

MAUREEN PALEY.



GARDAR EIDE EINARSSON

Music Playing Over Speech

17 January – 7 March 2026

Opening: 16 January 2026, 6 – 8 pm

Maureen Paley
4 Herald Street
London, E2 6GQ

Maureen Paley is pleased to present *Music Playing Over Speech*, Gardar Eide Einarsson's fifth exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition brings together two bodies of works, *Closed Captions* and *Incendiary Test Area*. In both, Einarsson considers how linguistic and visual structures shape our understanding of the world and mask systems of power.

The *Closed Caption* paintings use text taken from closed captioning in film and television, including descriptions of gestures, sounds, background noise, and musical cues. These fragments, originally intended to translate audio information into written form, are removed from their narrative contexts and presented on monochromatic fields. Without accompanying imagery or sound, the captions function as eerie independent visual elements, highlighting the messaging produced when conventional audio-visual cues are absent. This method relates to Einarsson's wider examination of systems of control, identity and perception, using closed captioning to consider how information is communicated and reframed through mass media. Directly echoing On Kawara's *Today* series, Einarsson works in a similarly uniform and specified process, adopting a minimal visual language of white text on a monochrome field to express a daily personal and cultural psyche.

Gardar Eide Einarsson's series *Incendiary Test Area* is based on historical photographs of model housing constructed by the US Army at Dugway Proving Ground, an area established during World War II for testing chemical and biological weapons. The model houses recreated German and Japanese villages at full scale, built with exact regional architectural accents and interiors. Their purpose was to develop the most effective bombs for the impending attacks on German and Japanese cities, and the buildings were burned and rebuilt at least twenty-seven times. Through this process, the structures became a form of anti-architecture; no longer the "machine for living" as described by Le Corbusier but its inverse, a site for destruction. The works are traditional Japanese Mokuhanga woodblock prints produced in Kyoto by Mokuhabga master Shoichi Kitamura and appear almost photorealistic. They evoke both the quiet introspection of Northern European interior painting and the sensibilities described in Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's 1933 text *In Praise of Shadows*, which reflects on the quotidian beauty within traditional Japanese aesthetics. These resonances stand in stark contrast to the violent history behind the scenes, reminding us how fragile the environments we cultivate are in the face of external forces.

Examples of the *Closed Captions* are current on display in *What Passes is Time. We Are Eternal*, at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. In October 2026, KODE, Bergen, will present *The Purpose Of A System Is What It Does*, a solo presentation of works by Einarsson.

Selected solo exhibitions of Einarsson include: *Groaning, Nixon's Voice*, NILS STÆRK, Copenhagen, Denmark (2025); *Ride of the Valkyries Continues*, Oscaar Mouligne, Kyoto, Japan (2025); *Incendiary Test Area*, Trykkeriet, Bergen, Norway (2024); *These Colors Don't Run, Parapet Real Humans*, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA (2023); Maureen Paley, London, UK (2019); *How to Survive in the West*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2019); *A madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy*, AROS, Aarhus, Denmark (2015); Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway (2013); *Power Has a Fragrance*, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden and Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany (2011); The Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, US (2009); *South of Heaven*, Kunstverein Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany (2007); and Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2007).

Selected group exhibitions include: *MINEBANE! Contemporary Art the Taguchi Art Collection*, Akita Senshu Museum of Art, Akita, Japan (2025); *Composition for the Left Hand*, Kode Bergen Art Museum, Bergen, Norway (2024); *Before Tomorrow*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2023); *Far From Home II*, ARoS Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark (2022); *I Know Where I'm Going Who Can I Be Now*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2021); *This is the Night Mail*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2021).

Works by Einarsson are held in institutional collections including the Aarhus Art Museum, Aarhus, Denmark; Berkley Art Museum, Berkley, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; MoMA, New York, USA; Norwegian National Museum of Art, Oslo, Norway; and SFMOMA, San Francisco, USA.