Indexed by: Heather Nodler, April 2011

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Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Lucas Samaras Date: January 26, 2004

Location: Whitney Museum of American Art

Interviewer: Carol Mancusi-Ungaro

Video: Ronald Bronstein / Edit: Laurie McDonald

Total Run Time: 01:38:43

Abstract:

Artist Lucas Samaras discusses his work with Artists Documentation Program Founding Director and Whitney Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, on the occasion of the exhibition "Unrepentant Ego: The Self-Portraits of Lucas Samaras," Whitney Museum of American Art, November 13, 2003-February 8, 2004. The discussion focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Samaras uses to create his mixed-media self-portraits and his wishes for their future conservation and exhibition.

Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):

Corporate Name(s)

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Artists Documentation Program Harvard University. Art Museums Menil Collection (Houston, Tex.) Whitney Museum of American Art

Genre(s)

Interviews Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol Samaras, Lucas, 1936-

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration

Artists' materials Art--Technique Assemblage (Art) Photography Sculpture Self-portraits

Exhibitions/Works:

Names of exhibitions and works referenced during this interview appear below in gray cells.

Controlled Vocabulary:

Except where indicated, all keywords employ Getty vocabularies (AAT/ULAN/TGN). Those marked with (*) employ Library of Congress Authorities. Those marked with (**) employ local terms.

Time	Contents	Subject Keywords
00:00:01	Opening Credits	
00:00:48	Introduction	
	Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Lucas Samaras	
00:01:25	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Samaras describes the processes and materials that he used to create his Large Drawing series. He also discusses various conservation issues inherent in the works and expresses his preferences regarding their future treatment.	colored pencils drawings (visual works) fading felt-tip pens fugitive (pigment attribute) glue graphite pencils hardness ink paper (fiber product) staining
00:01:37	(Image) Lucas Samaras Large Drawing #33, June 20, 1966 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; gift of Arnold and Milly Glimcher, 1986	drawings (visual works)
00:03:04	(Image) Lucas Samaras Large Drawing #11, May 25, 1966 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:03:10	(Image) Lucas Samaras Large Drawing #4, May 9, 1966 Private collection	drawings (visual works)
00:04:10	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, October 2, 1962 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:04:16	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, January 15, 1963 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)

	Skull and Milky Way, 1966 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 91.34.6	
00:08:06	(Image) Lucas Samaras	radiographs
00:08:00	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Samaras describes the processes and materials that he used to create a series of x-ray works . He also discusses in great detail his use of metal, usually steel or brass, pins and expresses his preferences regarding conservation and restoration of his works that employ pins.	brass (alloy) glue moisture paper (fiber product) pins (fasteners) radiographs restoration (process) rust steel (alloy)
	Lucas Samaras Large Drawing #39, June 24, 1966 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 80.37.2	
	Lucas Samaras Large Drawing #44, October 30, 1966 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; gift of Arnold and Milly Glimcher, 1986	
00:07:50	(Images)	drawings (visual works)
00.07.00	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, September 11, 1962 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	urawings (visual works)
00:05:22	(Image) Lucas Samaras Lucas is Crying, 1962 Collection of Milly Glimcher	drawings (visual works) drawings (visual works)
	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Samaras describes the processes and materials that he used to create other drawings, including a series of crumpled works on paper.	fixative nibs (pen points)

	Box #10, May 1963 (overview and details of pins) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
00:13:20	Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Samaras describes the processes and materials that he used, as well as his intent, in creating a series of assemblage boxes.	assemblages (sculpture) boxes (containers) pins (fasteners) wool (textile) yarn
00:14:27	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #10, May 1963 (details of wool) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	assemblages (sculpture)
00:15:15	Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Samaras describes the appeal of using brightly colored wool yarn in his assemblage boxes.	assemblages (sculpture) Hofmann, Hans Pollock, Jackson wool (textile) yarn
00:15:20	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #10, May 1963 (details of wool) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	assemblages (sculpture)
00:17:08	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #12, 1963 (overview and details of wool) The Lipman Family Foundation, Inc.	assemblages (sculpture)
00:19:50	Technical Specifications, Conservation Issues, and Exhibition Samaras describes some of the techniques and materials that he used to create his assemblage boxes, as well as the boxes' unique conservation-related characteristics and needs. He also offers his opinions regarding general conservation of his works.	adhesive age assemblages (sculpture) boxes (containers) cases (containers) coating (material) collectors dust exhibiting humidity Pace Gallery of New York, Inc. preservation (function) Walker Art Center wool (textile) yarn
00:24:08	Technical Specifications, Conservation Issues, and Exhibition Samaras continues to describe some of the techniques and materials that he used to create his assemblage boxes, including metal pins and gemstones. He expresses his wishes for the works' conservation.	adhesive boxes (containers) gems (object genres) glue pins (fasteners) preservation (function)
00:24:16	(Image) Lucas Samaras Box #42, December 26, 1965	assemblages (sculpture)

