

PRESS RELEASE*Christopher Knowles in Two Acts*

October 16, 2021 - January 8, 2022

Act One: Saturday, October 16th, 12-6PM

Act Two: Saturday, December 11th, 6-8PM

Bridget Donahue is pleased to announce the representation of and the gallery's first solo exhibition with, in two parts, New York-based artist Christopher Knowles (b.1959). Knowles is a poet, performer and visual artist whose output includes text, sound, typing, painting, drawing, sculpture, and recorded performance—including works completed in collaboration with esteemed theater director Robert Wilson. Knowles and Wilson's collaboration began in 1974 when Knowles was just 15 years old. *Christopher Knowles in Two Acts* will be animated in two stages: Act One is the opening presentation of drawings from 1990. Act Two is an evening performance to showcase new work and throw a holiday party. The artist will be present for both acts.

Act One
The exhibition opens with never before seen drawings from the 1990s: vibrant felt marker depictions of the "Announcer's Test" (one hen, one hen two ducks, one hen two ducks three squawking geese...). For people unfamiliar with Knowles's work, the direct materiality, repetition, abstractions and permutations provide an aesthetic link to his artistic roots in downtown 1970s New York. Working with Robert Wilson and Holly Solomon Gallery, Knowles was embedded in the city's avant-garde performance community that was cropping up alongside other artists working within the bounds of Minimalism. For viewers more familiar with Knowles's iconography, the exhibition is punctuated with classic images in his oeuvre: the red balloon, the rooster (referencing Knowles's own rooster costume he wore for Robert Wilson's 1992 production of Wagner's *Parsifal*), Top 20 pop charts, number one songs and drawings made from fond family memories. Knowles's paintings are often derived from photographs, filled edge-to-edge with segmented blocks of color that never touch. In the drawings on view, the subjects float in space, rendered in dreamt up shapes and hues. The shifts in scale are playful and diverse and these drawings hold space for an important aspect of Knowles's work: syncopation.

Act Two
In keeping with precise and humble modes of production, and to insert the artist's new work and voice in a social setting, Act Two presents a performance and a party. The exhibition will be augmented with red balloons and hundreds of hand-cut, colored and signed Christmas decorations Knowles made in 1978. He will read new poems, play the electronic Simon memory game and DJ hits from his vinyl record collection. Act Two lingers into a holiday party atmosphere. You are invited.

Christopher Knowles has exhibited his works widely throughout the world at museums and galleries including: Kunstverein Langenhagen, Hannover, Germany; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands; Of Mice and Men: 4th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York, New York; Office Baroque, Brussels, Belgium; Nogueras Blanchard, Madrid and Barcelona, Spain; Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, New York; and has performed solo or as part of the Byrd Hoffman company extensively, at venues including: White Columns, New York, New York; Thalia Theatre, Hamburg, Germany; The Kitchen, New York, New York; the Louvre Museum, Paris, France; and in touring duets with Robert Wilson the world-over.

Christopher Knowles, *Untitled (My Name Is Christopher Knowles)*, c. 1980, a typing on paper, is on view now at the Museum of Modern Art as part of "Artist's Choice: Yto Barrada — A Raft", through January 9, 2022.