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Albert Winsemius: De man die Nederland en Singapore rijk maakte [Albert Winsemius: The man who made the Netherlands and Singapore rich]. By Frans Stoelinga. Amsterdam: Boom, 2021. 336 pp.

A biography of Dutch UN adviser Albert Winsemius (1910–96)—important for the post-independence development of Singapore but also for his European homeland after 1945—was missing until now. Stoelinga, a former businessman who lived in Singapore during the crucial 1965–1971 period, aims to fill that void with an adaptation of his dissertation for a general audience. His work on Winsemius merits attention from scholars of Singapore and of the intellectual history of development.

Pivotal work by Hong Lysa, Huang Jianli, Loh Kah Seng and others revised the orthodox Singapore story of Lee Kuan Yew’s introduction to the anti-colonial Chinese student activists. Stoelinga’s work offers tantalizing clues into what helped Lee see them as “communist” threats and result in the British-educated anti-colonial politician’s turn to American ways.

Apart from chapters summarizing Singapore’s history and the parallels between the Dutch and Singaporean starting points, the book tells the story of its protagonist in chronological order. From a modest, Calvinist background in the rural north of the Netherlands, Winsemius worked his way to a doctorate in Rotterdam and ended up at the Ministry for Trade, Industry and Shipping just before the German occupation in 1940. As Nazification of the bureaucracy intensified, he no longer felt safe staying in his price-controlling role. Stoelinga argues that the period from his sick leave in 1943 to his exoneration by the post-war denazification commission shaped his professional views on how to reorganize government.

Subsequent involvement with handling Marshall aid from the United States familiarized Winsemius with developing Dutch industry and exposed him to American anti-communist views. Winsemius co-authored the post-war industrialization memoranda for the Netherlands and helped implement them in 1949. Close

coordination with domestic and foreign businesses, including the arms industry, was the hallmark of the hands-on approach adopted by him as the new director-general for industrialization at the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Stoelinga describes Winsemius as a smart but tough person who always knew best. Through his network, in 1953 he wangled a position with the Spanish-Swiss arms manufacturer Hispano Suiza in Geneva, home to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The government official turned arms merchant judiciously left before the HS30 corruption scandal broke. Thanks to his international connections on the capitalist side of the cold war, he ended up being part of the UNDP mission to Singapore in 1960.

Stoelinga adds to our understanding of his Singapore role in three ways. First, according to the author, Winsemius brought along his political views to Singapore, urging Lee Kuan Yew towards anti-communism and the American way of business. Second, Stoelinga notes that Winsemius was opposed from the beginning to the way the merger with Malaysia was designed, placing stronger faith in promoting industrialization with a view to exporting to a global market. Last, the author stresses the parallels between Singapore's trajectory and Winsemius's plans earlier for the Netherlands.

The short chapter comparing the Netherlands after 1945 and Singapore after 1965 shows that the two countries—and, for that matter, post-war Europe on the one hand and the postcolonial world on the other—had more similarities than suggested by studies focusing on the uniqueness of the “Asian developmental state”. The way the Singapore model follows the Dutch blueprint is striking, from the establishment of the Economic Development Board and tripartism to the repeated folly of wage restraint. Lee and Winsemius both had an intellectually formative period in restive late 1940s Europe. Similar personalities might explain why Lee was so receptive to the anti-communist, anti-labour programme of Winsemius, whom Stoelinga quotes as not being particularly attached to democracy. Greater engagement with scholarship on Lee, such as the famous study by Michael Barr (2012), could have produced a more structured

comparison between the two strong-minded men beyond clichés of Calvinism and Confucianism.

Stoelinga's main contribution lies in his discussion of Winsemius's role in developing the Dutch and Singaporean economies. Authors like Barr and Skrbiš (2008) and Lily Zubaidah Rahim (2009) point to the Chinese ethnic turn in Lee's thinking starting in the 1980s. Stoelinga helps us understand the developmental statist period that came before. His work is a useful addition given the usual "great men" focus on the People's Action Party (PAP). Lacking engagement with Singaporean historiography, however, the biography makes it hard to judge how pivotal Winsemius's suggestions were in shaping the PAP's decision to crack down on people Stoelinga rather too easily calls "communists" or "pro-communists".

Winsemius went beyond his mandate to add a piece of handwritten political advice to his first report and also telling Lee in person of the deleterious impact of ethnic tensions and of communists, who needed to be got rid of, even if through jailing or killing them. But Stoelinga's discussion of Winsemius's influence on the decision to let the Raffles statue stand and the intra-PAP struggle against the leftists should have been put in the context of a discussion of contemporary domestic politics that is absent from the Singapore chapters.

Nevertheless, the book provides new insights into a man whose behind-the-scenes importance in the Netherlands and Singapore cannot be ignored by historians of the two countries' development. It would be worth considering a revised English version in cooperation with a historian of Singapore to link the work better to existing Anglophone literature and contextualize the Dutch antecedents.

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Writing the Modern: Selected Texts on Art & Art History in Singapore, Malaysia & Southeast Asia, 1973–2015. By T.K. Sabapathy. Singapore: NUS Press, 2018. 448 pp.

Rare is the opportunity to be treated to “a history of an art historian’s work” (p. 15) in Southeast Asia. Rarer still if this history is arrayed in the form of an anthology of writings that span more than four decades. *Writing the Modern*, more than a tender work of homage, is also an anthology of significant value for readers interested in the historiography of modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia.

Edited by Ahmad Mashadi, Susie Lingham, Peter Schoppert and Joyce Toh under the auspices of the Singapore Art Museum, where Sabapathy played a central role in shaping its regionalist institutional vision from its early years, the publication compiles Sabapathy’s past writings into four broad themes: (1) The Southeast Asian Artist in relation to Art History; (2) A Mind for Method, and an Eye for Medium, Material and Form; (3) Art Institutions and the Exhibition; and (4) Regionalist Perspectives on Southeast Asian Art. In doing so, the publication has excavated a broad catalogue of writings belonging to a wide range of categories and genres, with a singular sustained and unswerving zeal to engage with the serious study of art in all its possible forms.

The wider art public beyond Singapore and Malaysia would have recognized Sabapathy as the scholarly pioneer of a regionalist perspective, capturing an epoch of “(re)calibration of positions in response to the unfolding dynamics between geography, state, region and regionalisms, and their mobilisation of culture and scholarship” (p. 17). Here, rather than spotlighting his more well-known and widely circulated essays such as “Developing Regionalist Perspectives in