



# **Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work**

*Kimberly Kay Hoang*

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# Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work

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## Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work Kimberly Kay Hoang

This captivating ethnography explores Vietnam's sex industry as the country ascends the global and regional stage. Over the course of five years, author Kimberly Kay Hoang worked at four exclusive Saigon hostess bars catering to diverse clientele: wealthy local Vietnamese and Asian businessmen, Viet Kieus (ethnic Vietnamese living abroad), Western businessmen, and Western budget-tourists. *Dealing in Desire* takes an in-depth and often personal look at both the sex workers and their clients to show how Vietnamese high finance and benevolent giving are connected to the intimate spheres of the informal economy. For the domestic super-elite who use the levers of political power to channel foreign capital into real estate and manufacturing projects, conspicuous consumption is a means of projecting an image of Asian ascendancy to potential investors. For Viet Kieus and Westerners who bring remittances into the local economy, personal relationships with local sex workers reinforce their ideas of Asia's rise and Western decline, while simultaneously bolstering their diminished masculinity. *Dealing in Desire* illuminates Ho Chi Minh City's sex industry as not just a microcosm of the global economy, but a critical space where dreams and deals are traded.

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