

http://beehive.temporalimage.com/content_apps02/queen_bees/pages/sanford.html Review by Carolyn Guertin in *Beehive*.

Christy Sheffield Sanford
Red Mona



From *Red Mona* by Christy Sheffield Sanford. Reproduced by Permission.

Bricolage, assemblage, collage, [weaving](#), intertext, immersion, emersion, Simone de Milo.

Red Mona (1995-1997) is the space where language study meets advertising meets de Sade meets soft porn meets surrealism meets the objectification of bodies meets soap opera meets Guy de Maupassant's unnamed female character in "Two Little Soldiers." Mona. Simone de Milo metamorphosized into Red Mona. You have never seen anything quite like this before. Sanford has taken 50 French flash cards (the language learning tools) and doctored them with her own art. The cards speak the original phrase and the superimposed art intertwines French and English and photographic images with a [translation](#) of de Maupassant's nineteenth century short story into an entirely new medium and context.

An American living in the south of France, Sanford is a consummate designer, graphic artist, hypertextualist and performance artist. The director of the collaborative work site [Madame de Lafayette's Book of Hours](#) (where M.D. Coverley's [The Lacemaker, Elys](#) also lives), Sanford is also the author of a number of online works, including [Bigamy in the Desert](#) and [The Pre-Raphaelite Dreams of Violette Poole](#).

Working from images culled (or at least common) to the mass media and *haute couture*, in *Red Mona* Sanford uses collage like it has rarely been seen. Following an entirely different approach from [Cheryl Sourkes'](#) collage work (not represented in her hypertext--she seems to use a whole hypertext as a collage instead of uniting it into one image the way she does in her photographic work) or from Patricia Seaman's dialogue with the [comic book](#) tradition, [New Motor Queen City](#), Sanford subverts patriarchal discourse by giving Mona a voice, desire, guilt and a sword. Many different cultural discourses come into play in this text to [undermine](#) patriarchal assumptions. Sanford incorporates psychology, religion (both sin and religious ecstasy), drug culture, song lyrics, food, women's fashion, adolescent fantasy, romance, and ambition. Toying with expectations she subverts class (removing de Maupassant's peasant farmer girl and two soldiers to high society), gender (Luc begins to lactate, for example, when left alone with a baby) and transforms de Maupassant's study of two soldiers into a *ménage à trois*. Reading this text is an intense surrealistic experience that unites all of the senses (smell, for example, is important in the written text), but in a radically different way from, for instance, [Carolyn Guyer's Quibbling](#). [Adriene Jenik's Mauve Desert](#) has the most in common with Sanford's text in terms of its multimedia effects and 'shock' value.

Marshall McLuhan felt that this new interaction of the senses was a mark of the new media. He said:

It seems contradictory that the fragmenting and divisive power of our analytical Western world should derive from an accentuation of the visual

faculty. This same visual sense is, also, responsible for the habit of seeing all things as continuous and connected.

Fragmentation by means of visual stress occurs in that isolation of moment in time, or of aspect in space, that is beyond the power of touch, or hearing, or smell, or movement. By imposing unvisualizable relationships that are the result of instant speed, electric technology dethrones the visual sense and restores us to the dominion of synaesthesia and the close involvement of the other senses (108).

Sanford embodies the shock or the sting of the senses not only in her startling conjunction of images on each card, but in the [leap of faith](#) through the random structuring of the cards themselves. This is a sensory experience extraordinaire.

Christy Sheffield Sanford:

[Sanford's Home Page.](#)

URL: <http://gnv.fdt.net/~christys/index.html>

[Bigamy in the Desert.](#) Online.

URL: <http://ezone.org:1080/ez/e9/articles/css/bigamy.html>

[Madame de Lafayette's Book of Hours Collaborative Work Site.](#) Project Director. Online.

URL: <http://gnv.fdt.net/~christys/goldind.html>

[The Pre-Raphaelite Dreams of Violette Poole.](#) Online.

URL: <http://www.walrus.com/~gibralto/acorn/pomes/christys/>

[Red Mona](#) Online.

URL: <http://www.purplefrog.com/~christy/red-mona/>

[Links are disabled because they no longer are viable.]

Carolyn Guertin



RED MONA, 1995.

This project site was supported by Purplefrog and contains over forty French Flash Cards collaged with images and text and accompanied by sound files.