



Installation views of *Elevator Pitch*, created in collaboration with New Orleans Airlift and Rick Snow, 2019, mild steel, stainless steel, copper, acrylic, cypress, electronic instruments, vocal samples provided by members of Louisiana's Deaf community, 290×240×180 cm, at Music Box Village, New Orleans, 2019. Photos by Camillie Lenain. Courtesy the artists and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Washington DC.



CHRISTINE

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With “touching listening,” anthropologist Roshanak Kheshti describes sound as “experienced (felt) by the whole body intertwining what is heard by the ears with what is felt on the flesh, tasted on the tongue, and imagined in the psyche.” This form of multinodal hearing—decentralizing the aural experience and exposing the body to the ineffable obscurities of sonic play—courses through the works of Christine Sun Kim, who was born Deaf. Despite being told by those around her that she could not receive or transmit noise, Kim found her own pathways to sound through sensorial experiments, such as a game in which Deaf kids scream in enclosed spaces to feel the tones trembling within hair, skin, and body.

The neon-green buttons in the cubicle-like installation *Elevator Pitch* (2019), with letters and numbers scrawled in Kim’s distinct hand, invite visitors to recreate these bodily sensations by activating high- and low-pitched shrieks and yelps of 13 members of Louisiana’s Deaf community. A collaborative project curated by Adriel Luis of Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and realized by Kim, artist-driven initiative New Orleans Airlift, and musician Rick Snow, *Elevator Pitch* contains multitudes, not unlike the process of non-aural listening and the gestural performativity in American Sign Language (ASL). Situated in New Orleans’s sculpture park Music Box Village, the work resembles a humble shed from the exterior, clad in algae-hued wood; yet a hint of its interior—rippling with color, sound, and movement—is suggested on the muted copper door by the majuscule script “TRU BIZ” followed by a zigzag line that encourages visitors to step in. The letters are from the affirmative ASL slogan “You true biz”—meaning “you exist and we see you”—and the contrast between exterior and interior parallels the identities of Deaf people, who may be seen as quiet, but in actuality are engaged in full-bodied performances with the dimensions of noise, gesture, and language.

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