	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Howard and Jean Lipman 74.97 a-b	
00:24:56	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #38, October-November 1965 (overview and details of interior) Collection of Milly and Arne Glimcher	assemblages (sculpture)
00:26:00	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Samaras describes some of the techniques and materials that he used to create his jeweled works. He also discusses the appeal and significance of using faux jewels and his opinions regarding their future restoration.	adhesive Albright, Ivan cleaning foil (metal) gems (object genres) reflectance restoration (process)
00:26:04	(Images) Lucas Samaras Untitled, 1965 (overview and details of gems) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	assemblages (sculpture)
00:28:11	(Images) Lucas Samaras Untitled, March 2, 1965 (overview and details of gems) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; gift of Mrs. Andrew P. Fuller, 1976	assemblages (sculpture)
00:29:57	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Samaras describes the materials that he used to create an assemblage mask. He also offers an assessment of its current condition and his opinions regarding its future restoration.	cardboard cleaning dust masks (costume) plastic (organic material) visual inspection
00:30:02	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, Spring 1965 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	assemblages (sculpture)
00:30:49	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Samaras describes the materials he used to create an assemblage work employing metal nails and offers an assessment of its current condition and his opinions regarding its restoration. He discusses the conceptual difference between shiny and rusted metal surfaces.	earth (color) humidity metallic (color attribute) pins (fasteners) rust surface properties visual inspection
00:30:54	(Images) Lucas Samaras Untitled, 1963 (overview and details of pins) Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Michael and Dorothy Blankford Bequest	assemblages (sculpture)

00:32:33	Technical Specifications and Historical Anecdote	assemblages (sculpture)
	Samaras again discusses the materials, particularly pins and found boxes, that he used to construct various assemblage works. He also describes how he would acquire his materials.	boxes pins (fasteners)
00:32:42	(Images) Lucas Samaras Untitled, 1963 (details of pin heads) Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Michael and Dorothy Blankford Bequest	assemblages (sculpture)
00:33:06	(Image) Lucas Samaras Box #27, 1965 The Menil Collection, Houston; gift of Lucas Samaras	assemblages (sculpture)
00:37:07	Conservation Issues Samaras discusses his preferences regarding restoration of his paintings and three-dimensional works, including when he thinks intervention is appropriate and whether conservators might rely on his store of spare parts.	gems (object genres) inpainting paint pins (fasteners) restoration (process)
00:37:14	(Image) Lucas Samaras Self-Portrait, c. 1958 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	paintings (visual works)
00:38:36	(Image) Lucas Samaras Self-Portrait, c. 1958 (detail of area of loss) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	paintings (visual works)
00:42:12	Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work Samaras discusses his use of colored construction paper as a ground and pastel as a medium and their effect on both the aesthetic and conceptual aspects of his drawings, particularly with regard to color.	color (perceived attribute) construction paper paper (fiber product) pastels texture
00:44:28	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, July 4, 1965 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:44:37	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, July 16, 1961 Collection of Janet and Peter Boris	drawings (visual works)

00:45:22	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, May 7, 1962 Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:47:05	Process of Creation and Conservation Issues Samaras discusses the process by which he created his pastel drawings, as well as the measures that he took to preserve the works. He also discusses his opinions regarding the use of fixative spray on pastels.	dust fixative pastels preservation (function) waxed paper
00:51:57	(Image) Lucas Samaras Cut Paper Drawing #17, December 20, 1967 Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:51:52	Exhibition Samaras expresses his preferences regarding the framing and exhibition of his cut paper drawings.	paper (fiber product) cutting (dividing) exhibiting shadows mounting
00:52:06	(Image) Lucas Samaras Cut Paper Drawing #20, 1967 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
00:53:38	Conservation Issues Samaras discusses the unique conservation needs of his AutoPolaroids works. He elaborates on his preferences regarding future conservation of the works.	diffusion transfer prints fading fugitive (pigment attribute) photographs restoration
00:53:44	(Image) Lucas Samaras AutoPolaroid, January 1971 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Postwar Committee	photographs
00:53:53	(Image) Lucas Samaras AutoPolaroid, June 14, 1970 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Postwar Committee	photographs
00:54:10	(Image) Lucas Samaras AutoPolaroids, 1969-71 Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	photographs
00:54:18	(Images)	photographs

