

## Twenty Six Mothers — *noelsheridan* projectspace, aeaf

Simone Kennedy presents here a sequence of images that derive their great power to disturb and fascinate from the disruptive application of collage to an image laden with conventional meanings and at the same time so familiar as to seem to bear none: no ideology, no discursive valency. The violence, the convulsive effect of this meeting—of 1) the ordinary and yet enshrined (street photography, mother and daughter shopping) and 2) the work done by the collaged addition / montaged intervention—is remarkable and depends upon the very simplicity of those two elements. The collage works an invasion of the pictorial space and integrity of the photographic world—and it also, of course, ‘violates’ the figures. These last carry with them conceptions of femininity, motherhood, innocence, goodness, grace, propriety and so on—all of which are radically attacked. In this instance their innocence is abruptly arraigned.

Kennedy’s practice here is derived directly from Max Ernst’s early collages: the same violence of disruption (of the space, of Victorian conventions, of bourgeois European hierarchies and categories and pieties—all twisted with a violently revelatory ‘Freudian’ counter-construction), the same making-strange of the normal, so as to read the familiar anthropologically, analytically, as a materialist, as a psychoanalyst.

What rites do this mother and daughter enact? How inevitable are the common meanings routinely attached to them? What do the things they bear and are increasingly laden with indicate about them, individually, and about their relationship? Is a story there to be read? Is it revealed or is it proposed?

The terminals of the simple battery this sequence resembles—with mother-and-daughter at one terminal and the otherness of the collaged presence at the other—are so polarised and powerful that we must be in their grip: thesis and anti-thesis sparking away, leaving us to supply the resolving term or reading. But this reading will remain always provisional, unstable, troubled and troubling

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