

mobilization in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in spite of general political inertia.

The concluding chapter completes the analysis with a discussion of the 2009 Southeast Asian Games, where arguably all previous aspects of sports culture came full circle, here particularly illustrating how sport carries “the objective of constituting, performing, and reinforcing state power” (p. 240). As was the case in the ceremonies of the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Vientiane the following year, national performativity through mass ceremonies was aimed at visualizing both socio-economic developmentalism and national and cultural heritage protection.

Approaching the topic of nationalism in Laos through the lens of sports provides fresh insights into modern Lao history. Creak sheds light on some less-known episodes and actors in Lao history, in particular by filling some lacunae in the Royal Lao Government's history. The communist-controlled “liberated zone” before 1975 receives less attention, as does the related case of the Democratic and then Socialist Republic of Vietnam — whose well-known ideological and political influence in the Lao PDR was significant for shaping physical education and practice in the country.

Simon Creak's book is a rewarding read not only for regional specialists, but also for any historian and anthropologist interested in the social and political dimensions of sports.

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Reworlding Art History: Encounters with Contemporary Southeast Asian Art after 1990. By Michelle Antoinette. Amsterdam: Brill, 2014. iv+592 pp.

An unfortunate conundrum is presented at the beginning of this vast and thorough study of contemporary artists from Southeast Asia: can an artist be contemporary and Southeast Asian at once

(p. 46)? It is unfortunate because it suggests that Southeast Asian art continues to pose questions rather than to elicit answers, even though contemporary Southeast Asian artists are amongst the most engaging, innovative, active and visible in the world today. The past twenty years have seen the proliferation of galleries and museums in Southeast Asia and of exhibitions of Southeast Asian art in Australia, Europe and the United States. Southeast Asian artists have been included in nearly every biennale and international exhibition in the world since 2000.

If one of the most defining features of contemporary art is that it is ephemeral, challenges history and speaks of the moment, then there is no artist more representative of the contemporary than the artist from Southeast Asia. Although not stated outright early in the book, this is revealed in its final chapters, almost unbeknownst to the author, in the discussion of what she calls “art historically aware” artists (p. 488). These are artists whose works make reference to art historiography and defy dominant historic narratives by performing discursive events. Artists such as Ho Tzu Nyen and Lim Tzay Chuen from Singapore present ideas that the author perceives as lacking in academic writing about Southeast Asian art by proposing that “memory is (also) often registered in contemporary art as a consequence of embodied, affective engagement with the world” (p. 399). If the underlying question posed at the start of the book is why Southeast Asian artists are excluded from Western art history textbooks, this book itself can be seen as a means of resolving this question once and for all and asserting unequivocally that Southeast Asian art is both contemporary and Southeast Asian. The author, in her choice of artists, proves this over and over again.

The book is conveniently sandwiched on both ends by Filipina-Canadian artist Lani Maestro’s 1993 “A Thick Book of Ocean”, which acts as a metaphor for the nearly impossible task of uniting artists from the region in a single volume. That maritime image also illustrates the book’s limitations. It is devoted nearly exclusively to artists from Maritime Southeast Asia. There is no mention of any artist from Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand or Vietnam. This omission has the unintentional effect both of creating an appearance of bias

towards Filipino, Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean artists and limiting the definition of Southeast Asia. One would have wished to see at least a footnote explaining the omission, especially since there are instances in which Vietnamese and Thai artists could have easily been referred to. The discussion of the artists' exchange networks, for example, could have also included such artists as Vũ Dân Tân (1946–2009), who participated in the second Asia-Pacific Triennial. Thai artist Manit Sriwanichpoom's *Pink Man* series could have also been mentioned alongside the itinerant work of Lee Wen in the context of global nomadism. Vietnamese-American artists Dinh Q. Lê and Tiffany Chung are among the world's most collected artists. The list goes on.

The focus on artists from Maritime Southeast Asia also inconveniently perpetuates the tropes that have been present in many presentations of Southeast Asian art: multicultural networks, maritime currents and what the author calls "corpo-geographic" identities (p. 58). The region's geographic and cultural diversity has always posed a challenge to art historians and this book presents a common dilemma: can we shed cultural and political context when discussing art from Southeast Asia? The author ventures that we do not need to do so, and, the omission of Mainland Southeast Asian artists notwithstanding, the book is strongest in its discussion of individual artists' works that move beyond stereotypes of tropicalism and post-colonial turmoil. I was impressed by the depth of the author's research and her insight into the brilliant contributions that these artists make to contemporary art. The sections on Wong Hoy Cheong, Simryn Gill and Lee Wen are especially poignant. The book is more about them and less about Southeast Asia per se. This in itself is an achievement, and it brings us closer to overcoming the persistent need felt by scholars to explain or justify the category of Southeast Asian art or label these artists as such.

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