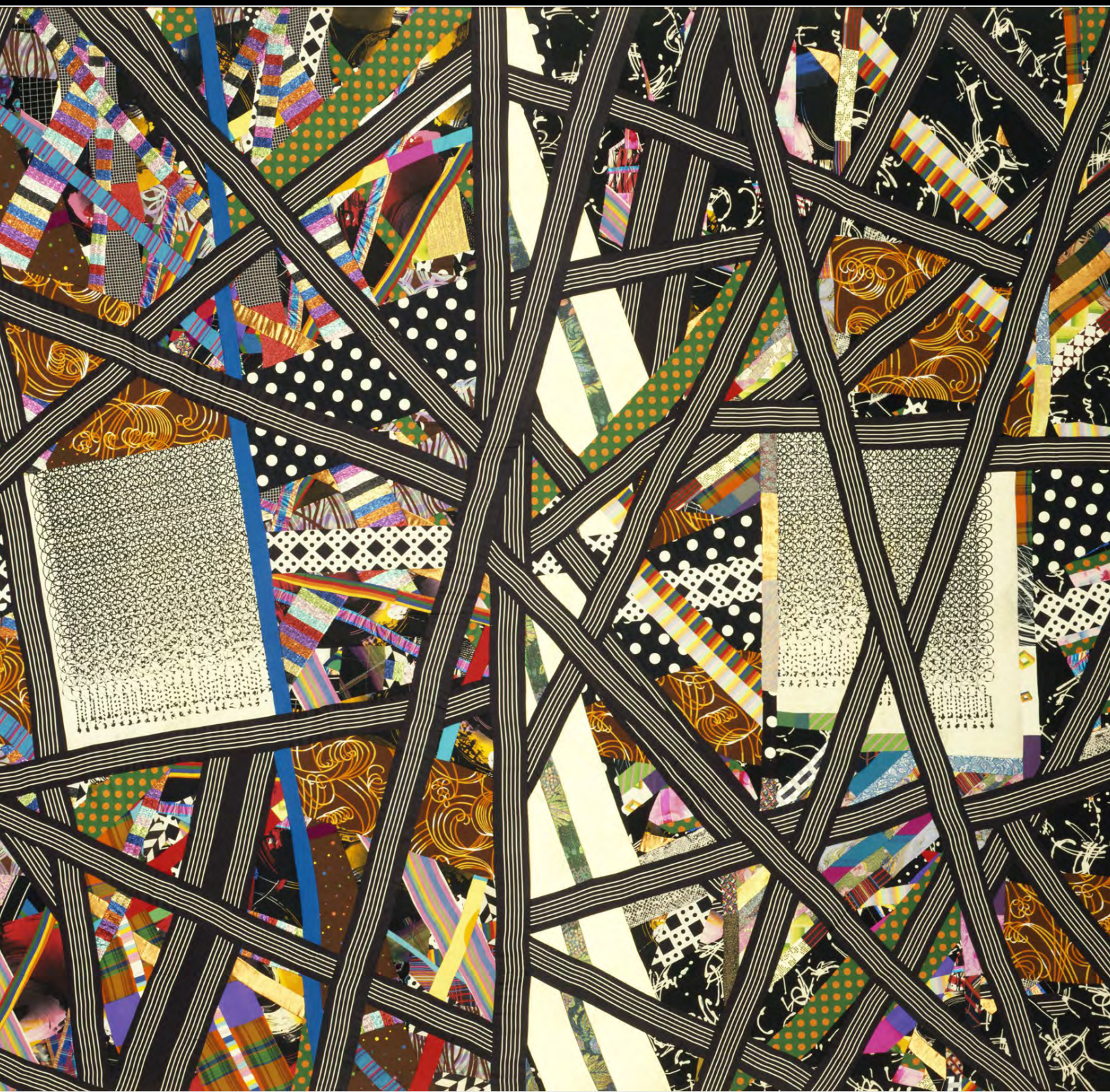
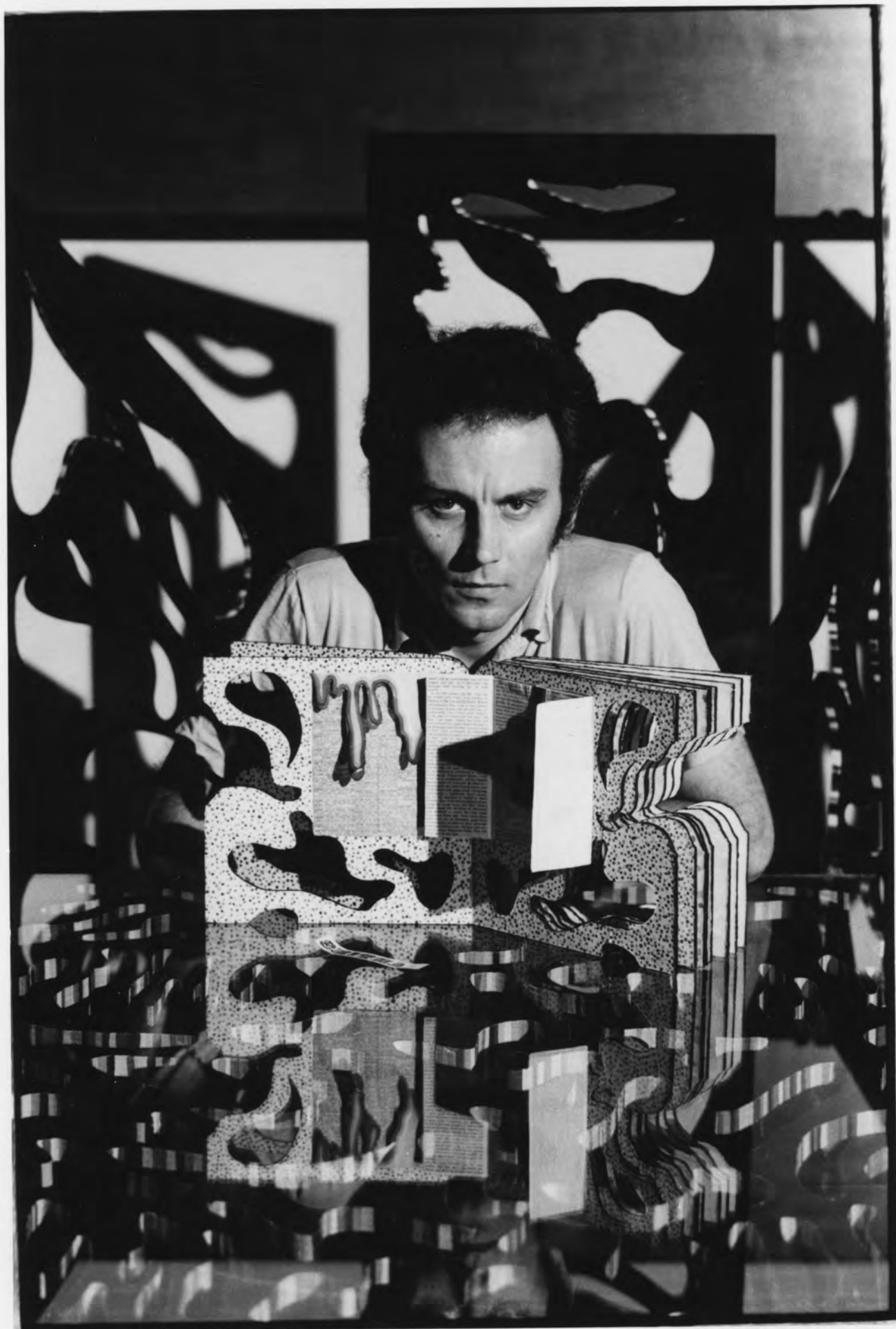


