‘A BAZAAR IN THE COLISEUM’: SOUTHEAST ASIAN HANDICRAFTS IN NEW YORK, 1956

Jennifer Way

This essay reconstitutes the meaning and significance of places, objects and people associated with an unstudied pavilion displaying handicrafts at the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit held in the New York Coliseum from 25 June to 29 June, 1956. Paying particular attention to correlations between the pavilion and the general features of Orientalism as defined by Said, I focus attention on the ‘tent-like enclosure’ and its contents that featured in the Coliseum. This pavilion, I argue, aimed to display ‘oriental objects’ in an environment that was to appear natural and convey the spirit of the places where they were made; it was to have ‘the atmosphere of an oriental bazaar’. The objects consisted of handicrafts that renowned American industrial designer Russel Wright collected during a recent trip he made to Southeast Asia on behalf of the U.S. State Department’s International Cooperation Administration. The ICA contracted Wright to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a multi-year programme to produce and export handicrafts from there to the United States. At issue are ways the ‘tent-like enclosure’ established and modulated relations between Southeast Asia, Vietnam and the United States within an Orientalist framework emphasizing American authority, hierarchical distinctions regarding places, objects and people as well as types of belonging linking people to objects, and salvage, supplementation and adaptation. Much of this amounted to a process of domesticating Vietnam for America. Vietnam, which the U.S. State Department as well as Wright perceived to need American assistance, entered the domestic economy where it would contribute to enriching the homes of the American middle class.

Keywords: pavilion, Southeast Asia, handicraft, New York Coliseum, Orientalism, Cold War.

Jennifer Way is an Associate Professor of Art History at the University of North Texas where she teaches and researches the history, methodology, theory and social and cultural contexts of art after 1945. This essay is part of a book-length study entitled, *Politics of Handicraft*, which developed from research supported by grants from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Center for Craft Creativity and Design, and Design History Society, respectively.

‘A Bazaar In The Coliseum’: Southeast Asian Handicrafts In New York, 1956

(Jennifer Way, University of Texas)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5456/issn.2050-3679/2013w09jw>

To view the images used in this article in a larger and more detailed format, follow this link:

<http://openartsjournal.org/issue-2/issue-2-galleries/article-8>

'A BAZAAR IN THE COLISEUM': SOUTHEAST ASIAN HANDICRAFTS IN NEW YORK, 1956

Jennifer Way

Abstract

This essay reconstitutes the meaning and significance of places, objects and people associated with an unstudied pavilion displaying handicrafts at the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit held in the New York Coliseum from 25 June to 29 June, 1956. Paying particular attention to correlations between the pavilion and the general features of Orientalism as defined by Said, I focus attention on the 'tent-like enclosure' and its contents that featured in the Coliseum. This pavilion, I argue, aimed to display 'oriental objects' in an environment that was to appear natural and convey the spirit of the places where they were made; it was to have 'the atmosphere of an oriental bazaar'. The objects consisted of handicrafts that renowned American industrial designer Russel Wright collected during a recent trip he made to Southeast Asia on behalf of the U.S. State Department's International Cooperation Administration. The ICA contracted Wright to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a multi-year programme to produce and export handicrafts from there to the United States. At issue are ways the 'tent-like enclosure' established and modulated relations between Southeast Asia, Vietnam and the United States within an Orientalist framework emphasizing American authority, hierarchical distinctions regarding places, objects and people as well as types of belonging linking people to objects, and salvage, supplementation and adaptation. Much of this amounted to a process of domesticating Vietnam for America. Vietnam, which the U.S. State Department as well as Wright perceived to need American assistance, entered the domestic economy where it would contribute to enriching the homes of the American middle class.

This essay reconstitutes the meaning and significance of places, people, objects and images associated with an unstudied pavilion that displayed handicrafts at the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit held in the New York Coliseum from June 25 to June 29, 1956. The 'tent-like enclosure' aimed to present handicrafts as 'oriental objects in an atmosphere natural to them, which would communicate the spirit of the places where they were collected' and also point to where they are sold in Southeast Asia,

namely, 'an oriental trading place' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72). Renowned American industrial designer Russel Wright collected the handicrafts during a recent trip he made to Southeast Asia on behalf of the U.S. State Department's International Cooperation Administration (ICA). This organization contracted Wright to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a multi-year programme to produce and export handicrafts from there to the United States. In what follows I consider how Wright's activity in Southeast Asia and especially in New York City, along with the purpose, appearance and location of the pavilion, prompted Wright, the pavilion's designers and American government officials and press, to consider the pavilion 'oriental.' Also, I explore why they characterised its contents as antithetical to contemporary American culture yet extremely well-suited to serving the needs of the American middle classes in their everyday lives and homes.

First, though, it is necessary to explain my approach to the material. The nature of references to ethnicity, civilization, technology and culture that explicitly or tacitly compare the United States and Southeast Asia in the primary documents I studied - articles about the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit, reports and ephemera from American and South Vietnamese governments respectively, and texts that Wright and other American designers as well as cultural commentators authored - compel me to contextualise them in regard to Orientalism. In 'The Designer as Economic Diplomat: The Government Applies the Designer's Approach to Problems of International Trade', 1956, Avrom Fleishman explains that showing 'oriental objects' in the pavilion advanced Wright's aim to associate handicraft not simply with places in Southeast Asia where it was made but especially with sites where it could be purchased there. Of importance is that by evoking the atmosphere of 'an oriental trading place' (pp.68-73), the pavilion linked sites of trade in Southeast Asia to the centre of an American city that was world famous for integrating international and domestic commerce. I contend that this developed within an Orientalist framework emphasizing American authority. It underscored similarities along with hierarchical distinctions between the United States and Southeast Asia that supported American ideas about Southeast Asians' need for salvage and Southeast Asians' ability to satisfy American middle class lifestyle and home decorating tastes and desires.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) serves as the touchstone for Orientalism in this paper because cultural historians who study American interests in

Asia during the Cold War period from about 1945 to the early 1960s treat it as a foundation for their scholarship. This scholarship serves as a point of departure for my research. For example, following the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, the United States was substituted for Said's focus on Europe's relationship with the Middle East. In particular, Douglas Little showed 'how orientalism made its way into U.S. popular culture' chiefly through 'images of the Middle East and other parts of the Third World' that circulated in *National Geographic*' (p.10). While still emphasizing the United States, Christina Klein shifted the location and subjects of Orientalism from the Middle East to Asia in order to examine how 'the Cold War made Asia important to the United States in ways that it had not been before' (p.5). In *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961*, she explained that during this 'distinct cultural moment' American cultural producers created 'stories, fiction and nonfiction that took Asia and the Pacific as their subject matter' (p.2), encompassing ideas about 'integration – international and domestic' and the 'forging of bonds between Asians and Americans both at home and abroad' (p.16). My research builds on this scholarship by moving the geography of American Orientalism from Asia to Southeast Asia. Furthermore, in focusing on Vietnam I am able to identify how material and visual culture relating to U.S. State Department aid programmes active there and throughout the region participated in American Cold War imperatives in ways that intersected with the lifestyle needs of the American middle classes that Wright and his staff stressed.

