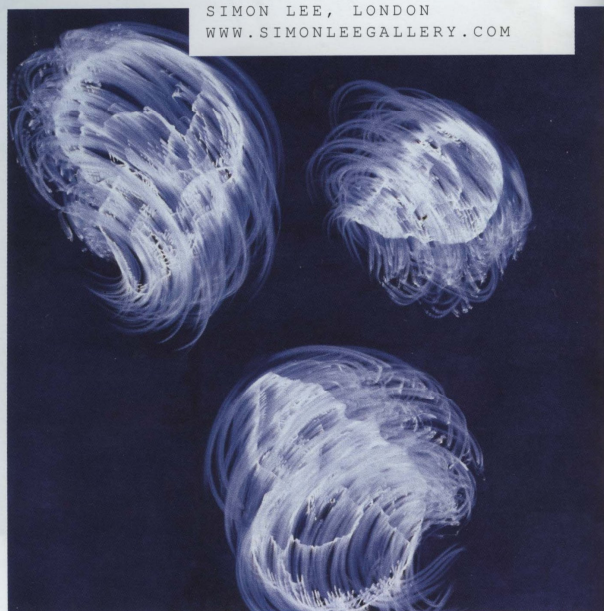


**ERASERHEAD:
GARY SIMMONS**

For his forthcoming show at Simon Lee, London, titled *The House of Pain*, the New York-based artist Gary Simmons has referenced the idea of Darwinism gone mad explored in H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), and the long-defunct, debunked practice of phrenology. But you mightn't know it to look at his work: against bright single-colour painted panels of yellow or blue, smudgy white chalk drawings are rendered like high-velocity phantoms, part visible, part rubbed out. On closer inspection these are skull drawings, whose shapes are confused by Simmons's signature acts of erasure and obfuscation. These erasures allude to the way ideas become redundant and how history fades, but also to how certain negative cultural prejudices can never be truly removed. Since the late 1980s the artist has used images taken from white American culture, from Disney cartoon characters to 1940s comic books and the movie *Deliverance* (1972), mining both buried and deliberate political agendas to sophisticated, ethereal effect. *Skye Sherwin*

GARY SIMMONS:
THE HOUSE OF PAIN
4 MAY - 9 JUNE
SIMON LEE, LONDON
WWW.SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM

Not Yet Titled ('Good Knot'), 2006-7, collage, 35 x 28 cm.
Photo: Jochen Litzmann. Courtesy Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin



Skullduggery, 2007, oil and pigment on canvas, 213 x 213 cm.
Courtesy Simon Lee Gallery, London, and Metro Pictures, New York

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