

Acknowledgments

In 1988, Clarence Shangraw, Linda Schiefler Marks, and I (all then staff of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco) traveled to Viet Nam to discuss the possibility of borrowing works of art from major Vietnamese museums for an exhibition in the United States. Rand Castile, then director of Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, was an enthusiastic supporter of the project. Many years of negotiations also brought changes in personnel, altered conceptions of the exhibition, necessitated changing the lists of objects, and enlisted the involvement of a number of different institutions, both here and abroad. Today, the exhibition has at last come to fruition.

Only three people remain of those originally involved from the many museums participating in the dialogue of 1988: Mrs. Tran Thi Thanh Dao of the Museum of Vietnamese History, Ho Chi Minh City, Dr. Nguyen Dinh Chien of the National Museum of Vietnamese History, Ha Noi, and myself. My gratitude extends back over the years to the many others who have also worked to realize this project. They are too numerous to list here, and rather than risk inadvertently excluding someone, I hope that all who have participated recognize my sincere thanks. They have helped to realize a dream.

In recent years, Dr. Le Thi Minh Ly of Viet Nam's Ministry of Culture has generously given us her time, advice, and support in this project; she represents the many extremely helpful people from the Ministry who were involved in this project over these past twenty years. I thank them all. On the U.S. side, representatives from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Freer Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., Asia Society, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, have traveled to Viet Nam, negotiated at the various Vietnamese consulates, and worked toward this goal. The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, though not a venue for this exhibition, spearheaded much of the work.

During this past year, staff from Asia Society and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, engaged in the day-to-day work required to bring an exhibition of this scale and scope to the public. It has been a joy working with all of them, in particular Clare McGowan, Adriana Proser, Melissa Chiu, Vishakha Desai, and Marion Kocot of Asia Society, and Christine Starkman, Diane Lovejoy, Heather Brand, Kem Schultz, and Marty Stein of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The contributors to this publication—Andreas Reinecke, Pierre-Yves Manguin, Kerry Nguyen-Long, and Nguyen Dinh Chien—proved excellent colleagues, not only in their marvelous writing, but in their rare ability to meet all deadlines; Lorna Price, editor par excellence, is always a joy to work with, given her even-handed pen. Daphne Geismar has designed an exquisite book.

Finally, I thank my family and friends for bearing with me all these years, as this project has risen and ebbed like the tide, often carrying my emotions with it. I feel fortunate in having played a small part in bringing this taste of Vietnamese culture to the American public.

Nancy Tingley