

Lucas Samaras

Me, Myself and...

January 17 – February 22, 2020

540 West 25th Street

New York

Opening Reception:

Thursday, Jan 16

6–8 PM



Image: Lucas Samaras, *Untitled*, 2019, pure pigment on paper print, 13" × 13" (33 cm × 33 cm), image 14" × 14" (35.6 cm × 35.6 cm), paper © Lucas Samaras, courtesy Pace Gallery

New York — Pace Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of more than seventy new works by Lucas Samaras, marking the artist's thirty-fifth solo exhibition at Pace since joining the gallery in 1965. In his new body of work, Samaras appropriates and transforms imagery from his personal archive of family photos using commercial software, producing alternately haunting and humorous compositions that meditate on the role of mythology, mortality and fantasy in our inner lives. Samaras's exhibition of recent photographic works will be presented alongside a selection of his pioneering sculptural objects from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as iconic works from later decades, and is accompanied by a catalogue containing a new text by the artist. *Me, Myself and...* will be on view from January 17 through February 22 at 540 West 25th Street with an opening reception held on Thursday, January 16 from 6 – 8 PM.

For more than six decades, Samaras has engaged in a provocative and influential investigation into the nature of selfhood. His new works derive in large part from black-and-white family photographs dating from his childhood in Greece in the 1940s, during the time of the Greek Civil War, as well as from later decades of his life. Together, these personal photographs track Samaras's own history alongside the evolution of his protean body of work, continuing a longstanding investigation into the expanded field of self-portraiture.

Samaras's recent works use and mis-use digital imaging techniques in ways that parallel his engagement with photography in the groundbreaking Auto-Polaroids and Photo-Transformations series of the late 1960s and 1970s. Scratching, incising or otherwise manipulating the photographic inks of images taken with an early Polaroid camera, Samaras introduced expressionist interventions into their mechanically produced surfaces, resisting the

ostensible objectivity of the technological medium. In his new works, Samaras's "hand" remains visible in the form of standardized Photoshop effects. Typically intended to disappear in the final image, Samaras instead allows these photo-editing effects to become a central subject of the work, producing a new language of abstraction derived from the visual artifacts of unabashedly computer-generated manipulations. These abstract forms contrast in striking and enigmatic ways with the archival photographs with which they are interwoven, framing, blurring, overlapping and transforming their figurative content.

Set in his apartment, studio and in the streets and parks of New York City, Samaras's new works investigate how a self can persist across time by means of the images that document its changing appearance. At times evoking a mythic pastoralism, the works digitally insert Samaras into various banal urban settings: in one instance, he is seen standing at his window, staring broodingly at what appears to be a swarm of digitally-generated birds hovering over the cityscape; elsewhere, his naked body lounges comically in a woody grove accompanied by an avian companion, loosely evoking Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. Whether set in the lobby of his high-rise apartment building or the picturesque landscape of nearby Central Park, Samaras's new works imbue the everyday spaces of the city with an oneiric and often menacing quality. Reflecting the artist's continued interest in how fantasy, imagination and interiority inflect our sense of the passage of time—both personal and collective—the works point to the performative labor through which we produce the fiction of a unified, stable and coherent "self."

Lucas Samaras (b. 1936, Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece) has produced an expansive body of work across media and discipline—including photography, painting, installation, assemblage, drawing, and sculpture—united by a focus on the body and psyche, and often emphasizing autobiography. A student of Allan Kaprow, Samaras emerged as a key figure in the Happenings of the late 1950s and early 1960s, collaborating with Robert Whitman and Claes Oldenburg and participating in Kaprow's seminal 18 Happenings in 6 Parts in 1959. Underpinned by themes of self-depiction and identity, Samaras's practice proposed a radical departure from the presiding ideas of Abstract Expressionism and Pop art during the 1960s. Samaras is recognized as a vanguard figure in assemblage, producing reliefs and boxes comprised of elements from his immediate surroundings in a turn away from traditional art media, reflective of the blurring of art and life. He is also acknowledged for his innovative use of photographic media; in 1969, he began using a Polaroid camera to create portraits and images, and altered these images through collage, with the addition of hand-applied ink, or, in the mid-1970s, by manipulating the wet emulsion of the film. An extension of his early experimentation, he later adopted a Leica digital camera and began using Photoshop to digitally alter his images.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated

relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by a drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances and interdisciplinary projects through Pace Live, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide: two galleries in New York--including its newly opened headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street--as well as galleries in Palo Alto, London, Geneva, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

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