Putting forth this argument develops more fully the very brief reference that Robert Haddow makes to Wright's activity in Southeast Asia in his book *Pavilions of Plenty, Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (1997). Whereas Haddow mainly focuses on American government-sponsored exhibitions of vanguard art, industrial products and home goods in Europe, I consider how material and visual culture participated in the politics of the Cold War developing in another region of the world. I show that for Americans, Southeast Asian handicrafts reflected agendas constitutive of those politics and served as a cultural resource that, according to American tastemakers, many Americans needed at home.

By highlighting Wright as one such tastemaker I do not mean to imply that he operated alone or acted autonomously. However, I do concentrate on Wright because in large measure, researching the ICA programme especially where Vietnam is concerned involves dealing with documents he wrote or that draw attention to or encompass his activity. Consequently,

Wright's presence and agency in my narrative reflect this aspect of my research along with my attempt to convey his professional concerns as these included his status as a major figure of American design and representative of United States State Department programmes and staff on whose behalf he worked with Southeast Asian handicraft artisans and American trade specialists and businessmen.

American interests in Southeast Asia and the Republic of Vietnam

At the outset we must revisit the political context in which the pavilion developed. Following the departure of the French and the political division of Vietnam in 1954 along with the subsequent founding of the Republic of Vietnam, or South Vietnam, in 1955, the United States Operations Mission to Vietnam (USOM) aimed to help the new Southeast Asian nation bolster its political autonomy and establish economic stability as a way to counter its vulnerability to communism. 'The United States is proud to be on the side of the effort of the Vietnamese people under President Diem to establish freedom, peace, and the good life', the U.S. State Department reported in 1956 (Robertson, 1956, p.973). That same year, Senator John F. Kennedy explained that the Republic of Vietnam held significance as 'the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia' with an 'economy ... essential to the economy of all of Southeast Asia' (pp.617–618).

Between 1955 and 1961, the ICA dedicated more than 700 million dollars to support personnel from the United States government and American business and design worlds in establishing economic pathways linking the United States and Southeast Asia. Their efforts included working with small industries and craftsmen to raise the quality of Southeast Asian products and locate markets for handicraft in the region and in the United States. In 1955, a Hoover Commission report criticised American foreign aid for not directly aiding the craftsmen of so-called underdeveloped countries. In response, and in relation to the United Nation's earlier 'Handicrafts Marketing Survey' (ECAFE, 1951), the State Department summoned American industrial designers for help in completing surveys of handicraft in different countries, and Russel Wright was one of those called into action. He was a renowned industrial designer voted, in 1952, President of the Association of Industrial Designers. Many Americans knew him as the creator of 'The American Way', a popular, mass produced and distributed line of home furnishings. Wright did more than produce vessels and utensils for American tables, counters, and shelves. In 1951 he and his wife Mary published *Guide to Easier Living*, a book that now

Figure 8.1: Russel Wright, 'Gold Mine in Southeast Asia', *Interiors* 116 (August, 1956), p. 94.

reads as a pre-Martha Stewart guide for middle class Americans in organizing their homes.

The ICA hired Wright to visit Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Hong Kong to survey and make recommendations regarding the potential to produce handicraft items there for American domestic markets and report on the possibility of exporting crafts to the United States.¹ Between November 1955 and February 1956 Wright made the trip together with craft expert Ramy Alexander and fashion designer Josette Walker. In Vietnam, Wright and his colleagues observed people making pottery, handloom textiles, needlework, baskets, silk weavings, wood furniture and lacquerware at sites ranging from cooperatives to semi-mechanised factories, schools and refugee camps. Moreover, Wright latched onto what he termed 'The Refugee Problem' (Wright, 1956, p.96). Following the division of Vietnam in 1954, hundreds of thousands of people had left their homes to migrate from north to south before the border closed during May of 1955. According to the State Department they fled the communist Viet Minh. Many did so aided by what the U.S. Navy called

Operation Passage to Freedom, and the United States distributed funds to help integrate these refugees. Consequently, refugees, with handicraft artisans numbering among them, featured as the subjects of the ICA's economic aid programmes in South Vietnam, which emphasised their resettlement.

Upon his return to the United States Wright submitted a report to the State Department and published an article in *Interiors* magazine entitled 'Gold Mine in Southeast Asia' about the possibilities he saw for a successful handicraft export programme. The first page featured a black and white photograph (Figure 8.1) of a young handicraft artisan weaving a basket in a refugee camp (p.95). The caption for another stated, 'Refugees in a Vietnam camp, weaving mats. There are between 500,000 and 800,000 refugees in Vietnam eager to work but with little to do' (p.100). None of the captions for photographs appearing in the article identified their artisan subjects by name. Instead, together, photographs and captions along with the main text characterised the handicraft artisans as a productive workforce having diverse craft skills. In this capacity they represented many others having the same aptitudes who collectively met the aim of the U.S. State Department – to interest American business in commissioning, marketing and distributing their handicrafts as upscale housewares intended for American middle class homes. Achieving this would strengthen the sovereignty of the new Republic of South Vietnam and bolster its status as an emblem of 'the Free World in Southeast Asia' (Kennedy, 1956, pp.617–8). According to Fleishman, it would 'help the individual artisans and small enterprisers by expanding their markets, while allowing them to continue their traditions of work and life' (p.72).

