

GARY SIMMONS

Simmons' work is always about the idea of the romantic and the overall pervading theme of memory: it's function for all of us individually and collectively: our fear of it, our fear of losing it, our fear of distorting or not distorting it, our need to believe it is or is not something that we can share. The constants in Simmons' work are his preoccupation with memory and his use of romantic gesture. Looking at the work within these parameters, its primary focus becomes the physical representation of the inevitable disappearance and ultimate ephemerality of things. Simmons' aesthetic approach, his choice of subject matter, titles, materials and his romantic gesture of blurring or erasure, inherently conjures an existential experience in that it heightens our awareness of the fleetingness and potential disappearance of all things and experiences; it forces us to witness our need to sustain them and feign their permanence through our belief in our memory, both collective and individual. The fact that Simmons creates his paintings and wall drawings by first drawing and then obfuscating the very imagery he just created physically exemplifies the existential dilemma he is discussing: our need to transcend the inevitable disappearance of all things through memory.

– Ellen Ross