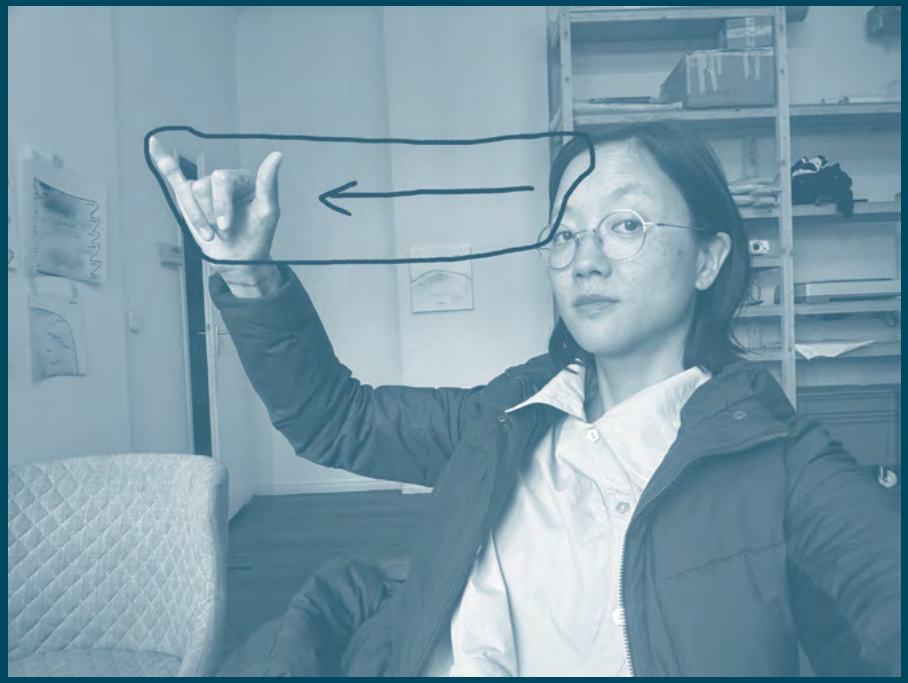
EN

CHRISTINE SUN KIM

FOR EVER



THE EXHIBITION

In *FOR EVER*, Christine Sun Kim (b. 1980) departs from the chapel-like architecture of Mudam's Henry J. and Erna D. Leir Pavilion to create a monument that reflects on resilience and its relation to the notion of 'forever'. The work consists of four sculptural canvases, each repeatedly depicting the outlines of the titular word in American Sign Language (ASL). Beyond using the language in her day-to-day life, Kim also uses her artwork as the springboard for a wide-ranging examination of how it is expressed, interpreted and perceived. Earlier works by the artist largely focused on what is kept and lost from one staging post of communication to the next, between the auditory and the visual, between intention and interpretation and between sender and receiver. In the newly commissioned piece for Mudam, however, she builds on her previous works by opening up a space for contemplation of the relationships between language, the transience of expression and the counterweight of permanence.

The *FOR EVER* canvases serve as monuments to the longevity and resilience of Deaf culture and the Deaf community, both of which have for centuries endured oppression and erasure, not least through efforts to suppress sign languages – a pattern that still continues today. In the USA, for example, a gene therapy treatment for a rare genetic form of deafness has recently been introduced. This development implies that deafness itself is eradicable, fixable or even something to be opted out of. These new methods of eradication pose major threats to the progression of disability rights, which, although imperfect, have removed barriers and made space accessible for deaf people. In *FOR EVER*, Kim encourages audiences – hearing and deaf alike – to consider these threats of erasure, and to defend deafness as a crucial part of human biodiversity.

Monumentality extends to the canvases' use of colour as a semiotic tool. The artist typically works with black and white, but for the *FOR EVER* canvases shifted to a shade of turquoise – the colour that is most widely recognised as representing Deaf communities, as well as being associated with universal symbols of access and hospital enviroments. Taking up large parts of the walls, the paintings depict an elongated and repeated version of the ASL sign for 'forever'. The extended space between 'for' and 'ever' symbolises the endless possibilities that can unfold between expression of the word and the infinity that it implies. By offering solidarity and advocacy and opening up space for critical reflection, the artist compels

