

Press release

Christine Sun Kim & Thomas Mader
ATTENTION

Kunstraum München
September 10 – October 23, 2022

Opening on Friday, September 9, 7 – 9 p.m.
The artists are present.

In cooperation with rasso rottenfusser
Curated by Lena von Geyso

In drawing, performance, sound pieces, and video, Christine Sun Kim & Thomas Mader's collaborative artistic practice addresses complex processes of communication, social inclusion and exclusion, sign language's relationship to spoken language, power structures inherent in grammar, and the expanded possibilities of understanding.

For Kunstraum München, Kim & Mader are developing an extensive installation that explores the ways in which attention in physical and digital spaces can be received and directed by Deaf and hearing people. Gesturing and signing are not the same. Only about one-third of the hand motions in sign language are "iconic," i.e., their movements correspond to their meanings. Besides signs articulated by hand configurations and directional movements, additional meanings and the coordination of grammar are modulated by facial expressions, mouth, head, and body movements. Furthermore, neither the vocabulary nor grammar of sign language is universal.

In American Sign Language (ASL) the most common way to attract attention from another person is by waving downwards with the palm and tapping in their field of vision; the opposite of this hand motion is to point a finger at someone or something. When you wave your hand at someone, you get their attention; when you point your finger at someone, you draw someone else's attention to that person.

Based on these vocabularies, Kim & Mader's expansive kinetic arrangement is a choreography that makes the semantics of American Sign Language palpable, both spatially and physically, and extends their meanings to include a state of perpetual attention seeking in contemporary media societies.

On one side of the exhibition space, a long arm with one hand performs the waving/tapping motion while on the other side, a hand with an equally long arm performs the pointing. The centerpiece of this search for attention is a rock sculpture set in the middle of the room. Both of the hands work on the stone, want its attention, and draw the attention of others to it.

The spatially translated semantics of ASL are thus expanded to include the ongoing quest for attention which is apparent in contemporary media societies. This constant societal need for resonance on social media shows up on the stone as erosion: the individual movements of the hands have left a deep notch on one of its sides and polished the other side smooth. The stone—in this case, tufa from Polling—is borrowed from the local environment of the exhibition site. If digital images of the installation are infinitely reproducible on a mass scale without showing traces of “decay,” it is the so-called “here and now” in the sense of Walter Benjamin that applies here.

Exhibition:

September 10 – October 24, 2022

Opening: September 9, 7:00 p.m. as part of VARIOUS OTHERS 2022.

With a greeting by John Stubbs, Consul for Public Affairs, United States Consulate General Munich

Opening hours during Open Art / Various Others Opening Weekend:

Friday, September 9, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 10, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 11, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Guided Tours:

September 18, 4:00 p.m.

Guided tour of the exhibition in German Sign Language with Birgit Fehn and Sabrina Göb

October 9, 4:00 p.m.

Guided tour of the exhibition in German Sign Language with Birgit Fehn and Sabrina Göb

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The Long Night in Munich's Museums:
Saturday, October 15, 2022, 6:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Curatorial presence:
Sunday, October 23, 2:00 p.m.

In preparation for the Kunstraum München's 50th Anniversary in 2023, the archive on the ground floor is being redesigned by Cora Piantoni using excerpts and quotations from correspondence found in the archives since 1973.

The exhibition is supported by the United States Consulate General Munich, the Department of Arts and Culture of the City of Munich, the Department of Social Services of the City of Munich. Coordination Office for the Implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention, the GLS Treuhand. Dachstiftung für individuelles Schenken and Steiner Foundation Munich.



U.S. Consulate General
Munich



Landeshauptstadt
München
Kulturreferat



Landeshauptstadt
München
Sozialreferat

Koordinierungsbüro zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention

GLS *Treuhand*
Dachstiftung
für individuelles
Schenken

 **STEINER-STIFTUNG
MÜNCHEN**

In cooperation with the Deaf Association GMU (Gehörlosenverband München und Umland (GMU), Museum Signers and Various Others

GMU
gehörlosenverband münchen und umland e.V.



**VARIOUS
OTHERS**

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Visiting hours during exhibitions:

Wednesday to Sunday, 2 – 7 p.m.

Archive visiting hours: Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The Kunstraum is an independent art association and is supported by the Department of Arts and Culture of the City of Munich.