



Art

The Most Influential Artists of 2020

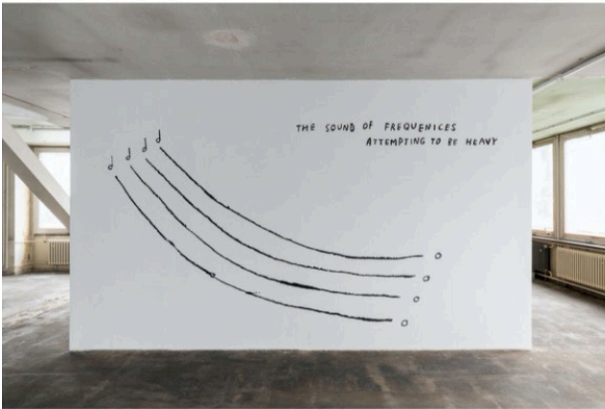
At the start of 2020, it was impossible to predict that this year would transform the art world as we knew it. By March, the COVID-19 pandemic began to throw entire years of museum, gallery, and biennial exhibitions into the balance, and it may have forever rocked the international art fair circuit. In June, the Black Lives Matter movement swept through the art world and ushered in a long overdue reckoning with the inequity and systemic racism of the art industry.

The artists below were at the forefront of these waves of change. They created fresh work to live up to this moment and launched fundraisers and initiatives to aid victims of COVID-19, promote BIPOC organizations, and lift up fellow artists. Some managed to set head-spinning auction records and opened spectacular museum shows; others set career milestones and earned due recognition for their longstanding, influential practices. They represent a small fraction of the artists who inspired us this year, though they stand out as leaders who will surely guide us through the next one and whatever it may bring.

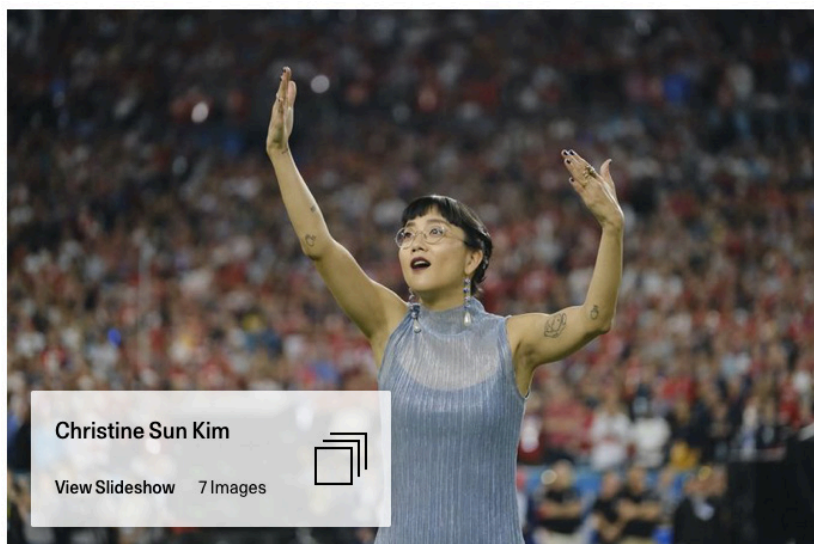
Christine Sun Kim

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B. 1980, Orange County, California. Lives and works in Berlin.



At Super Bowl LIV in February 2020, sound artist and performer Christine Sun Kim made a strong impression. At the 40-yard line, she performed the national anthem and “America the Beautiful” in American Sign Language. Known for her pointed explorations of sound’s role in society, Kim saw it as an opportunity to extend her work drawing attention to issues facing the greater deaf community to an audience of over 100 million viewers. Yet Fox Sports hardly aired the performance, leading the artist to pen an op-ed for *the New York Times*. “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,” Kim wrote. “I hope that despite the failure of Fox to make the performance accessible to all, it did do that.”



Kim's work has continued to receive major mainstream visibility this fall. In September, her 2018 work *One Week of Lullabies* for Roux became the Smithsonian American Art Museum's first-ever sound installation. The following month, Kim was named one of the Ford Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's inaugural Disability Futures Fellows. This year, she also held solo exhibitions at the MIT List Visual Arts Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo Shibuya Koen-dori Gallery; and this December, she opens a solo show, "Trauma, LOL," at her L.A. gallery François Ghebaly. Most recently, Kim's work was featured as part of *New York magazine's* initiative that commissioned artists to create their own versions of the United States's iconic "I Voted" stickers.

—Shannon Lee