

PEDER LUND

Lucas Samaras: Chairs and Pastels

Peder Lund is pleased to announce its second exhibition with the Greek-American artist Lucas Samaras (b. 1936). The vastly productive sculptor, photographer, painter, filmmaker, writer and performance artist has worked in such diverse materials as Polaroid film, acrylic and oil paint, pastel, aluminium, bronze, clay, fabric, precious metals and stones, razor blades and pins. Across this large variety of media he has mastered to maintain a distinctively characteristic stylistic expression over the past six decades, regardless of contemporaneous artistic tendencies. The exhibition *Lucas Samaras: Chairs and Pastels* will feature a suite of pastels and three sculptural chairs. The exhibition opens 9 May and continues through 29 August 2015.

Samaras refers to his pastels as “coloured dust”, and has introduced them serially throughout his career. In the 1960s, he completed several compositions in one sitting and drew fantasy still-lives, close-ups of body parts, domestic interiors, couples and hermaphroditic nudes. He then returned to the medium in 1974 and again in 1981, when he drew more than 200 self-portraits. The nine pastels on view at Peder Lund are from the series *Heads* and were made between 4 July and 24 July 1981. The pastels are psychologically charged and demonstrate the importance of Samaras’ own body and mind in his art. He defamiliarises objects and depictions of himself almost obsessively, and subject matter and material are meticulously presented as dual and equally important facets of the artwork. The *Heads* are in sharp colours that swirl into the shape of the artist’s face, and the materiality of the crayon is seductive. The mood and psychological state of the artist in the summer of ‘81 seems part seclusive (a number of the pastels show only the artist’s right eye and nose as if hiding from the viewer); and part in a gradual state of derangement (as the month progresses the tint and the application of the crayon grow increasingly colourful and stabbing). Still, the *Heads* remain distanced and the artist’s various emotional states are rather manifestations of colour and form than self-biographical information. This theatricality is consistent in Samaras’ oeuvre – the viewer remains a voyeur of scenes that are strictly under the artist’s control.

On view are also two colourful stick chairs from 1989 made of painted wood and glue. Chairs have been a recurring theme for Samaras since the late 1950s. He started out by “rescuing” unoccupied chairs he found around New York City, which he prepped and photographed. In 1969, he began his *Chair Transformation* series (of which *Chair Transformation #9* is on view), and physically transformed chairs using a wide variety of methods and materials, including mirrors, yarn, wood and bright paint. He returned to the subject in the 1980s when he constructed chairs by attaching small, found objects such as razor blades, colour pencils and kitchen utensils to armatures made out of wire. Like his *Photo-Transformations**, his chairs are ordinary objects transformed into something fantastical. His manipulations of visual metaphors continue to this day.

Lucas Samaras was born in Kastoria in Greece in 1936 and immigrated to New Jersey with his family in 1948. He studied under Allan Kaprow at Rutgers University and Meyer Schapiro at Columbia University, and became a key figure in the Happenings in New York in the late 1950s and early ‘60s. Samaras has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, Chicago; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. His work has been represented at three editions of Documenta (1968, 1972, 1977); the Whitney Annual Exhibition (1965, 1968, 1970); and at the 1980 Venice Biennale. He represented Greece at the Venice Biennale in 2009. Samaras’ work is included in more than forty public collections worldwide, including Art Institute of Chicago; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Gallery, London; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Samaras lives and works in New York.

Exhibition period: 9 May - 29 August 2015. For more information: mail@pederlund.no / +47 22 01 55 55

* The *Photo-Transformations* were first conceived in 1973 when Samaras began to manipulate the wet dyes of Polaroid prints before they dried.