



Dear Suzanne Phan,

My name is Anh-Vy Phan and I am the Communications Associate at the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network. We briefly spoke at Accented #30, DVAN's first in-person Accented event at the Salesforce Tower in early August. I am reaching out with regards to a story featuring Pulitzer-Prize winning author Viet Thanh Nguyen and his family's struggle with exploitation, displacement, and disenfranchisement.

Viet Thanh Nguyen has written a number of books and essays on his experiences as a migrant of the Vietnam War, including but not limited to: *The Refugees*, *The Sympathizer*, *The Displaced*, and *The Committed*. This fall, he will be releasing a memoir entitled *The Man of Two Faces*, which touches on the theories of his favorite philosopher, Ralph Ellison and his concept of the "Invisible Man", and Viet's own personal experience of being a "Man of Two Faces" due to being displaced as a result of the Vietnam War. Viet's family found refuge and rebuilt their lives in San Jose, California, a place he considers his hometown. Unfortunately, their hopes for peace and prosperity did not last for long, as the land where the supermarket that Nguyen's parents owned, the source of their livelihood, was being reclaimed by the City for development. The supermarket was called "Saigon Moi" (translated to "New Saigon"), a place where his parents and their community could begin to heal and grow. Once again, they found themselves displaced.

Gentrification has been a longstanding issue in the Bay Area, with the rise of tech industry and lucrative land development projects, but East San Jose, home to 180,000 Vietnamese-Americans and Vietnamese refugees, has been particularly targeted since 1973, when Vietnamese refugees first began arriving in the United States. 72% of respondents in a survey issued in 2020 personally knew individuals and families that had been forced out of East San Jose. With redlining and urban displacement becoming a greater issue, families like Nguyen's were and are unable to afford housing costs, and find themselves forcibly removed from their newfound homes.

We at DVAN will be hosting the San Jose leg of his Book Launch at the San Jose City Hall Rotunda, which sits on the same land that his parents' supermarket used to be located. This event is momentous for Nguyen; it is an act of resistance, as he is reclaiming and sharing his own narrative of the War, its impact on him, and how he had to constantly reconfigure and redefine his multifaceted identity as a



Vietnamese-American man, a son, a refugee, a writer, a husband, a father, and so on. The Mayor of San Jose, Matt Mahan, will also be personally attending the event.

Nguyen will be joined by Cathy Park Hong, author of New York Times Bestseller, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. The decision to speak with Hong is an interesting one, given that he disagrees with the theories and ideologies presented in her book. *Minor Feelings* discusses the Asian-American racialized identity, and how we have “minor feelings” towards racism because of our identity as existing between White and Black identities in America. *A Man of Two Faces* builds upon this, adding that while Asian-American and refugeehood have struggles that are centered around the Model Minority and perpetual foreigner stereotypes, we must uncover the root of the racism we experience, which revolves around colonialism. The present tensions between these two pioneering Asian-American authors promises an interesting and thought-provoking discussion.

The event is projected to garner a large number of attendees from the Vietnamese and Southeast Asian communities in the Bay Area.

Please let us know if this is a story that interests you. I would be more than happy to schedule a phone or Zoom meeting to discuss more details. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anh-Vy Phan