

## Gary Simmons

7 November – 19 December 2003

Opening reception: Friday, 7 November , 6-8pm

Anthony Meier Fine Arts is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by Gary Simmons. Using icons and stereotypes of American pop culture, Simmons creates haunting, memorable works that address personal and collective experiences of race and class. Simmons has been exhibiting internationally for fifteen years, including the 1993 Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial and most recently a comprehensive mid-career survey on display at The MCA Chicago, SITE Santa Fe and the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Simmons' exhibition at Anthony Meier Fine Arts centers on the ongoing political debate over the separation between church and state. Employing text and imagery of Southern Baptist churches and state buildings, the exhibition consists of three paintings, four exploded drawings -- one large visual created through the combination of numerous individual, partial images -- and a site-specific wall work. The exploded drawing in many ways mirrors the topic of Simmons exhibition: there is strength in numbers, a combined force of many that an individual lacks. All of the pieces employ Simmons signature erasure technique.

In his erasure works, Simmons creates drawings and then smudges the image with his hands, rendering it a ghostly reference of its former self; a reference laden with movement, memory, and the passage of time. The smudging questions what is seen and what is not. It asks the viewer to differentiate between the scrim of personal experience through which one often sees the world and the true image on the wall. This objectivity is the cornerstone of Simmons' church and state exhibition.

The push and pull of the erased lines blurs not only the image but also the border between two and three-dimensional work. There is a performance-based aspect to these pieces; the physical act of moving the chalk, the charcoal, the paint, leaves a ghost of the artist on the surface and creates a seamless fluidity of form.