

AMANDA
WILKINSON

Images Disturbed by an Intense Parasite
Film and Video Programme
March – June 2020

Laurie Simmons, *The Music of Regret*, 2006

35mm film transferred to HD, 40 minutes

Exhibition dates: 19 May 2020 - 25 May 2020

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Laurie Simmons's first film, *The Music of Regret*, is a poignant reflection on life's disappointments in the form of a forty-minute, three-act musical. In the film, inanimate objects from the artist's photographic oeuvre—a camera, a gun, a pocket watch—are brought to life by Alvin Ailey dancers, and a group of suburban neighbors, played by hand puppets, and a real-life woman, played by actress Meryl Streep, sing love songs in concert with Simmons's custom-made ventriloquist dummies. Each vignette, filled with nostalgia for the conventions of family life in 1950s America, tears off a veneer of pleasantries to reveal inconsolable sadness caused by one misstep after another. Riddled with the artist's signature melancholy, *The Music of Regret* points to today's surfeit of commodities, which supplement an emptiness born of social and political carelessness.

I had always thought about some of my pictures as scenes from a musical. I often had a soundtrack in my mind, and certainly the walking objects—a house, an hourglass, a cake, a camera, a toilet—which I paired with plastic or human legs, I thought of as characters from a musical that might potentially come out and sing and dance. So when the idea came up to do something I'd never done before, I thought about actually bringing this musical to life. It was so interesting to have the opportunity to bring my still photos to life.

Laurie Simmons