



Hurvin Anderson *Skinny Dipping* 1999, oil on canvas (detail)  
The Simmons & Simmons contemporary art collection, acquired 2002

## The Simmons & Simmons contemporary art collection

Simmons & Simmons is an international law firm with a contemporary art collection.

Under the guidance of Stuart Evans, a former partner at the firm, Simmons & Simmons has been collecting art for over 25 years. The collection was established to support up and coming artists early in their careers and to develop a showcase for their work outside of the traditional gallery environment. Today, the firm has a leading collection of over 400 contemporary artworks, which hang in the meeting rooms and communal spaces of the firm's offices not only in London, but around the world.

Simmons & Simmons is proud of its commitment to the arts: it stages regular art tours, artist talks and temporary exhibitions, and has been legal partner to the Frieze Art Fair (now Frieze London) since its inception. Engagement is important and alongside its dedicated website at [simmonscontemporary.com](http://simmonscontemporary.com), its Twitter account @Simmons\_Art and a staff art network, the firm regularly looks for new ways to offer staff, clients and local communities access to some of the most interesting aspects of contemporary art and culture. The firm's activities in 2014 include participating in the 'Highlights from Corporate Collections' exhibition at Bonhams; showcasing the first temporary exhibition curated by staff at the firm and, for the first time, hosting tours as part of the City of London Festival and Open House London 2014.

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Bernard Frize *Rosetta* 1997, acrylic and resin on canvas (detail)  
The Simmons & Simmons contemporary art collection, acquired 1999

## *Painting About Painting*

Simmons & Simmons through its art collection is committed to collecting quality work by young artists working in the cities in which we have offices. This adds an extra dimension of experience in our working lives to know that the artists whose work we encounter on a daily basis might share the same urban context, and the firm itself is acknowledged to be supporting local production as part of our community engagement. With this in mind this exhibition shows work by artists living and working in London, many of whom trained here, some very close to home at the Cass (formerly the London Guildhall University), a short walk from us here in Moorgate.

Much art discussed in the media comes with easy one liners; the task of much contemporary art seems to want to find ways of delivering an easy message embedded often in social fascinations or the common topics of the day. For this reason much commentary doesn't know what to make of painting, and the death of painting has been continuously announced for over a hundred years. Except it doesn't. If the market tells us anything, the extraordinary prices paid for contemporary painters at auction demonstrate that painting, and a rich interest in it, is alive and well.

So we thought it worth asking the question as a basis for this exhibition: within contemporary art, what is it that painting is doing differently, that attracts so much attention and opprobrium in equal measure? So we have *Painting About Painting*, an attempt to put together works that demonstrate a breadth of contemporary production, but all concerned with the history of the medium, and all convinced of the state of exception within which painting exists. Painting does engaging, sometimes profound things for the viewer that other media don't attempt. Whatever else painting attempts to conjure by way of the social or biographical, it also conjures itself.