, primarily through temples. This art form reflects the beliefs and lifestyle of the people, symbolizing ancestors' spirits and guardian angels that protect them and provide supervision through food and water. While some representations of animals are now reserved for sacred sites or religious buildings, they continue to play important roles in traditional ceremonies. Animal art exists within thought, lifestyle, society, and spaces, demonstrating the significance and context of various locations.

5. CONCLUSION

The development of animal art in Luang Prabang began in the pre-Lan Xang period, reflecting beliefs in spirits and nature through cave paintings and tools. During the Lan Xang period, it was influenced by Buddhism and Mon, Khmer, and Thai cultures. The Kingdom period incorporated the influences

of Siam, Vietnam, Burma, and France. After being registered as a World Heritage site in 1995, animal art has been preserved and utilized in handicrafts, hotel decorations, and buildings to attract tourists. Regarding artistic styles, animal art is predominantly found in temples, created through techniques such as Hooptam (murals), carving, Lai Fok Kham (gold stenciling), and stucco work, using materials like cement, wood, and gold lacquer. Popular subjects include Nagas, Erawan elephants, and mythical creatures. In government and public spaces, animal art plays a lesser role, mainly appearing in fountains and entrances, emphasizing silver and gold colors, mostly in folk art style. The beliefs associated with animal art in Luang Prabang encompass Buddhist, Brahmin-Hindu, and Theravada Buddhist traditions, influences from Indian, Chinese, and Lanna cultures, and Traiphum cosmology (three world), primarily appearing in religious architectural decoration. Community beliefs from the city founding legends, folktales, traditions, astrological beliefs, and Feng Shui Community relationships with animal art are divided into three aspects: 1) Spatial relationships, where animals represent city symbols and enhance landscapes; 2) Social relationships, where animal art plays roles in rituals, merit-making, and traditions; and 3) Conceptual relationships, where certain animals symbolize ancestors and city guardians. From childhood, residents are familiar with animal art in temples, and it remains embedded in their beliefs and lifestyle, representing ancestor spirits and guardian angels who protect and provide abundance, as passed down through legends and stories to the present day.

6. DISCUSSION

The research findings on "Animal Art: Styles, Beliefs, and Relationships in the Luang Prabang Community" reveal several significant insights that can be discussed in relation to the research objectives.

The development of animal art in Luang Prabang has undergone a long evolution from ancient times to the present. Historically, animal art was created exclusively for religious buildings, as certain beliefs prohibited the depiction of specific animal forms within residential spaces. In contemporary times, some of these animal forms have been adapted into tourist products. The evolution of animal art coincides with Luang Prabang's designation as a World Heritage site, where artistic expressions have changed in both form and function according to different political and administrative systems. This evolution aligns with Talcott Parsons' (1902-1979) Functionalism Theory, which discusses adaptation and integration during changes in political systems. As societal conditions evolve, so too do art and culture, adjusting to the prevailing systems. This theoretical framework helps explain how animal art in Luang Prabang has transformed in response to shifts in governance.

Regarding styles and beliefs, animal art in Luang Prabang demonstrates a unique blend of characteristics, primarily expressed through folk craftsmanship. Most pieces feature mythical animals created by artists for religious decoration according to traditional beliefs. The artistic forms have been influenced by various cultures through both religious transmission and foreign trade, leading to cultural diffusion. This aligns with Franz Boas's (1883) Cultural Diffusion Theory, which explains how one culture spreads to another while adapting to fit new cultural contexts.

Regarding the relationship between animal art and the Luang Prabang community, animal art is connected to community beliefs about ancestors and local legends, giving rise to traditions and ceremonies. Animal art is also used to decorate buildings and appears in tourist products. As Luang Prabang is a Buddhist city, animal art serves as a symbolic representation of thought, society, and space. This corresponds with George Herbert Mead's (1863) Symbolic Interactionism Theory, which emphasizes the exchange of symbols for communication and mutual understanding between individuals. According to this theory, the creation and exchange of symbols are crucial for communication, viewing interpersonal relationships as a process of creating and sharing meaning.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 For application

7.1.1 The research findings should be published and shared to showcase the styles, beliefs, and community relationships related to animal art in Luang Prabang. This documentation will serve as a knowledge repository of the art and culture in Luang Prabang, which is recognized as a World

Heritage site. It will also benefit those interested in studying or researching the significance of animal art.

7.1.2 Researchers and interested parties can utilize these findings for educational purposes, particularly in examining animal art styles, their associated beliefs, and the significant community relationships in Luang Prabang.

7.1.3 Researchers who study animal art can use this research framework or model for further interpretation and analysis.

7.2 For future research

7.2.1 Further studies should investigate the development of animal art throughout the Lao People's Democratic Republic to gain a deeper understanding of its origins and various forms.

7.2.2 Research should explore the factors that influence changes in animal art in Luang Prabang, especially as it continues to evolve and intersect with other cultural traditions.

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