

shift towards this stance in the future. ASEAN's second goal, a new regional order, is still a work in progress as it is overly dependent on outside forces for its future success. In summation, the author argues that, despite vast political, cultural and religious differences among member nations, ASEAN has been a success on the whole, and he is cautiously optimistic about its future.

That future, however, will be shaped by an increasing Sino-US rivalry. Perhaps the author is looking towards this future (or a pre-2017 world) when he claims that "the United States is unwilling to concede its predominant status" (p. 241). This is arguably in doubt at present, as Donald Trump killed the pillar of his predecessor Barack Obama's shift towards Asia, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and instead focused on the Korean peninsula and trade with China, which the author does note (pp. 229–30). Ang has done well to capture the preceding thirty years of Southeast Asia's regional history. With its concise, readable prose, it makes a worthy follow-up to his work on the Cold War and is a sound contribution on global contemporary history.

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The Politics of Vietnamese Craft: American Diplomacy and Domestication. By Jennifer Way. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020. xiv+226 pp.

Jennifer Way's *The Politics of Vietnamese Craft* is an exceptional book and body of research inspired by an issue of *Interior* magazine from

August 1956. This issue featured “Gold Mine in Southeast Asia”, an article by Russel Wright (a canonical designer of American Modern design) on his travels and his views of a successful handicraft export programme in South Vietnam. His trip had been a commission by the United States International Cooperation Administration (ICA) to survey and find craftwork that could be exported for sale in the United States.

The Politics of Vietnamese Craft takes this article and Russel Wright’s programme as a lens to unpack the promotion and development of Vietnamese craft from 1955 to 1961 as part of American foreign policy. These efforts were undertaken to prevent the loss of Southeast Asia to communism by actively fostering connections between the American home front and South Vietnam. Way shows that this exchange was not merely mutual imaginations of what Vietnamese craft was but was also an economic relationship informed by the American belief that being part of a Free World economy could prevent the spread of communism. Way focuses on how the aid programme revitalized craft as a ‘native’ industry in South Vietnam by modifying the design of the craft to appeal to American consumers. ‘Native’ craft in this respect, as Way points out, did not account for pan-Asian influences brought about both by Wright’s instruction or by histories of exchange and French colonialism in Vietnam.

An important facet of *The Politics of Vietnamese Craft* is Way’s illustration of how images and objects were circulated by the United States Information Agency and how markedly different the cultural Cold War was in Asia from that in Europe. In Europe, the United States had tried to spread abstract expression and promote consumption of American technologies and projects. In South Vietnam, however, it focused on ‘native’ craft being part of the Free World and having a place in the American home. Images are also significant objects for Way. Her analysis of the photographic representation of the artisans who were refugees from North Vietnam in the programme demonstrates how these efforts depoliticized Vietnamese craft by making productive workers out of refugees.

While Way's research utilizes an expanded and historically informed definition of craft to include handicraft, arts, decorative arts, cottage industry and more, Wright's article forms the backbone of her study and her lens on craft. This is not to say that the study is limited. Each chapter offers in-depth case studies and new research that contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the early Cold War world that the United States tried to build in the aftermath of the Second World War. Way's book exemplifies how deep archival research can be. While her research focuses on the craft aid programme, she marshals diverse sources from archives and primary sources, some of which have not been studied before, thereby offering new research avenues.

The Politics of Vietnamese Craft is a necessary extension to studies of Cold War American cultural diplomacy and histories of design and craft. From the outset, Way frames her publication and her research within American art histories and in relation to works such as Guggenheim curator Alexandra Munroe's *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (2009) and Christina Klein's highly cited *Cold War Orientalism* (2003), as well as in relation to global Cold War historiography.

However, reading *The Politics of Vietnamese Craft* merely through these prisms misses the significant contributions it makes to emerging studies of exhibition histories and Southeast Asian and East Asian art history. Way's book is littered with references to the regionalizing imperative of US diplomacy and Russel Wright's 'forgotten' influence on the region. The latter has only been examined by a handful of scholars, amongst them Yuko (2008, 2011).

Furthermore, Way's studies of exhibitions provide invaluable accounts of lesser-known exhibitions. Her study of *Southeast Asia Rehabilitation Exhibition* (1956), to which she devotes an entire chapter, provides new insights into how exhibitions were used and designed into 'world' art, taken from the non-Western world and incorporated into an American global modernity. Her brief examination of the significant but similarly lesser-known project *Asian Artists in Crystal* (1956–57) presents cultural diplomacy across

mediums of art and craft that can be used to critically examine an emerging ‘international’ art world after the Second World War.

The Politics of Vietnamese Craft is a remarkable study of an American craft aid programme that resonates across a number of fields. Way’s contributions do not just complicate some of the ways that we have thought of the Cultural Cold War, but they also question some of the legacies of the Cold War that inform contemporary framing of Vietnamese craft in relation to the tourist industry. Moreover, while she does not articulate it, her study may be extrapolated to catalyse a re-reading of the development of Southeast Asian art in the early Cold War. It could be used as a basis to question the very foundations of the networks that define contemporary Southeast Asian art today.

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The Crown and the Capitalists: The Ethnic Chinese and the Founding of the Thai Nation. By Wasana Wongsurawat. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019; Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2020. xiii+201 pp.

George W. Skinner, in his classic *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (1957), planted a tree so big in the field of Chinese-