

# THE SUNDANCE KID IS BEAUTIFUL



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## PERFORMANCE

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*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* presents the work of Christopher Knowles, the multitalented poet, linguist, performer, actor and visual artist in a staged environment that incorporates many of his diverse approaches.

The sixty minute solo work features Knowles performing multiple actions in different time and scale registers in concert with more than a dozen short texts, including *The Sundance Kid is Beautiful*, selections from his libretto for Wilson and Phillip Glass's landmark opera *Einstein on the Beach* as well as many others.

A newspaper landscape containing Knowles' alarm clock collection, recent sculptures, and a finely tuned lighting and sound environment evoke themes surrounding the measurement of time, communication, sign systems, and popular culture. Within this scenographic landscape Knowles creates moments of dramatic stillness and motion that explore specific aspects of his unique world.

*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* draws the audience into Knowles' whimsical, witty, and dream-like world, thereby allowing viewers to engage with his compelling practice on its own mesmerizing terms.





# AUDIENCE RESPONSE

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In 2012, *The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* was presented as a work-in-process at the Martin E Segal Theater Center, The Graduate Center, CUNY in New York. This was followed with a world premiere at the Louvre Museum Paris in November, 2013. Subsequently, the production had its New York premiere as part of Performa 13 in November 2013.

The following are responses to the production:

Christopher Knowles is an American original—sui generis. His genius has everything to do with his ability to make one re-think language through poetic configurations that are haunting, vivid, and real. He is an artist of the first magnitude.

— Hilton Als, *The New Yorker Magazine*, in response to *The Sundance Kid is Beautiful*

Radiant...

— Robert Wilson, in response to *The Sundance Kid is Beautiful*

*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* is perhaps the most fascinating, unique, and important performance we have ever presented at the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center. The high level of professionalism and good judgment exhibited by the production team throughout the process was extraordinary, and the sense of complete commitment to the work was truly inspiring to witness.

— Frank Hentschker, Executive Director and Director of Programs at Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, The Graduate Center, CUNY

I was deeply moved when I saw Christopher Knowles on stage. He stands out as an actor. His strong and poetic presence, his inner world so close to ours, childish, full of humour and melancholy ...

—Isabelle Huppert, actress



# PERFORMANCE SPACES

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*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* is conceived as a theatrical or performative presentation adaptable to a variety of spatial configurations, including proscenium stages, black box theaters, thrust stages, outdoor and gallery spaces. The environment is defined by a newspaper landscape that evokes Knowles' text and visual logic in three dimensions, the staging re-contextualizing the performance space by overlaying the floor and walls with a strict grid of newspapers, folding chairs overlaid with newspapers, and sculptures created by Knowles, including a selection of alarm clocks from his personal collection. By further adding detailed and rigorous lighting and sound design to frame the set, *The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* constructs a hermeneutic, landscape-like environment that serves as a virtual extension of the structured logic found throughout Knowles' practice.







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# BIO & COLLABORATORS

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Born in 1959, Christopher Knowles lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. His incredibly diverse practice, which includes writing, painting, sculpture, and performance, exhibits a fascination with the aural and visual elements of language.

Knowles' first work as a performing artist started with a collaboration with Robert Wilson in 1973, when Wilson invited him to perform in his play *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Knowles wrote and performed in several of Wilson's seminal early stage works, including *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974), *\$ Value of Man* (1975), and *Dia/Log*. In 1976 Knowles wrote the libretto for Wilson's and Philip Glass' *Einstein on the Beach*.

First exhibited as a solo artist in 1974, Knowles has continued to cultivate a prolific practice that explores themes surrounding communication and sign systems. His work has been exhibited in many solo and group showings internationally, and his poetry has been published in a variety of magazines and journals, including *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice*, and *Interview Magazine*. His two and three-dimensional works are held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and numerous other international institutions and private collections. Most recently, his work was part of the critically successful exhibition *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language* at the Museum of Modern Art, NY, as well as a solo exhibition of paintings at Gavin Brown's enterprise New York, where he is also represented as an artist.

*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* is directed by Noah Khoshbin, and produced and managed by Andrew Gilchrist.

*The Sundance Kid is Beautiful* is produced in association with the Byrd Hoffman Water Mill Foundation, Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York, The Martin E. Segal Theatre Center at The Graduate Center, CUNY, with additional support from Dissident Industries, WorldStage, Change Performing Arts, and American Friends of the Louvre.