Ultimately, Wright managed the establishment of several handicraft centres in Southeast Asia, including in Saigon, mounted trade shows and department store exhibitions of handicraft in the United States, and designed materials for furnishing middle-class American homes that he named after places in Southeast Asia. By 1958, when hopes had dimmed for the success of handicraft exports from Vietnam to America, Wright proposed a 'Handicraft Programme for Tourism' in Vietnam. He established the 'Russel Wright Program Silk Screen Workshop' in Saigon the next year and oversaw its teaching of color, design and printing.

On 'an encounter which is already political and economic'

Nick Crossley reminds us that for Said, '[k]nowledge and imagination of the East does not arise out of nowhere or out of a neutral intellectual encounter';

¹ These activities are detailed in the documents of Box 44 of the *Russel Wright Papers*, Special Collections Research Center, New York, Syracuse University Library.

rather, it develops from 'an encounter which is already political and economic. It arises in a context of material and political domination and is shaped by that context' (Crossley, 2005). According to Said, especially during the nineteenth century and in the encounters of its imperialism and colonialism, Europe's power to shape everyday life in the Middle East and delimit the ability of Middle Easterners to act, know and represent themselves and their families,

communities and nations served as a foundational feature of its Orientalist dominations. If we shift to the mid-twentieth century and consider how the United States engaged with Southeast Asia, we find that the former's knowledge about and power over the latter's people, culture and nations was not solely 'regulated first by the local concerns of a specialist', as Said indicated had occurred in regard to Europe and the Middle East (p.45). Rather, already, that is, before American specialists arrived in Southeast Asia, the 'general concerns of a social system of authority' (Said, 1978, p.45) operating out of Washington D.C. in the context of Cold War anxieties organised relations between the United States and this region, especially following from American military involvement in Korea earlier in the decade. Conversely, Said's reference to a system underpinning Orientalism throws into relief the array of American State Department aid programmes intended to shepherd, for example, Vietnam towards a democratic government that would assist its burgeoning citizenry lacking resources and skills not to mention homes sustain themselves economically. The ICA determined the kinds of assistance the new nation needed, especially refugees attempting to resettle there, and then it proceeded to provide material resources and staff, with the latter treating American interests and previous practices as standards that the region, including its handicraft artisans, would follow.

To his service for the ICA Wright brought significant experience in domestic handicraft production and distribution. For instance, he had designed product lines of high quality for the American middle classes

Figure 8.2: Russel Wright, 'Gold Mine in Southeast Asia', *Interiors* 116 (August, 1956), p. 100. [The original captions read: 'Left: In the Coliseum exhibition: Vietnam straw hats and baskets. Right: Messrs. Wright and Alexander in a Vietnam jungle watching the ages-old method of dye-pounding black Chinese brocade silk.']

through his nationally recognised firm.² During the fall of 1940 his American Way housewares line retailed as the 'first comprehensive group effort of its kind among industrial designers, artist, craftsmen, manufacturers and retailers in the home furnishings industry'.³ It gave Wright knowledge of how to strategise linking the production of handicraft to its intended consumption by middle class Americans. Its publicity explained:

Where individual regional craftsmen are discovered whose work meets 'American-Way' design and merchandise standards, examples of their work will be chosen. In cases where outstanding skills are present, lacking only a proper quality of meeting merchandising needs and requirements, craftsmen will be supplied with suitable designs in terms of their own expression, to be produced in sufficient quantities for national distribution.⁴

The emphasis the housewares line placed on craftsmen designing wares expressly to satisfy the interests of a national market anticipated Wright's approach to organizing handicraft production and trade in regard to Vietnam. There, he would advocate teaching artisans to make what Americans would recognise as Vietnamese. 'The best way we evolved to have the Asian small producer make things that Americans would want to buy was to have Americans design the products'. Thus, instead of 'poor copies of

² Oversize Box 21, *Wright Papers*.

³ Oversize Box 21, *Wright Papers*.

⁴ Oversize Box 21, *Wright Papers*.

Western goods that have no place in their life', Wright said 'native designers must learn the demands of the U.S. consumer' and therefore American designers will 'train them to our standards of production' so 'we can get people who have never seen American life to create things that Americans may buy'.⁵ American Way's distribution of regional craft at the national level using 'modern conditions of use and marketing'⁶ also gave Wright a template for subsequently linking Southeast Asian handicrafts to American business and trade professionals and the middle classes.

An indication that Wright was exploring how to give Vietnamese handicraft the status of goods 'that Americans would want to buy' even though the artisans 'have never seen American life' surfaced in two captions for contrasting photographs that he reproduced in 'Goldmine in Southeast Asia' (Figure 8.2). One references handicraft as a commodity displayed in the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit - 'Left: In the Coliseum exhibition: Vietnam straw hats and baskets'. The other characterises Vietnam as an exotic location where artisans made handicraft as a subject of interest to the Americans who watch - 'Right: Messrs: Wright and Alexander in a Vietnam jungle watching the ages-old method of dye-pounding black Chinese brocade silk' (Wright, 1956, p.100).

Wright's witnessing the making of Southeast Asian handicraft and linking it to American distributors and their consumers via the Coliseum exhibit alerts us to another dimension of American Cold War-era imperatives operating within the ICA's 'social system of authority'. The latter gave Wright and other Americans working on behalf of the ICA in Southeast Asia agency in the form of resources to travel in order to survey, analyse, evaluate, report on and subsequently endeavour to ameliorate the lives of people residing in South Vietnam (Said, 1978, p.45). This dimension of Wright's and his colleagues' ICA roles intersected with broad changes occurring in the design profession and also in diplomacy.

An amendment to Wright's initial contract with the State Department said that in Southeast Asia he 'will assemble samples of handicraft products' during his 'contractor's initial survey for public showing in the US',⁷ and 'all handicraft purchased abroad becomes property of US government'.⁸ Consequently, when Wright toured Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, '[h]is most immediate decisions involved selecting some 1500 hundred items for display in this

country; but these had to be chosen not only on the basis of their intrinsic design interest but also in the larger context of the economic needs of the countries' (Fleishman, 1956, p.70). Economic needs encompassed American State Department ideas about what the nations of Southeast Asian required to maintain their societies and governments so they would not feel compelled to seek assistance from the USSR or China. Wright kept them in mind as he collected handicraft that in the New York Coliseum he presented to American businessmen and trade professionals. Wright explained, 'Government programs come and go. I hope my program has more vitality because it connects the customer here with a producer over there' (Hoffman, 1958, p.15). To connect 'the customer here' in the United States with handicraft artisans living in refugee camps throughout South Vietnam, in the Coliseum, the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development's 'tent-like enclosure' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72) took its place among 268 other exhibits for trades representing items of potential interest to trade and business representatives attending the five-day International Housewares Show, which 'expected to attract 15,000 buyers' - all from trade.⁹

