

(This letter is extracted from [www.ThanhNienCoVang.com](http://www.ThanhNienCoVang.com))

January 13, 2009

Ms. Ysa Le  
Executive Director, VAALA  
1600 N. Broadway  
Santa Ana, CA 92706

Re: "Fresh off the Boat II: Art Speaks" exhibit

Dear Ms. Le:

We write to strongly urge the Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association (VAALA) to discontinue the use of offensive materials in your "Fresh off the Boat II: Art Speaks" exhibit that is currently on display in Santa Ana.

As elected officials, we embrace the First Amendment of our United States Constitution and the freedom of expression enshrined there. And as such we join together to exercise our own right to object to the provocative materials included in this exhibit.

Vietnam continues to be ruled by a totalitarian regime that denies its people the most basic of freedoms. A regime that condemns priests, monks, healthcare and human rights workers to prison simply for daring to speak of the very rights which so many Americans take for granted.

This display prominently features the flag of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the image of Ho Chi Minh. Imagine promoting a Nazi flag with a bust of Adolf Hitler in the middle of a community of Holocaust survivors! This sort of action is offensive, incendiary and irresponsible. It shouldn't be banned, but common decency should lead to a wiser decision.

Surely, VAALA is aware that many residents in Orange County, particularly those in the Vietnamese American community, will find your art exhibit to be offensive. We have already received countless complaints from constituents that are outraged by what they see as propaganda promoting the mainstreaming of the communist regime in Hanoi.

We ask you to exercise wiser judgment and immediately remove all the offensive materials from your art exhibit.

Sincerely,

VAN TRAN, Assemblyman 68th District  
MARGIE RICE, Mayor  
TRI TA, Mayor Pro Tem  
TRUONG DIEP, Council Member  
ANDY QUACH, Council Member  
FRANK FRY, Council Member  
ANDREW NGUYEN, School District Trustee