	Lucas Samaras AutoPolaroids, 1969-71 (overview and detail) Denver Art Museum; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Greenhill	
00:54:30	(Image) Lucas Samaras Something, 1969-71 (details of book cover) Collection of Beverly and Peter Lipman	photograph albums
00:55:14	Technical Specifications Samaras discusses the processes that he used to create his AutoPolaroids series.	diffusion transfer prints exposure ink pens (drawing and writing) photographs stippling
00:57:30	(Image) Lucas Samaras Photographs from <i>Something</i> , 1969-71 Collection of Beverly and Peter Lipman	photographs
00:57:40	Conservation Issues and Exhibition Samaras offers his advice on the conservation and exhibition of his AutoPolaroids, particularly in relation to their photosensitivity.	fading photosensitivity tone (color effect)
00:57:42	(Image) Lucas Samaras AutoPolaroids, 1969-71 The Art Institute of Chicago; gift of Robert and Gayle Greenhill	photographs
00:58:31	(Image) Lucas Samaras Photographs from <i>Something</i> , 1969-71 Collection of Beverly and Peter Lipman	photographs
00:59:39	Conservation Issues and Process of Creation Samaras makes observations and offers his advice on the conservation of his SX-70 works, particularly in relation to their photosensitivity and a crackle that he witnessed in specific batches. He also describes the methods that he used to manipulate his materials and the ways in which Polaroid changed its manufacturing processes over time.	crackle fading internal dye diffusion transfer process photographic processes photosensitivity pressure shipping
01:00:54	(Image) Lucas Samaras Photo-Transformation, November 3, 1973 The Museum of Modern Art, New York; gift of Robert and Gayle Greenhill	photographs
01:01:13	(Image) Lucas Samaras	photographs

	Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:01:32	(Image) Lucas Samaras Photo-Transformation, November 29, 1973 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Lilyan S. and Toby Miller	photographs
01:06:04	Historical Anecdote Samaras describes his history of using Polaroid cameras.	cameras (photographic equipment) Polaroid Corporation* Wolf, Eelco*
01:08:51	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Samaras describes the materials and techniques that he used to create his series of <i>Matrix Drawings</i> . He also discusses the relationship of reflectance to those works.	drawings (visual works) drawing techniques graphite pencils incandescent lamps (lighting devices) reflectance silver (metal)
01:09:18	(Image) Lucas Samaras Matrix Drawing #2, March 18, 1975 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:09:34	(Image) Lucas Samaras Matrix Drawing #1, April 10, 1975 Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:10:34	(Image) Lucas Samaras Matrix Drawing #36, April 27, 1975 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:10:42	(Image) Lucas Samaras Matrix Drawing #50, May 5, 1975 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:10:49	Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications Samaras discusses some of the key components and found materials that he employed in his assemblage boxes during the 1980s.	assemblages (sculpture) boxes found objects pins (fasteners) plastic (organic material
01:10:51	(Image)	assemblages (sculpture)

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	Box #123, 1988	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:11:01	(Image)	assemblages (sculpture)
	Lucas Samaras	
	Box #124, 1988	
	Collection of Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz	
01:11:16	(Images)	assemblages (sculpture)
01.11.10	(Images) Lucas Samaras	assemblages (sculpture)
	Box #125, 1988 (overview and details)	
	Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
	Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:13:08	Concept/Nature of Work and Technical Specifications	allover patterns
	Samaras discusses the similarities between his materials and	beauty
	methods and those of Jackson Pollock.	Pollock, Jackson
01:13:10	(Image)	assemblages (sculpture)
01.15.10	Lucas Samaras	
	Box #100, 1977	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
	courtesy the race dallery, New York	
01:13:10	(Images)	assemblages (sculpture)
	Lucas Samaras	
	Box #103, 1977 (overview and details of dripped plastic on cloth)	
	Collection of Stanley and Adrienne Green	
01:17:18	Technical Specifications	adhesive tape
	Samaras discusses the materials and techniques that he used to	assembling (additive and
	create his <i>Panoramas</i> series, a series of photomontages that he	joining process)
	creating using Polaroid prints, tape, and X-acto knives.	cutting (dividing)
		diffusion transfer prints
		perspective (technique)
		photographs utility knives
01:17:31	(Image)	photomontages
	Lucas Samaras	
	Panorama, March 16, 1983	
	The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; gift of Arnold and	
	Milly Glimcher, transferred from the Department of 20th Century	
	Art, 1986	
01:18:08	(Image)	photomontages
01.10.00	Lucas Samaras	Firestanionages
	Panorama, 1983-86	
	Denver Art Museum; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Greenhill	
	, 6	
01:18:29	(Image)	photomontages
	Lucas Samaras	