In several ways, to 'sound out likely American firms on their interest in Southeast Asia' (Fleishman, 1956, p.70) and relate 'consumer reaction to design, production, and distribution problems' via representatives of American business and trade,¹⁰ Wright proved he was committed to taking a 'hardhearted business approach' (Hoffman, 1958, p.15) different from previous US sponsored aid abroad. For one thing, because the Coliseum served as a 'customs bonded warehouse area'¹¹ and 'goods may also be displayed under all the advantages of a premier trade show',¹² by displaying Southeast Asian handicrafts there, Wright avoided costs associated with importing them to other locations. In addition to saving money and significantly diminishing red tape, this strategy afforded Wright, like other exhibitors at the Coliseum, 'freedom to try out the market potentials of new or unusual products',¹³ namely, handicrafts unfamiliar to most Americans. Correspondingly, Wright approached the task of nurturing American interest in purchasing them 'as a designer would approach any problem, in stages, each one corresponding to an element of the complicated trade situation' (Fleishman, 1956, pp.68-

5 Box 38, *Wright Papers*.

6 Oversize Box 21, *Wright Papers*.

7 Box 46, *Wright Papers*.

8 Box 46, *Wright Papers*.

9 'Caution is urged in U.N. Aid role', *New York Times*, 26 June 1956, p.50. See also Pepis, 1956, p. 30.

10 Box 46, *Wright Papers*.

11 'Coliseum Offers Duty-Free Areas', *New York Times*, 4 May 1958, WT2.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

73). In two respects, Wright's attention to questions of marketing coincided with what industrial designer Don Wallance described as '[a]n increasing demand for well-designed and well-made products for modern living [that] has opened up new possibilities for the small industry aiming at a quality market' (p.82).

He modelled the profile of the industrial designer as the American cultural figure emerging as best-suited to integrate the creation with the marketing of handicraft within a complex network of resources and expectations. As Wallance explained, '[f]rom the initial conception of the product to its use by the ultimate consumer, a complex of interrelated activities is brought into play – market appraisal or analysis; product analysis, design, and development; technical research; cost analysis; materials specification and procurement; tool and die making; organization of production facilities; training of workers; choice and preparation of distribution channels; planning of promotional activities' (p.39). What is more, the multi-layered managerial and governmental and non-governmental aspects of Wright's duties coincided with changes in foreign diplomacy including expectations that diplomats must deal with an expanded depth of problems and wider range of tasks. The State Department summarised, 'We need people who can deal with complex economic problems, financial problems, scientific problems, legal problems, informational problems, geographic problems, politico-military problems, and a variety of other specialties' as well as 'generalists', 'men and women who can deal with a wide range of problems' (Livingston, 1954, p.762). In short, the purview of diplomacy was changing. According to the State Department, 'Diplomacy is becoming less concerned with relationships among governments and more concerned with relationships among peoples. Fundamentally, our most valuable and dependable alliances are rooted in this people-to-people relationship' (Livingston, 1954, p. 763). Meanwhile, industrial designers and those who studied their field noticed an increasing tendency for the American government to use designers 'in any type of investigation, and it is here spelled out in what is perhaps its largest context, the field of international trade' (Fleishman, 1956, p. 24). After all, according to Fleishman, 'Nations may disagree on politics, tariff and disarmament, but the language of fashion and design is universal. So is the problem of making a living and learning a business' (Roe, 1956, p. 41). The latter sentiment dovetailed with Wright's appraisal of what Southeast Asians could provide Americans. 'What we want to impress on the Asians...is that America will buy something other than tourist souvenirs from the

Orient. We will suggest they make fewer clay Buddhas and incense burners and more tableware, furniture, straw mats and hand-woven fabrics' (Roe, 1956, p. 41).

To ensure the existence of a healthy market for 'well-designed and well-made products for modern living' (Wallance, 1956, p. 82), Wallance urged industrial designers to pay attention to marketing as much or even more than design of a product. 'Because the products of these firms generally represent the most advanced approach in their field and have not yet received widespread consumer acceptance, successful marketing requires creative merchandising methods and informed and sympathetic sales people' (p. 82). At the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development 'two large vinyl plastic tents' intending to 'help the village artisans and small enterprises that make the products find a market while continuing the best of their traditional crafts and patterns of living'.¹⁴ Questionnaires that Wright gave to attendees - 'leading department store executives, import-export companies and manufacturers' - and that he 'analyzed at the end of the show to indicate preferences at the buyers' level'¹⁵ also epitomised creative merchandising intended to elicit the interest of 'sympathetic sales people' who would be willing to import and distribute handicraft from Southeast Asia for American consumption. From them, Wright identified 'at least 52 potential customers' (Hoffman, 1958, p.15), and he used information from the questionnaires to prepare proposals for individual nation projects in Taiwan and Cambodia, respectively.

Ultimately, retailers presenting housewares at the exposition 'had a complaint to register against the highly touted Russel Wright Asian exhibit'. Apparently, it failed to provide ways for buyers interested in purchasing handicrafts to do so during the exposition. 'Instead, they were referred to representatives who could explain the background and finer qualities of a work, but could not take an order or provide the name of a source for the goods' (Okell, 1956, p.20). The complaint underscores that Wright treated evaluating the performance of 'the atmosphere of an oriental bazaar' (Fleishman, 1956, pp.68–73) as a key component of his 'creative merchandising' (Wallance, 1956, p.82) of Southeast Asian handicraft, keeping in mind the 'general concerns of a social system of authority' (Said, 1978, p.45) back in Washington D.C. In this respect, Wright's first task was to pique the interest of potential trade and business and then he would follow through by gathering information and additional responses. These procedures Wright had shaped with the approval of the ICA.

¹⁴ 'Caution is urged in U.N.Aid role', 1956, p. 50.

¹⁵ Ibid.

'A bazaar in the Coliseum'

The 'tent-like enclosure' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72) displaying handicrafts served as the primary means with which Wright enticed trade and business representatives to become interested in Southeast Asia. Moreover, through a two faceted process of domestication, it cast Southeast Asia as different from the United States yet also subservient to and able to meet American domestic interests.

