

Christine Sun Kim

American Sigh Language

May 3 — May 31, 2025



François Ghebaly is proud to announce a new solo exhibition by the acclaimed artist Christine Sun Kim. *American Sigh Language*, Kim's third solo exhibition with the gallery, coincides with the artist's major museum survey, *Christine Sun Kim: All Day All Night*, which is co-organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, where it is on view in New York through July 6, and the Walker Art Center, where it will travel in Spring 2026.

Known for her incisive explorations of sound, language, and social relations, Christine Sun Kim has built a renowned practice that examines the nature and complexity of communication. Working through an interdisciplinary approach, Kim pulls from an array of visualization tactics, including musical notation, infographics, and her own sign language notation system. She often uses her own life experiences as her direct material, creating works with both diaristic origins and widely metaphorical implications.

In her new exhibition *American Sigh Language*, the present political moment weighs heavily on the artist. Weight, in fact, recurs as a key theme throughout the exhibition, pointing to a social and political context in which the current administration brashly erodes norms and diminishes civil rights protections for numerous groups of Americans, including people of color, transgender people, immigrants, and disabled people. Under this pressure, these targeted groups can feel the double burden of fighting for their rights while dealing with the weight of persecution. In *American Sigh Language*, Kim captures, records, and diagrams the feelings and implications of this weight.

The exhibition opens with a major new ten-channel sound work: *Community Sigh*. Collaborating with friends from around the world, Kim collected audio recordings of sixty-six Deaf people sighing. She pressed the sound clips on five vinyl records that play simultaneously on continuously repeating record players. From speakers spread throughout the gallery, the sounds of exasperation, exhaustion, anger, and frustration fill the room. Yet the piece also conveys a togetherness borne of shared experience and embodied in collective breathing. Atop

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each vinyl disk spins a hand-formed record weight. Typically used by audiophiles to improve vinyl playback, the record weights here symbolically burden the physicalized sounds, spinning dizzily in place.

Weight is also conveyed in two new drawings that explore an American Sign Language (ASL) idiom, MIND ROCK. A compound sign combining MIND and ROCK, the expression indicates that a thought has concretized into stone, as if to say that one's mind is made up, one's thoughts have become heavy. In her idiosyncratic notations, Kim puts her own spin on the signs, depicting them in one instance as a dark black circle that fuses thought and stone, and in another as an empty musical staff rebounding off a charcoal mass.

Kim elaborates on this use of musical notation in a new wall mural and drawing series called *Heavy Relevance*. Taking an open-ended approach to the concept of relevance, she creates an experimental score in which bands of empty staff lines become distorted and weighed down by singular quarter notes. Kim created the works while contemplating the fluctuations of cultural trend cycles in which ASL and Deaf culture become more or less relevant due to popularity factors largely outside the Deaf community's control. With federal rights and protections on the line, *Heavy Relevance* dwells on the distortions of relevancy and trendiness on an individual psyche, an institution, or on society at large.

Christine Sun Kim (b. 1980, Orange County) has exhibited and performed internationally, including at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2025); Gwangju Biennale (2023); Secession, Vienna (2023); Queens Museum, New York (2022); the Drawing Center, New York (2022); the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2021); Manchester International Festival, Manchester (2021); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (2020); Whitney Biennial, New York (2019); Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Buffalo (2019); Art Institute of Chicago (2018); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017); De Appel Arts Center, Amsterdam (2017); Berlin Biennale (2016); Shanghai Biennale (2016); MoMA PS1, New York (2015) and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013), among numerous others.

Kim's awards and fellowships include an MIT Media Lab Fellowship, a United States Artists fellowship, a Ford and Mellon Foundations' Disabilities Future Fellowship, and the Prix International d'Art Contemporain of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco. Her works are held in numerous prominent collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, LACMA, Tate Britain, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Walker Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others. She lives and works in Berlin.