

Dr Marcus Bunyan in ArtBlart (www.artblart.wordpress.com)

Review: 'Trish Morrissey, Photographs and Video at the Centre for Contemporary Photography (CCP), Fitzroy, Melbourne
Exhibition dates: 22nd January – 14th March, 2010

This is an extract from the online review that first appeared on March 2nd 2010

(Extract)

The most outstanding body of work in both exhibitions is Morrissey's wonderfully vibrant series of large format photographs titled 'Front' (2005 – 2007, below). Featuring photographs of families on beaches in the UK and Melbourne, Morrissey insinuates herself into the hierarchical family group (usually as the mother wearing the mother's clothes) with unsettling results. The photographs are wonderful, the compositions implicitly believable in their conceptualisation, technically brilliant with beautiful control of light, colour and space. As Dan Rule insightfully noted in *The Age* newspaper, "What makes Morrissey's work impressive and convincing is its multiplicity. She doesn't just comment on family and femininity and photographic mode; she steps inside and embodies the formal and cultural archetypes."

The rituals of family gathering and holidaying are neatly skewered by Morrissey's performative acts – as Roy Boyne observes in his quotation, "When self-identity is no longer seen as, even minimally, a fixed essence, this does not mean that the forces of identity formation can therefore be easily resisted, but it does mean that the necessity for incessant repetition of identity formation by the forces of a disciplinary society creates major opportunities for subversion and appropriation." (1. Boyne, Roy. "Citation and Subjectivity: Towards a Return of the Embodied Will," in Featherstone, Mike (ed.). *Body Modification*. London: Sage, 2000, p.212.)

These photographs subvert the idiom of the nuclear family, where conversational parties possess common cultural references. In Morrissey's photographs the family photograph has become a site of resistance, a contested site, one that challenges the holistic whole of the family, the memory of the family photograph and the

idea that without family nothing cohesive would exist at all. The singular 'body' of the family is neatly dissected and parodied with great fun, wit and elan. I loved the series.

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Trish Morrissey