One facet of domestication involved establishing that Southeast Asian handicraft originated from and belonged to somewhere other than the United States, namely, the 'orient'. For example, in writing about the pavilion, Fleishman noted that 'Mr. Wright wanted to show the oriental objects in an atmosphere natural to them, which would communicate the spirit of the places where they were collected' (p.72). Fleishman indicates that Wright associated 'oriental' handicraft with a place where it existed and from where Wright collected it. An additional implication is that the place where handicrafts belonged in 'an atmosphere natural to them' differed in 'spirit' from mid twentieth century America, which presumably was unnatural for them. In this context, the 'oriental' pavilion both conjured an environment intended to attract the curiosity of American 'widespread interest in the alien and unusual' (Said, 1978, pp.39–40) and simulate 'an atmosphere natural to' 'oriental objects' that differed from the larger surroundings.

In regard to Orientalist devotion to 'the alien and unusual', Wright's statements about 'oriental objects' include many references highlighting their differences from contemporary American objects, for example, based on their manufacture. 'Most striking of all,' Wright remarked in regard to pottery sites he visited in Vietnam, 'was a shot of potters who, lacking the wheel on which clay usually is revolved, made wheels of themselves in a fashion' (Pepis, 1956, p.39). In this example Wright implies that in contrast to the manual or machine-driven wheel preferred in the U.S, in Southeast Asia potters must cobble together even an approximation of these tools.

Additionally, Wright wrote about places where he collected handicraft by dwelling on differences between them and an American environment and an American sense of space and place. To this point Fleishmann noted about the pavilion in the Coliseum that '[b]y carefully placing the pottery, metalwork and other small objects on low tables, the designers caught the predominantly horizontal spirit of an oriental trading place without being literal' (p.72). Fleishman alerts us to ways that the presentation of handicraft in the pavilion advanced Wright's intention to root 'oriental objects'

not simply in sites where artisans made it but especially in places where it became available for purchase and distribution. Interestingly, to create the pavilion Wright worked with two young East Coast designers who had strong international professional interests. Romaldo Giurgola, who taught at the University of Pennsylvania, was born in Italy and had worked there as a designer. Muriel Emmanuel has summarised Giurgola's designs as treating 'architecture as a continuous progression based on historical precedents' (pp.285–7). Paul J. Mitarachi trained at Harvard and then designed exhibition installations in the United States and El Salvador. Although neither Giurgola nor Mitarachi had visited Southeast Asia, perhaps each man's interest in building traditions outside North America helped them collaboratively evoke 'an oriental trading place' conjuring 'the atmosphere of an oriental bazaar' (Fleishman, 1956, pp.68–73).

As a result, the site served to root handicraft and its makers autochthonically, that is, as if occurring naturally in and belonging somewhere, in this case, the 'orient', which reciprocally designated the handicrafts displayed there as 'oriental objects'. The emphasis on bringing forth aspects of an original location for them reinforced Wright's practice of distinguishing between 'other parts of the world' and 'home'. Wright observed: 'We brought the issue home to the American market by emphasizing the craft traditions in these countries which are not duplicated in other parts of the world' (Fleishman, 1956, p.71). Notably, Giurgola and Mitarachi organised differences between 'other parts of the world' and 'home' by designing a pavilion consisting of not one but two separate yet interrelated 'tents'.

In one, 'oriental objects' and their arrangement in space connoted 'oriental' societies, cultures, people, and craft processes. The adjacent tent targeted representatives of the American home front interactively. Inside, 'conferences with various trade groups were held,' and businessmen watched 'regional survey movies' including '6,000 ft. colored 16 mm movies and slides, [and an] 18 minute movie of Vietnam' that Wright had made during his survey trip to Southeast Asia to detail handicraft materials, methods of fabrication and the appearance of handicraft for American markets (Fleishman, 1956, p.71). Respectively, the tents contrasted stasis and mobility, with handicraft objects rooted to their 'natural' environment in one, and their potential circulation via trade pathways facilitated by the U.S. State Department and American business and trade in the other. The tent with the movies and slides also connoted mobility by referencing Wright's travels. Even its design portended mobility insofar as the 'tent-like enclosure made of white vinyl

strips and scaffolding...could be easily moved or replaced in the event of a road tour' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72).

Together, the tents made up a 'bazaar in the Coliseum' connoting 'the informality of the oriental street-markets' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72) and affording 'a unique experience for members of the trade' (Fleishman, 1956, pp.68–73). To this latter point the bazaar performed the Coliseum's implicit expectation that exhibits amount to 'show business' (Palmer, 1956, p.14), that is, a spectacular presentation of the salient features of products. Also, the association of 'show' with the Coliseum correlates with the press acclaiming

the Coliseum's enormous size and number of elevators, state of the art lighting, air conditioning, infrastructure and generous seating space, all of which rendered it superbly equipped to facilitate international trade in and through New York City. In addition, publicity about the Coliseum, which opened only two months prior to the International Housewares Exposition of which the Southeast Asian Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit constituted a part, estimated how much money it would take in from businessmen visiting its trade fairs.

Interestingly, despite its unremarkable international modernist architecture and the reference its name

Figure 8.3: Avrom Fleishman, 'The Designer as Economic Diplomat: The Government Applies the Designer's Approach to Problems of International Trade', *Industrial Design* 3 (August, 1956), p. 72.

Figure 8.4: Avrom Fleishman, 'The Designer as Economic Diplomat: The Government Applies the Designer's Approach to Problems of International Trade', *Industrial Design* 3 (August, 1956), p. 73.

made to the magnificent engineering feat in ancient Imperial Rome, a writer for *Time* magazine hinted that the New York Coliseum qualified as 'oriental'. This 'Temple for Mecca',¹⁶ 'Mecca' being a Western transliteration of the Arabic 'Makkah', called to mind large numbers of people meeting along routes of pilgrimage and trade. Yet images published in the mass print media tended not to emphasise individual exhibits. Perhaps the Coliseum's features and agenda to bring world products and commerce to New York seemed grander than photographs or drawings could capture. As a result, depictions of the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development exhibit are limited to a tiny black and white photograph showing the exterior of one of the tents as a dark linear armature holding a series of rectangular white vinyl strips taut along the outside and on the inside, supporting longer versions that dip downward (Figure 8.3). A larger drawing takes a bird's-eye view of a tent articulated by scratchy thin and inky black lines denoting scaffolding and aggregates of blocky and curved exhibition furniture on which generic shapes indicate handicrafts (Figure 8.4). Neither image designates areas allotted to specific places in Southeast Asia or identifies particular objects.