	Panorama, March 6, 1983 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc. 84.9	
01:20:54	(Image) Lucas Samaras Panorama, February 27, 1983 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	photomontages
01:21:01	Process of Creation Samaras describes his use of a room-sized camera to create <i>Ultra-Large Lucas</i> , 1983, a life-sized self-portrait.	cameras (photographic equipment) photographs Polaroid Corporation* Wolf, Eelco*
01:21:07	(Image) Lucas Samaras Ultra-Large Lucas, 1983 The Museum of Modern Art, New York; gift of Robert and Gayle Greenhill	photographs
01:22:15	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, July 6, 1990 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	photographs
01:22:23	Process of Creation and Technical Specifications Samaras describes the materials and techniques that he used to create a series of ink drawings.	ink letters (signs) paper (fiber product)
01:22:33	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled #13, May 2, 1980 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:22:45	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled (Ego), September 7, 1983 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:23:19	Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work Samaras describes the materials and techniques that he used to create a series of gold jewelry based on chicken-wire forms. He also discusses the target audiences for that work.	audiences casting (process) chicken wire gold (metal) jewelry necklaces
01:23:24	(Image) Lucas Samaras	necklaces

	Necklace #7, 1996-98 Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:26:26	Conservation Issues	adhesive
	Samaras discusses his use of pins on his box works and their tendency to rust. He also discusses switching from using Duco cement to using acrylic gel medium to coat gems. He then offers his preferences regarding the conservation of his boxes and discusses the phenomenon of people stealing components of his works.	boxes (containers) brass (alloy) gems (object genres) pins (fasteners) rust theft
01:26:28	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, October 28, 1985 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:26:33	(Image) Lucas Samaras Untitled, November 8, 1995 Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	drawings (visual works)
01:26:40	(Image) Lucas Samaras Box #79, 1972 Collection of Morton and Linda Janklow	assemblages (sculpture)
01:26:47	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #81, August 1973 (various details) Collection of the artist; courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	assemblages (sculpture)
01:27:27	(Images) Lucas Samaras Box #108, 1982 (overview and details of jewels) Collection of Martin Z. Margulies	assemblages (sculpture)
01:28:29	(Image) Lucas Samaras Box #109, 1982 Denver Art Museum; acquisition challenge grant, the American Art Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Robbins	assemblages (sculpture)
01:30:23	Technical Specifications and Process of Creation Samaras discusses a series of self-portraits that he created using Polaroid TPX film.	Polaroid Corporation*
01:30:35	(Image) Lucas Samaras	photographs

	Self-Portrait, August 21, 1998	
	Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
	*\$100 AVMI	
01:30:44	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Self-Portrait, June 6, 1996	
	Collection of David P. Mixer	
01:30:49	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Self-Portrait, June 13, 1996	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:31:16	Technical Specifications and Concept/Nature of Work	digital cameras
	Samaras describes the materials and techniques that he used to	digital images
	create a series of digitally manipulated self-portraits. He also	digital prints
	discusses the relationship of technology and beauty to his work.	Macintosh (Computer)*
01:31:35	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Untitled (Conflict #15), April 20, 2003	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:31:46	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Untitled (Factid #63), May 23, 2003	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:31:54	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Untitled (Observations #44), February 10, 2003	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:32:01	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Untitled (Orchid #44), July 30, 2002	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:32:14	(Image)	photographs
	Lucas Samaras	
	Untitled (Conflict #23), April 21, 2003	
	Collection of the artist;	
	courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	
01:33:24	(Images)	sculpture (visual work)
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	Lucas Samaras Mirror Corner, 1990 (overview and details of "knobs") Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; promised gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President P.2003.90	
01:33:24	Conservation Issues and Concept/Nature of Work Samaras discusses past incidents of damage to his large-scale mirror works, as well as his preferences and advice regarding their restoration. He also discusses the visual significance of the "knobs" on his mirrored works.	damage glass (material) mirrors restoration (process)
01:36:20	(Images) Lucas Samaras Model for Mirrored Room-Trigonaon, 1995 (overview and detail of damage) Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York	sculpture (visual work)
01:37:37	(Image) Exhibition wall graphics	
01:37:54	Closing Credits	