

## Artist Christine Sun Kim Calls TV Broadcast of Her Super Bowl Sign-Language Anthem a ‘Huge Disappointment’



BY ALEX GREENBERGER  February 3, 2020 5:36pm



Christine Sun Kim.  
SARA LINDEROTH

It is a rarity for an artist to appear in anything related to the Super Bowl, America’s most widely watched sporting event, and at Sunday’s game, Christine Sun Kim became one of the few ever to do so when she performed “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “America the Beautiful” in American Sign Language. But those who were watching via Fox’s TV broadcast of the game only caught a few seconds of her performance, which, according to Kim—who is deaf and the child of immigrant parents—suggests the network may not have been entirely attuned to important issues about representation.

In a *New York Times* op-ed published on Monday, Kim wrote that she was proud to have performed at the Super Bowl, but that she wished that Fox had paid her equal on-screen attention to that devoted to Demi Lovato and Yolanda Anderson, who sang nearby. “To be honest, it was a huge disappointment—a missed opportunity in the struggle for media inclusiveness on a large scale,” Kim writes. “Though thrilled and excited to be on the field serving the deaf community, I was angry and exasperated.”

Kim is known for making political statements in her work, and last year, she was one of the group of artists in the Whitney Biennial who requested

that their work be removed in protest of Warren B. Kanders, then the Whitney Museum's vice chair, who runs a company that makes tear gas canisters and other products that have been used against activists and asylum seekers around the world. (Kanders resigned from his post last summer.) Kim's work often probes modes of communication and what it means to have a voice, in the literal and metaphorical senses of the word.

In the op-ed, she described being deaf in America as "political," and went on to say that she was reticent to accept the National Football League's offer because others had declined to perform at the Super Bowl in solidarity with San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, the subject of much notoriety for kneeling in protest during the national anthem. Ultimately, Kim writes, she decided to take the opportunity because "our rights can easily disappear if we do not continue to show up in places like the Super Bowl."

She ends her op-ed on an optimistic note, pointing out that the entirety of her performances are available on YouTube (see below). "I had hoped to provide a public service for deaf viewers, and believed that my appearance might raise awareness of the systemic barriers and the stigmas attached to our deafness—and move some people to action," she writes. "I hope that despite the failure of Fox to make the performance accessible to all, it did do that."

Read Kim's op-ed at the *New York Times*, and see her performance of the national anthem below.



Greenberger, Alex, "Artist Christine Sun Kim Calls TV Broadcast of Her Super Bowl Sing-Language Anthem a 'Huge Disappointment'," ARTnews, February 3, 2020.  
<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/christine-sun-kim-super-bowl-1202676823/>