A second facet of domestication consisted of clarifying how 'oriental objects' differed from American objects, nevertheless, they seemed useful for, if not necessary to, American homes. These issues of difference and desire relate to key themes in Said's scholarship. For example, in the section of *Orientalism* called 'Knowing the Oriental', Said outlined how Europeans constructed their Middle Eastern subjects as 'the Orient, the Oriental, and his world' (p.40) existing in binary relationships that gave Europeans the greater power, authority and significance. Said showed that Orientalist Europe constructed its relationship with the Middle East on a perception of 'a strong and a weak partner', with Europe having the 'position of strength, not to say dominance' (p.40) over people and cultures it perceived not to change let alone develop or progress. Generally, Europeans perceived their civilization and selves as Western, changing, progressive and modern in contrast to Middle Easterners who, they asserted, remained primitive, pre-modern and unchanging. As evidenced by commentary from Wright and his colleagues, the ICA's relationship with Southeast Asia indexed 'views [of] the Orient as something whose existence is not only displayed but has remained fixed in time and place for the West' (Said, 1978, p.109). The last theme recalls the stasis

associated with Southeast Asia and mobility associated with American business and trade characterizing the contents of the respective tents in the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development exhibit.

The binary articulation of a modern, developing West and static, more primitive Southeast Asia nourished America's ideas about Vietnam's need for salvage, which also resonates in Orientalist thinking. Following Said's work, Ali Behdad explored how Europeans worried about Middle Eastern societies and cultures that required 'intervention for historical preservation and cultural renewal' to avoid becoming 'a deteriorated and decadent civilization' (p.715) that is no longer vital, given its apparent stasis and other differences from modern Western culture and society. Likewise, anxiety that unchecked industrialization in Vietnam could wipe out the 'native handicrafts' Wright surveyed to 'develop a profitable foreign' trade with 'these areas'¹⁷ encouraged American ideas about managing the vulnerabilities they associated with Southeast Asia. Speaking at the opening of the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Henry Cabot Lodge comingled American economic development in Southeast Asia with salvage and cultural heritage: 'Economic development should not mean disrupting old cultures, uprooting people or throwing away the best heritage of the past centuries'.¹⁸ Lodge implied that the activity of the United States in Southeast Asia amounted to activity upon its heritage. Importantly, he conveyed that insofar as Southeast Asia required economic assistance, so, too, did its heritage deserve salvage involving, in Said's terms, a relationship 'between a strong and a weak partner' (p.140). As Virginia Dominguez explains:

■ We assert the need to salvage, rescue, save, [and] preserve a series of objects or forms, we announce our fear of [their] destruction, our inability to trust others to take appropriate action and our sense of entitlement over the fate of the objects. Our best liberal intentions do little other than patronize those slated for cultural salvage. (p.131). ■

To be sure, in reflecting on Southeast Asian handicrafts Wright seemed to promote change. 'I am impatient with all those Americans I encounter –those sentimentalists who are only interested in preserving oriental culture traditions, and art. These things are

16 'A Temple for Mecca', *Time*, 30 April 1956, vol.67, issue 18.

17 'Wright on 8-week Hunt for Designs in Southeast Asia', *Retailing*, 30 November 1955, p.4.

18 'Caution is urged in U.N. Aid role', 1956, p. 50.

dead'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Wright left it to himself, his colleagues and American business and tradesmen as well as politicians and diplomats to establish standards and expectations for Southeast Asian artisans, explaining, '[c]ulturally, we must help them to find and evolve their own kind of 20th century customs and expressions and adaption to our times'.²⁰ The ICA benefitted from Wright's efforts to adapt Southeast Asian handicraft to 'our times' because by 1958, other Americans were reporting that the region was modernizing to the detriment of native industries, as indicated by this passage from an article by Kathleen McLaughlin in *Craft Horizons* titled 'Threat of Extinction for Ancient Crafts in Asia?': 'Everywhere in Asia new factories are springing up, turning out in almost dizzying quantities volumes of household articles [...] at prices far below levels the handworker can afford to meet', sparking 'speculation in various countries about the dilemma of the crafts workers and the rise of unemployment among them' (p.2). Equally at issue was the implied question of how to salvage the crafts workers' ability to find steady work, in other words, how to help them resettle. To this point, the pavilion in the Coliseum furnished a temporary exhibit promoting the long term restoration of the vitality of Southeast Asia. This consisted of aiding Southeast Asians in developing their economies by producing their native handicraft from where they resettled, which would generate a consistent flow of trade situating handicraft where it was needed – in American homes.

Adapting Vietnamese handicraft to American 'times' also converged with emerging critiques of the modern West. Writing in *Industrial Design*, Wallance summarised, 'Western man seems to have lost the capacity for making things beautifully as a matter of course. Industrial work, usually fragmentary and repetitive, does not provide the satisfaction and psychological balance that derives from making a complete object through personal skill' (p.81). The 'bankruptcy' followed from mass produced 'impersonal standardized products' made of 'sleek new synthetic materials' (pp.81–2). In a letter he wrote to Lodge, Wright indicated that Americans' needs for the 'ancient crafts in Asia' emerged from the success of 'our times'. 'There are statistics to prove that this need for the old and the handmade grows right along with the new, machine-made products'.²¹ Accordingly, there is 'an expanding market for hand-made things,' and 'a real need for things that are personal in character, for accidental irregularities, for natural materials and

textures' (Wallance, 1956, p. 81–2). Wright explained:

■ You see, because of the machine-made character of our mass-produced products, which enable us to distribute so many useful products for our living to all of our millions of people, we evolve around us a background of simplicity, and yet, also, of monotony and repetition. Therefore, we have a need for and want objects made by hand crafts about us in our homes. Products made by handicrafts have a personality and a charm which the machine-made products cannot have.²² ■

Wright directly linked his advocacy regarding what American homes needed to the handicraft he considered pre-technological, ancient, enduring and emblematic of Southeast Asia: 'We want handmade products from foreign countries but we want them to have the character and the personality of a particular foreign country from which they come'.²³ Wright did not consider importing American standards and material goods to Southeast Asia for the benefit of its people.

