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SIMMONS & BURKE

YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER IN PARADISE ON EARTH

September 6 – November 1, 2008

Reception, Saturday, September 6, 6 – 8 pm



Simmons & Burke *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth #2 [Detail]*, 2008
Lightjet print and custom audio software
78.25 x 54 inches (framed) Edition of 5

Kim Light/LightBox is pleased to present *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, the first solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based collaborative artists Simmons & Burke. Simmons & Burke's works shimmer with highly faceted collage compositions of appropriated images, celebrating contamination by digital replication, popular culture, and the history of art.

The visual and audio components are marked by an intricate collage aesthetic, assembled solely from content carefully collected from internet sources. The artists' user experience of browsing for digital source material heavily informs these works, they relate this process to the chance operations of John Cage.

Case Simmons & Andrew Burke take cues from early traditions of collage; notably the Surrealist collages of Max Ernst and the political photomontages of John Heartfield. As individual components, each appropriated photograph has been painstakingly cut, scaled, and digitally overlaid until the accumulation across the picture plane suggests a unifying perspectival space. Their compositional strategies find affiliations with Renaissance and Baroque formulas for directing the viewer's eye to and from areas of narrative emphasis—Da Vinci's aerial perspective and Caravaggio's radiant central focal point play an important role organizing these dense collages.

But just as the lineage of their work reaches back 300 years, it is firmly rooted in their particular understanding of the contemporary conditions of a viral media ecosystem. Experiencing a Simmons & Burke work, the viewer can virtually retrace the non-linear stops in the process of a labyrinthine google search. *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* gives expression to a cut-and-paste culture, where the promiscuity of images reigns.

Simmons & Burke's stand-alone audio composition, entitled *Bodies of Water*, will be featured in the adjacent gallery. Pressed as a limited-edition vinyl record, *Bodies of Water* exists in three movements, comprised of samples lifted from the internet and edited together to provide a multi-layered narrative experience. This soundscape delivers what the artists refer to as a "pinpointed cacophony," a swarm of memories expressed through a variety of audio clips. Cultural moments ranging from Chopin to Ludacris are collaged together not only to evoke the narrative meaning, but also to highlight the equal importance of two such disparate forms of music. Mirroring the formal aesthetic of the visual collage (lightjet prints), the sounds collected for the custom audio programs come from all strata of popular and high culture and take on hybrid significations when re-contextualized. The wide and contrasting range of audio samples play together in overlapping, crossfading, and pitch-shifted arrangements in order to effect confused and congested memory. The final movement is based around the academic compositional form A B A, though it does not attempt any programmatic resolution, and ends with a final sample from Beethoven's 7th Symphony repeatedly skipping and dissipating into nothingness.

Case Simmons & Andrew Burke began their collaboration in 2006, with their *Temple* series. Simmons studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and Burke received his Master's in Music from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. Their work has recently been acquired by the Guggenheim Museum in New York. The artists live and work in Los Angeles.

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