Dr. Nancy Tingley, an independent curator, spent twenty years on *Arts of Ancient Viet Nam: From River Plain to Open Sea*. Following a 1988 trip to Viet Nam, she conceived of an exhibition that borrowed from Vietnamese museums and institutions and included works never shown together and some not seen in the United States for thirty years. This catalog and accompanying exhibition curated by Tingley mark the completion of a monumental task. The show, consisting of 130 objects, makes its debut at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and travels to the Asia Society Museum, New York.

Chronologically surveying ancient and traditional Vietnamese art, the book includes essays by Andreas Reinecke, Pierre-Yves Manguin, Kerry Nguyen-Long, and Nguyen Dinh Chien, with each lending their expertise to examining a specific significant era. Starting with the Early Cultures (first millennium BC to the second century AD), Reinecke covers the “Golden Age” of Viet Nam’s cultural history and Sa Huynh culture by exploring jewelry, pottery, burial jars, axes, and bronze figures. Manguin focuses on archaeology in Fu Nan in the Mekong River delta and the Oc Eo culture of Viet Nam, a first-through sixth-century settlement. By examining archaeological discoveries and Buddhist figures, Tingley concentrates on the kingdom of Champa in central Viet Nam in the seventh century that was centered on its ports and trade. Nguyen-Long continues this reflection on commerce and exchange during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries in Hoi An, a harbor town that served as the center of the porcelain market and a major port for industrial trade. After each essay which includes illustrations and footnotes, Tingley presents corresponding exhibition objects from the era, featuring full page color plates each with its own detailed listing.

The extensive bibliography would be much more useful if it were organized by era as is the rest of the book. The catalog’s clean design and consistent layout makes information easy to find. The index is detailed and helpful, and the appendix exploring ceramics from shipwrecks off Viet Nam is a treat.

The catalog provides a wealth of information with its main focuses on trade, the links between neighboring countries, the geography of Viet Nam, and the impact cultural changes have had on the area and its traditional art. A substantial book in size, information, and visuals, this book would be a perfect addition to any library with concentrations in art, history, or Asian studies.

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