Ma Vang is an Assistant Professor and founding chair of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Merced. Her book, History on the Run: Secrecy, Fugitivity, and Hmong Refugee Epistemologies (Duke University Press, 2021), examines how secrecy structures both official knowledge and refugee epistemologies about militarism and forced migration.

During its secret war in Laos (1961–1975), the United States recruited proxy soldiers among the Hmong people. Following the war, many of these Hmong soldiers migrated to the United States with refugee status. In History on the Run Ma Vang examines the experiences of Hmong refugees in the United States to theorize refugee histories and secrecy, in particular those of
the Hmong. Vang conceptualizes these histories as fugitive histories, as they move and are carried by people who move. Charting the incomplete archives of the war made secret through redacted US state documents, ethnography, film, and literature, Vang shows how Hmong refugees tell their stories in ways that exist separately from narratives of U.S. empire and that cannot be traditionally archived. In so doing, Vang outlines a methodology for writing histories that foreground refugee epistemologies despite systematic attempts to silence those histories.

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