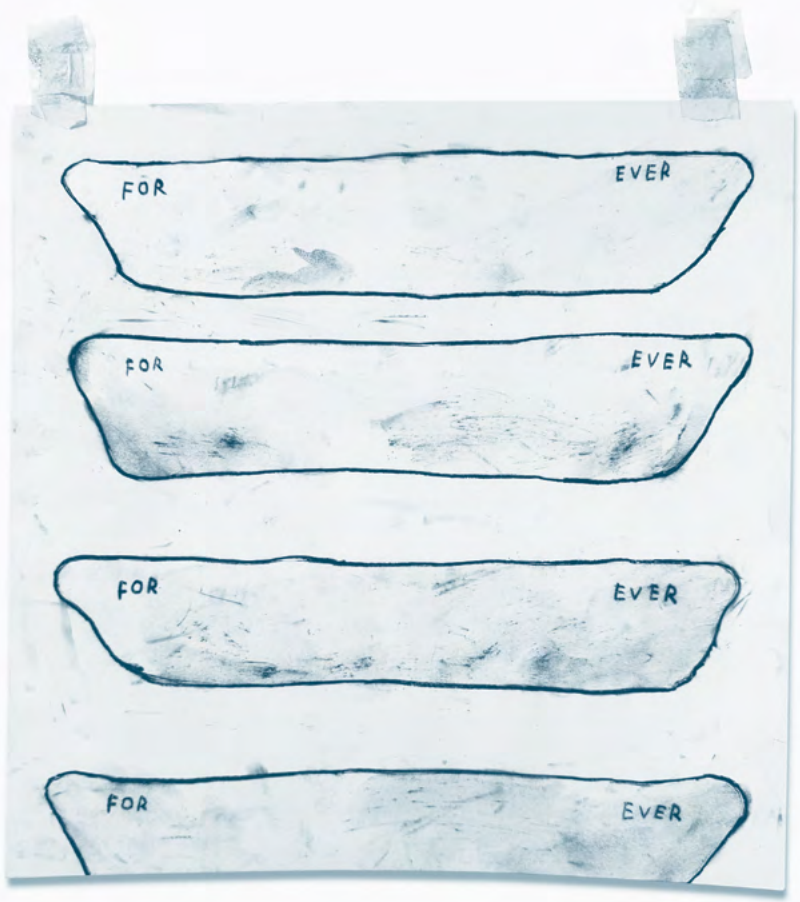
us to consider the enduring presence of deaf existence and its shifting visibility within historical, cultural and institutional narratives.

Kim has often created work exploring the impact of sound on society and architecture. Notions of sound typically centre on experiences of hearing; Kim's practice, however, encourages us to think beyond the communication of audible sounds. In *FOR EVER*, a soundscape can be experienced audibly but at times solely physically, which the artist produced in collaboration with musician Matt Karmil. These frequencies are experienced in and through bodies; visitors can experience sound in different ways, through their own particular subjectivities.

Sound, language and communication are present throughout the exhibition, in audible, visual, written and embodied forms. The mechanical creation of sound through the record player at the centre of the room, for example, differs from the lyrical ASL materialisation of 'forever' on the canvases; the record is looped to suggest an endless cycle, evoking the idea of foreverness. Yet it is pressed on lacquer, a less durable material that will slowly deteriorate over time while being played, thus creating tension between what is temporary and what is everlasting. In this way, the pavilion becomes a place to reflect on the various ways in which visual and sonic registers of language and communication are produced, perceived, understood and remembered.

Through the glass corridor connecting the pavilion to the museum's main building, the hollows formed in ASL signs for 'forever' can be seen on the windows on either side, appearing at different sizes and discernible from outside, thereby extending beyond the exhibition space. Produced in semi-transparent foil, the works are suggestive rather than fully explicit, their material presence rendered even more ambiguous when contrasted with the large, weighty canvases in the main space. The window installation symbolises the ongoing efforts of Deaf communities to achieve greater recognition and representation in a hearing-centred world.

In *FOR EVER*, Christine Sun Kim's exploration of presence, communication and sound illuminates the temporality of the real and the abstract alike. She plays with modes of language – its permanence and impermanence – and stresses how culture, memory and history are preserved within it. By repeatedly and insistently materialising 'forever', she also highlights the ongoing efforts to reshape dominant discourses and histories through action, both tangible and palpable. Kim's use of monumentality is a powerful testament to the fact that deaf people have always existed – and will continue to do so, eternally.



ARTIST CHRISTINE SUN KIM ON HOW HER DEAF RAGE GREW INTO DEAF WRATH

I've been giving a lecture recently, a performance where I hit audiences with scenes from television series and films featuring deaf characters. Over and over and over, the audience watches these characters get shot, get drowned, get stabbed and die. The clips are gruesome. This section of the talk is meant to go on and on and make my point for me: In the televisual subconscious, there is a need to eliminate deaf people and deafness. After one of these lectures not long ago, I gathered with a group of deaf people from the audience, including Greg Hlibok. In 1988, Hlibok played a pivotal role in bringing Gallaudet University – the first and foremost university for deaf and hard-of-hearing students – its first deaf president. I was eight at the time and to me, he and other protest leaders represented the beginning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) era.

