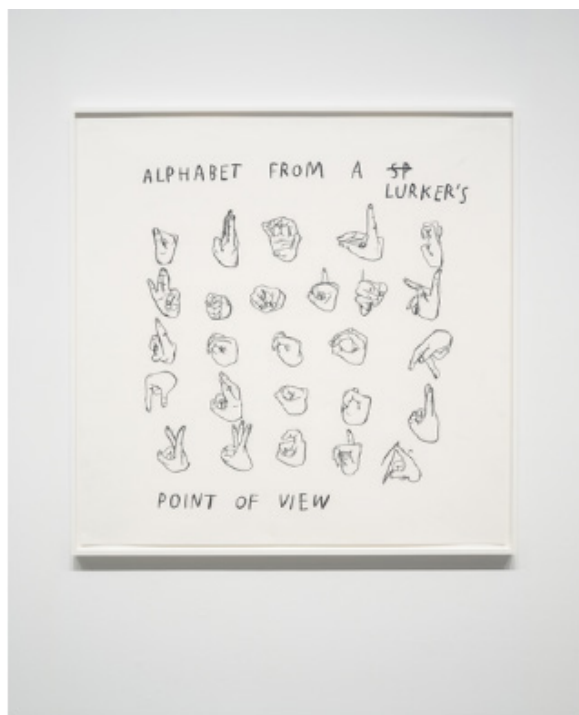


ARTFORUM



Christine Sun Kim, *Alphabet from a Lurker's Point of View*, 2019, charcoal and oil pastel on paper, 49 1/2 × 49 1/2".

CAMBRIDGE

Christine Sun Kim

MIT LIST VISUAL ARTS CENTER

20 Ames Street E15

February 7–April 12, 2020

I first encountered Christine Sun Kim's drawings in the Museum of Modern Art's "Soundings" exhibition in 2013, where she was showing poetic, gestural works based on the movements of American Sign Language and the visual language of musical scores. Equally impressive was the artist's statement in the catalogue. In a vocabulary as economical as her drawings, Kim made a series of observations on sound that were both eye- and ear-opening, describing it as "a form of authority" with its own "social currency" and outlining what it's like to "feel my voice internally": "Only my body can produce sounds fully accessible to me." John Cage's famous anecdote about hearing the workings of his own body in an anechoic chamber comes to mind. Perhaps sound is always inside us, no matter how much we can hear outside of ourselves.

At MIT's List Visual Arts Center, nine large pie charts, drawn in charcoal and black oil pastel on white paper, delineate the artist's "personal decisions" as a Deaf person with the same wit as the works shown in "Soundings," using language as much as line. (Kim capitalizes "Deaf" as a political gesture, making it more proper noun than limiting adjective.) With titles such as *Shit Hearing People Say to Me and Why I Play the Deaf Card* (all works cited, 2019), these infographics are funny, self-deprecating, prideful, revealing, and emotional, much like a good stand-up routine. True to form, they taught me a lot about deafness, ASL, Alexander "Fucking" Graham Bell (he was anti-sign language), and my own stereotypical reactions to Deafness as a hearing person.

In three other drawings in the exhibition, Kim presents the ASL alphabet from atypical perspectives: *Alphabet from the Speller's Point of View* literally flips the script; *Alphabet from a Bird's Point of View* provides the drone shot; and *Alphabet from a Lurker's Point of View* gives us side-eye.

— Damon Krukowski