# Lucas Samaras







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b. 1936, Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece

d. 2024, New York

Eluding historical categorization, Lucas Samaras's (b. 1936, Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece; d. 2024, New York) oeuvre is united through its consistent focus on the body and psyche, often emphasizing autobiography. The themes of self-depiction, self-investigation, and identity were a driving force behind his practice, which, at its onset in the early 1960s, advanced the Surrealist idiom while proposing a radical departure from the presiding themes of Abstract Expressionism and Pop art. Samaras emigrated with his family from Greece to the United States in 1948 and attended Rutgers University, New Jersey studying under Allan Kaprow and George Segal, and then at Columbia University, New York, where he studied art history under Meyer Schapiro. During this time, he initiated painting self-portraits and gravitated toward the use of pastels, which enabled him to work quickly, exploring figurative and geometrical forms in rich colors and with luxuriant texture, characteristics that would reoccur throughout his practice. He soon shifted toward objects, producing assemblage reliefs and boxes comprised of elements culled from his immediate surroundings and five-and-dime stores—cutlery, nails, mirrors, brightly colored yarn, and feathers—affixed with liquid aluminum or plaster. Gesturing toward a larger investigation of (self) reflection in his work found in his early mirror rooms, self-portraiture, and more recent use of digital mirror-imaging, Samaras's oeuvre acts as an extension of his body while underscoring the transformative possibilities of the everyday—a true blurring of art and life.

In 1969, Samaras began to expand upon his use of photography, experimenting with a Polaroid 360 camera, which appealed to his sense of immediacy. His innovation further materialized with his use of the Polaroid SX-70 in 1973 in a melding of self-portraiture and abstraction, created by manipulating the wet-dye emulsions with a stylus or fingertip before the chemicals set. This process progressed with digital art in 1996 when he obtained his first computer and began to experiment with printed texts on typewriter paper. By 2002, he had acquired a digital camera and the use of Photoshop became an integral component of his practice. These technologies gave way to Photofictions (2003), a series characterized by distorted self-portraits and psychedelic compositions.

**P A C E**