

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
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## THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF LUCAS SAMARAS: SELECTIONS FROM A RECENT GIFT

August 29 - December 1, 1992

An exhibition devoted to the photographic achievement of Lucas Samaras is on view at The Museum of Modern Art from August 29 to December 1, 1992.

Organized by Peter Galassi, director, Department of Photography, **THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF LUCAS SAMARAS: SELECTIONS FROM A RECENT GIFT** presents some thirty of forty-three works recently given to the Museum by Robert and Gayle Greenhill. Surveying the evolution of the artist's photographic career from 1969 to 1986, the gift is outstanding in its quality as well as its comprehensive scope.

Born in Greece in 1936, Samaras came to the United States in 1948. He has explored a wide range of mediums, including painting, drawing, sculpture, and "happenings," the improvised performances of the 1950s and 1960s. In 1969 he added photography to his repertoire, when he discovered that the instant results of the Polaroid medium allowed him to "do a happening in [his] own time." In the years that followed, each new Polaroid format has engendered a fresh Samaras series, which range in size from the tiny "AutoPolaroids" (1969-71) to the life-size "Ultra-Large" figures (1983). The artist has further varied his photography by continuing to work on some pictures after the exposure has been made. In the "Photo-Transformations" (1973-76), for example, he manipulated the fluid emulsion as it developed, turning his image into a grotesque apparition. In the "Panoramas" (1983-86) he sliced and then

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combined variant exposures of a single motif, elongating bodies and the environments they occupied.

Samaras's photography is not only formally diverse but also psychologically complex. Although nearly all of the work is a form of self-portraiture, it is also an extended act of imagination, in which Samaras has ceaselessly invented and reinvented his self. In the "Sittings" (1978-80) Samaras asked friends to pose in his place, as if to invite the audience to recognize that every life is a performance.

Mr. Galassi notes, "The richness of Samaras's photography may be expressed as a fusion of opposites. The intimate is fused with the theatrical, the earnest with the satirical, the flagrantly vulgar with the exquisitely beautiful. And for every allusion to the achievements of older art there is an anticipation of later innovations. Artistically, as well as psychologically, Samaras's work is expansive: full of possibility."

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For further information or photographic materials, contact Trudy Rosato, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9757.