■ We cannot hope to provide Asians with American houses, kitchens, bathrooms, or appliances ... But it should not be impossible to teach them ... they are more likely to improve their condition within their actual potentialities, rather than concentrating on an unhappy, piecemeal imitation of the United States. (Wright, 1956, p.96) ■

Instead, their 'actual potentialities', according to Wright, included 'Asians' providing Americans with what the latter required: 'the great numbers of skilled handicraftsmen of the Far East can supply a goodly amount of the vast and increasing and eternal need for handicraft products'.²⁴ Wright flexed his authority by deciding how handicraft artisans could address the need: 'it is necessary that such products be designed for a world of which the Asian handicraftsman has little knowledge or understanding'.²⁵

In addition to setting up cooperatives and training to help artisans create objects that Americans desired, in other ways Wright and his staff adapted Southeast Asian handicraft and connotations of the 'orient' to contemporary American 'times' and interests in hand-made things. For example, Wright combined modern American materials and 'oriental' cultural forms and orientations to space. Consequently, Giurgola and Mitarachi designed an 'oriental bazaar' using white

19 Box 38, Wright Papers.

20 Box 38, Wright Papers.

21 Box 38, Wright Papers.

22 Box 38, Wright Papers.

23 Box 38, Wright Papers.

24 Box 38, Wright Papers.

25 Box 38, Wright Papers.

vinyl strips and scaffolding. Therein, handicraft alluded to 'an oriental trading place' by dint of its horizontal organization—'the predominantly horizontal spirit of an oriental trading place without being literal' and additional features, for instance, 'objects [were] suspended and arranged with some freedom but without the random clutter of the conventional bazaar' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72). Furthermore, the space accommodated handicrafts not only from Vietnam but also Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Organizationally, it was 'divided visually with a single bold color as background for each of the five nations, and with mats and fabrics hung on the frames and partitions' (Fleishman, 1956, p.72).

Also, Wright mentioned adjusting Southeast Asian handicraft to American tastes when he described that in Southeast Asia, he and his colleagues 'found an abundance of handicraft labour of the type almost extant in the USA, and many native products which can be adapted by design for American use'.²⁶ Wright modelled how to familiarise Americans with Asian culture when, during the same year that he had organised the Southeast Asia Rehabilitation and Trade Development Exhibit for the Coliseum, he designed a new collection of American home furnishing items. 'Esquire', which Wright created for the Edwin M. Knowles China Company, consisted of 'five patterns, one plain antique white and the others with stylized natural themes somewhat oriental in flavor'.²⁷ Objects that Wright displayed at the United States World Trade Fair held at the Coliseum during May 1958 exemplified additional possibilities of adaptations. 'When asked if he plans to use pure native design, Mr. Wright says, "I'm adapting designs all over the place"' (Hoffman, 1958, p.15). Since 1956, he adapted existing garments like hats and clothing by adding decoration and changing their use from labour to fashion, thus generating a 'Siamese straw hat adapted for American use and a Siamese scarf brought back to this country by Josef Walker, noted fashion designer and stylist' along with a 'Vietnamese native straw hat embroidered on the underside'.²⁸

The greatest example of Wright's adaptations was Giurgola's and Mitarachi's two white plastic tents constituting a 'bazaar in the coliseum'. They calibrated the sleek white plasticity commensurate with the modern international design style of corporate Manhattan, to evoke Southeast Asia as the 'orient', a place, time and culture the U.S. State Department endeavoured to aid by establishing diplomatically

structured, economic pathways. Importantly, the pavilion normalised the Cold War in Southeast Asia based on what it omitted - visual representations portraying the actual places where the handicrafts were made, such as the refugee centres clotting the terrain in south Vietnam. At the time, American mass print media and books, such as Tom Dooley's *Deliver Us From Evil, The Story of Viet Nam's Flight to Freedom* (1960), published black and white photographs highlighting the raw surroundings of refugee tent villages filled with listless women and children signifying broken families and the tremendous human suffering of the resettlement process.

Wright mentioned it in 'Gold Mine in Southeast Asia': 'one has only to see the refugee slums elsewhere in Hong Kong, and the even sadder Vietnam camps, to realize how much remains to be done – among other things to provide employment in crafts and small industries' (p.97). At the same time, however, he maintained a trajectory of Orientalism 'premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak' (Said, 1978, p.22). Wright represented handicraft artisans as if disengaged from their present circumstances, existing outside of Western experiences and expectations concerning history and contemporaneity, and deficient in aspects of their lifestyle in comparison to Americans. From this place Wright tapped into an ostensibly timeless craft tradition that served as a point of entry for artisans into sustained contact with modern America. Accordingly, the United States would benefit when the refugee artisan realised 'that goods created by his own hands are not only useful to him but maybe of economic value in the industrialized world as well'.²⁹ Conversely, the Americans held, from this perspective Vietnam would profit, too. 'Instead of becoming the helpless victim of industrialization, village crafts, revitalized, could play a minor, perhaps, but active part in a new kind of over-all development' (Wright, 1956, p.96).

Conclusion

As the duties the American State Department contracted from Wright changed, so did the appearance of subsequent exhibitions of the Southeast Asian handicraft he promoted. For the United States World Trade Fair held at the New York Coliseum from 7–17 May, 1958, Wright displayed some items he collected in Southeast Asia during 1956, such as 'a conical-shaped hat worn by Vietnamese women and a basket made by 'Moi' tribes' (Emerson, 1958, p.33) along with new objects the craft workshops in Vietnam produced.

²⁶ Box 38, *Wright Papers*.

²⁷ 'Wright Shows his New Designs', *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December 1956, WD.

²⁸ Box 44, *Wright Papers*.

²⁹ Box 38, *Wright Papers*.

The latter ranged from reiterations of historical forms – ‘Sculpture from the Bien Hòa Cooperative School of Ceramics outside Saigon will include bronze figures reproduced from the Khmer period’ (Emerson, 1958, p.33) – to a lacquered screen created by the contemporary artist, Thanh Le. Interestingly, for an audience including ‘both commercial buyers and the general public on designated days’ (Jones, 1958, p.1), Wright put aside references to an oriental bazaar for modernist grid scaffolding.