While we were having a glass of wine, I received a text from a hearing family member, who shared a New York Times article about the first FDA-approved gene therapy treatment for a rare genetic form of deafness. They mindlessly wrote: 'amazing.' This treatment and the media narrative around it are in line with the countless instances of deaf death in popular media. It is eugenics, plain and simple. The broad deployment of these gene therapies erases any room for ethics or nuance in the broader cultural understanding of deafness not as a pathology to be fixed, but, as deaf activists have argued, as a crucial part of human biodiversity.

I was ten when the ADA was signed into law in 1990. I witnessed firsthand what that accessibility looked like as it blossomed: captions on TV, interpreters in classrooms, protections in the doctor's office and widespread access to spaces that had been barred to deaf participants. As my rights expanded, so did my life and my identity. I was able to pursue my passions and gain a platform as an artist. Now I am watching that progress erode. Almost ten years ago, I made a series of drawings called 'Degrees of Deaf Rage'. At this point, rage is not enough. Wrath is. When I look at my wrath closely, I get sick. I live alongside deaf people who have been deeply affected by inaccessibility. Two common injustices haunt me the most. One is the familial isolation that many of us encounter, especially with parents who never took the time or effort to learn sign language. That severing of a parental relationship cuts deep. The other is language deprivation, where deaf kids are blocked from learning sign language during their critical language acquisition periods. Language deprivation impacts people for life.

Disability rights are not perfect, but they have propelled me to where I am today. In moments of darkness, I am buoyed by the words of Dr. Corinna S. Hill, a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf. She has pointed out how, throughout history, the dominant culture has always tried to assimilate and eliminate deafness. They isolated us in mental institutions. They prevented us from learning sign language. They sterilised us. But we are still here and our culture is still strong. Yet the dark moments are dark. Deaf people have survived countless attempts at erasure, but this one feels different. We are being erased before we are even born. I fear for my community, our history, our culture and our language. And the fear grows into anger, into rage, into wrath.

I texted my family member back: 'Unsend "amazing" please.' They reacted with a thumbs-up.

By Christine Sun Kim
Originally published and commissioned by CULTURED Magazine, June 2026,
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CHRISTINE SUN KIM

Christine Sun Kim's practice considers how sound operates in society, deconstructing its politics and exploring how oral languages operate as social currency. Musical notation, written language, infographics, American Sign Language (ASL), the use of the body and strategically deployed humour make frequent and recurring appearances in her practice. Working across drawing, performance, video and large-scale murals, Kim explores her relationship to spoken and signed languages, to her built and social environments and to the world at large.

MATT KARMIL

Matt Karmil is a British musician and engineer, his solo artist output appearing on labels such as Idle Hands and Smalltown Supersound. He is one of the foremost mixing and mastering engineers working in contemporary electronic music, with credits including Underworld, Bicep and Nia Archives. His own practice is grounded in analogue technique – tape, hardware and the grain and imperfection they carry – used as a way of shaping how sound is felt as much as heard. He first worked with Christine Sun Kim in 2015, composing a sub-20Hz piece for *Bounce House* at Sound Live Tokyo, beginning a collaboration that continues to this day.

Public programme

Drop-in!
SIGNS=SIGNS

in collaboration with Hörgeschädigten SmH

10.10.2026 | 18:00–23:00
and during the school holidays
of All Saints' Day and Christmas

Lunchtime at Mudam

25.09.2026 | 12:30–13:30
06.11.2026 | 12:30–13:30
08.01.2027 | 12:30–13:30

Curator tours

25.11.2026 | 18:00–19:00
EN with Hollie Douglas

02.12.2026 | 18:00–19:00
DE with Léon Kruijswijk

Tours in Sign Language

31.10.2026 | 11:00–12:00
DE

02.12.2026 | 18:00–19:00
International Sign Language

02.01.2027 | 11:00–12:00
DE

Guided tour and workshop
FOR EVER

in collaboration with Hörgeschädigten SmH

03.11.2026 | 10:00–12:00 | LU, DE, FR, EN

Public programme

Find Mudam's full programme of events, workshops,
lectures and more on mudam.com

Social media

Follow our social media accounts and share your experience
using these hashtags @mudamlux #mudamlux #openmuseum
#christinesunkim

Newsletter

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Images

1, 2
Courtesy of the artist
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3
Portrait of the artist
Photo: Kameron Herndon for Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA

Christine Sun Kim
FOR EVER
25.09.2026 – 10.01.2027
Mudam Luxembourg –
Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean

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Above all, this exhibition is dedicated to every deaf person who has ever walked this earth, and every one still to arrive.

MUDAM