Event Outline: Diasporic Poetics: Reading by Debut Asian American Poets
9:00am - 10:15am on Friday February 9th, 2024
Room 2210, Kansas City Convention Center

Event Description: Join four award-winning Asian diasporic poets for a celebratory reading of their debut poetry books. Whether excavating diasporic grief; reckoning with the silence of language; questioning the role of faith and belonging; complicating the translator’s agency—these unique poets challenge what it means to write and belong to the contemporary Asian American diaspora. The reading will be followed by a conversation about their writing journeys including their advice for poets working on their debut.

Event Category: Poetry Reading

Event Organiser & Moderator:

Jay Gao is a poet from Edinburgh, Scotland, living in New York City. His debut poetry collection Imperium (Carcanet, 2022) is a winner of the 2023 Michael Murphy Memorial Prize. He is also the author of five poetry chapbooks and pamphlets, two of which are forthcoming. He earned his MFA in Literary Arts (Poetry) from Brown University. Currently, he is a reader for Poetry magazine and PhD student in English at Columbia University.

Event Participants:

Megan Pinto is the author of Saints of Little Faith (Four Way Books, 2024). Her poems can be found or are forthcoming in the Los Angeles Review of Books, Guernica, Ploughshares, Lit Hub, and elsewhere. She lives in Brooklyn and holds an MFA in Poetry from Warren Wilson.
Jimin Seo is the author of OSSIA, a winner of The Changes Book Prize. He earned his MFA from Columbia University School of The Arts. His most recent project, Poems of Consumption, is a collaboration with artist Hamed Sinno premiering at the Barbican Centre in London.

Susan Nguyen is the author of the poetry collection Dear Diaspora (University of Nebraska Press), which won the Prairie Schooner Book Prize, a New Mexico-Arizona Book Award, and an Association for Asian American Studies Outstanding Achievement Award. She is currently the Senior Editor of Hayden's Ferry Review.

Xiao Yue Shan is a poet, writer, editor, and translator. then telling be the antidote won the Berkshire Prize and was published in 2023. How Often I Have Chosen Love was published in 2019.

Event Agenda:

8:45-8:50 Meet at Room 2210
9:00-9:05 5 Minutes Introduction
Read out accessibility statements, housekeeping. Jay will introduce and welcome the event, providing a brief moderator remark.

Note: Our event doesn’t come with any projector so you won’t be able to display your poems during your reading. If you would like to—(because of, say, a specific visual element etc.)—I can print out physical copies and distribute them around. Please just send me a PDF of the poems.

9:05-9:15 10 Minutes Megan Reading
9:15-9:25 10 Minutes Jimin Reading
9:25-9:35 10 Minutes Susan Reading
9:35-9:45 10 Minutes Xiao Yue Reading
9:45-10:05 20 Minutes Panel Discussion
Moderator questions. Respond to each other’s work.

1. How has the idea of ‘diaspora’ shaped your work?
2. What is your relationship to language/translation?
3. How do you view the contemporary space of Asian American/diasporic poetry? How has that supported or challenged your own poetics?
4. What was the journey like getting your debut book published?
5. Do you feel that the publication/reception of your book has been mediated by your Asian diasporic identity in any way? In either both good or bad ways? (Bad examples being, say, pigeonholed, negatively reviewed etc.)
6. What advice would you have to aspiring poets, especially minoritarian/Asian diasporic poets? (Thinking in terms of community, institutional support etc.)

10:05-10:15 10 Minutes Audience Q+A
Thank you, wrap up event etc.