Something else changed. Instead of finding handicraft makers in Southeast Asia he focused on getting their products to American consumers more directly. Meanwhile, the American press paid less attention to the artisans’ situation and more to Wright’s status, often emphasizing his knowledge not simply about ‘the Orient’ but specifically about Vietnam. For example, for the fall of 1958, Wright organised an exhibition of ‘art objects and handicrafts from Vietnam’ for purchase that would circulate to twelve major U.S. cities, beginning with V&J Sloane in New York. Accordingly, the press emphasised that the exhibition of ‘art objects and handicrafts from Vietnam’ was ‘selected and coordinated by Russel Wright, industrial designer. A man with a great affinity for the Orient, Mr. Wright has been associated with Vietnam since 1956’.³⁰ For his part, instead of referencing the items’ origins in a place, way of life or people, Wright renarrated handicraft as representative of Vietnam the nation’s character – ‘They represent some of the beauty of Vietnamese culture ...’, although he did maintain its difference from American culture by pointing out ‘its exotic character’.³¹ Still, he did not foreground the place and time from whence the objects came or stress their fine art status. He cautioned: ‘This is not a ‘museum’ exhibit.’³² Instead, Wright concentrated on the items’ availability to middle class consumers: ‘The pieces are for sale or are samples from which orders may be given’.³³ ‘All articles at this exhibit can be ordered for delivery in three months. Some lacquer screens and paintings can be bought immediately’.³⁴

The manner in which Wright represented handicrafts and their corresponding significance for Americans had shifted from emphasizing their belonging to the ‘orient’ and having the potential to enrich American lifestyles and homes, to their status as an index of Wright’s

authority as an expert and tastemaker for American middle class consumers. Corresponding changes in settings, from pavilions connoting an ‘oriental bazaar’ to a modernist installation circulating among urban anchor department stores, tell us that domesticating Vietnam was a process of change arcing from promoting the foreignness of its culture to adapting its differences to the needs and desires of American consumers and finally, bringing wonderful objects to Americans via their familiar department stores, which urged them to think not of Vietnamese homes and places but of their own. Changes in Wright’s treatment of handicraft correlate with a shift in State Department concerns about the politics of a region and related refugee crises in the context of Vietnam’s post-colonial status and the Cold War, towards a horizon of possibilities for American trade and business and the necessity of completing the task of shepherding a specific nation, Vietnam, into the American circle of political allies and trade partners and into the American middle class home.

Bibliography

- 1 Behdad, A. (2010) ‘Orientalism matters’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol.56, no. 4, p.709-728
- 2 ‘Caution is urged in U.N. Aid role’, *New York Times*, 26 June (1956), p.50.
- 3 ‘Coliseum offers duty-free areas’, *New York Times*, 4 May (1958), WT2.
- 4 Crossley, N. (2005) ‘Orientalism’, *Key Concepts in Critical Social Theory*, London, Sage.
- 5 Dominguez, V. (1987) ‘Of other peoples: Beyond the “salvage” paradigm’, in H. Foster (ed.) *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, no.1, Seattle, Dia Foundation and Bay Press, p.131-137.
- 6 Dooley, T.A. (1960) *Deliver Us from Evil, The Story of Viet Nam’s Flight to Freedom*, New York, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy.
- 7 ECAFE [Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East] (1951) ‘Handicrafts marketing survey’, *United Nations Economic and Social Council*, 15 February.
- 8 Emerson, G. (1958) ‘Trade fair will introduce Vietnamese to Americans’, *New York Times*, 2 May, p.33.
- 9 Emmanuel, M. (1980) *Contemporary Architects*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, pp.285–7.
- 10 Fleishman, A. (1956) ‘The designer as economic diplomat: The government applies the designer’s approach to problems of international trade’, *Industrial Design* 3, August, pp.24–73.

30 ‘Vietnamese Handicrafts Begin Nation-Wide Tour’, *New York Times*, 25 September 1958, p.39.

31 ‘Handicrafts from Vietnam’, *New York Times*, 29 September 1958, p.26.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 ‘Vietnamese Handicrafts Begin Nation-Wide Tour’, p.39.

- 11 Haddow, R. (1997) *Pavilions of Plenty, Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 12 'Handicrafts from Vietnam', *New York Times*, 29 September (1958), p.26.
- 13 Hoffman, M. (1958) 'U.S. designer helps craft work in Asia', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 February, p.15.
- 14 Jones, B. M. (1958) 'Wares of the Coliseum', *New York Times*, p.1.
- 15 Kennedy, J.F. (1956) 'America's stake in Vietnam: Cornerstone of the free world in Southeast Asia', *Vital Speeches of the Day* 22, no.20, 1 August, pp. 617–8.
- 16 Klein, C. (2003) *Cold War Orientalism: Asian in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- 17 Little, D. (2002) *Orientalism, American Style: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.
- 18 Livingston, M.T. (1954) 'The new environment of American diplomacy', *The Department of State Bulletin*, vol.22, November, p. 762.
- 19 McLaughlin, K. (1958) 'Threat of extinction for ancient crafts in Asia?', *Craft Horizons*, vol.18, no.4, p.2.
- 20 Okell, B. (1956) 'Coliseum import sales sluggish', *Retailing Daily*, 28 June, p.20.
- 21 Palmer, C.B. (1956) 'Coliseum: Showcase of showcases', *New York Times Magazine*, 29 April, p.14.
- 22 Pepis, B. (1956) 'Handcrafts bring Asia near to U.S.: Hong Kong furniture', *New York Times*, 6 June, p.30.
- 23 Robertson, W. S. (1956) 'Progress in free Viet-Nam', *Department of State Bulletin*, vol.34, 11 June.
- 24 Roe, D. (1956) 'Designers tour Far East', *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, 1 February, p.41.
- 25 Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon.
- 26 'A temple for Mecca', *Time*, 30 April (1956), vol.67, issue 18.
- 27 'Vietnamese handcrafts begin nation-wide tour', *New York Times*, 25 September (1958), p.39.
- 28 Wallace, D. (1956) 'Design and craftsmanship in small scale industry, Part two', *Industrial Design*, vol.3, June, p.82.
- 29 'Wright on 8-week hunt for designs in Southeast Asia', *Retailing*, 30 November (1955), p.4.
- 30 'Wright shows his new designs', *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December (1956), WD.
- 31 Wright, R. (1956) 'Gold mine in Southeast Asia', *Interiors*, vol.116, August, p.96–7.