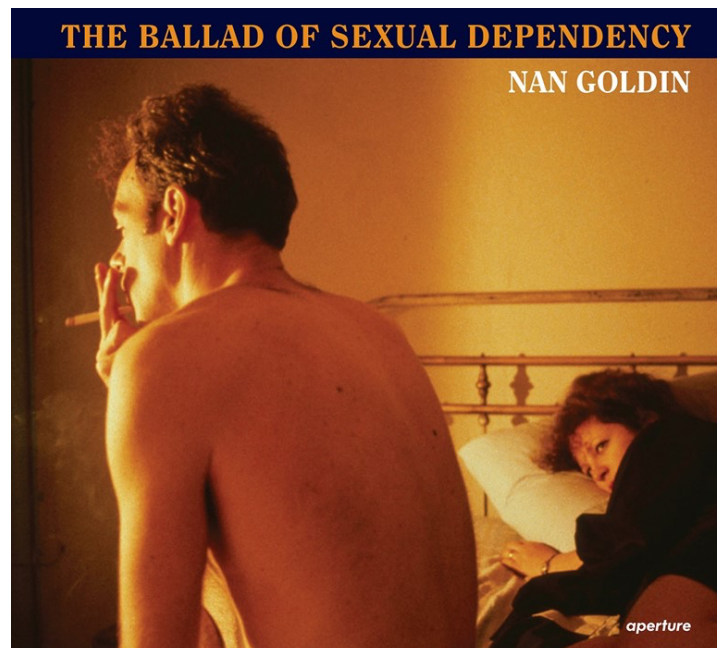


## ‘REAL, RAW, HONEST’: HOW NAN GOLDIN INSPIRED A GENERATION OF PHOTOGRAPHERS

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Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* [1986] Courtesy of Aperture

Since the 1980s, photographer Nan Goldin has unflinchingly explored life's fathomless depths, exhilarating horizons, and everything in between. Renowned for their immediacy, emotional intensity, and raw, authentic aesthetic, her intimate portraits of friends, family, and loved ones shy away from neither moments of unbridled joy or abject sorrow.

Her seminal work, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (a slideshow originally conceived in 1983), forms a deeply personal narrative consisting of over 700 images. It encompasses her lovers, friends, and her fiercely empathetic portrayal of the devastating effects of the AIDS crisis. "*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* is the diary I let people read," Goldin wrote. "The diary is my form of control over my life. It allows me to obsessively record every detail. It enables me to remember."

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As an artist who has elucidated so many difficult, traumatic experiences – such as domestic violence, grief, bereavement, and alienation – she’s also crystalised and enshrined some of the most joyful and optimistic. *Eden and After* (2014) explores Goldin’s enduring fascination with childhood and the innate human wisdom and natural androgyny which she believes children possess. “Children are from another planet. Babies come from somewhere else,” she once explained. “They’re closer to whatever it is that we come from and where we’re going. They know more in those years. And then they’re taught to forget.” She related a story that she had heard from a friend about a four-year-old child who asked a tiny infant: “Baby, do you remember God? Because I’m beginning to forget.”

Now, a selection of her work will be exhibited in Berlin, occupying the busy intersection of Friedrichstrasse and Torstrasse. The installation, displayed as part of Neuer Berliner Kunstverein’s *Billboard* series, will be accompanied by an atmospheric sound piece composed by Soundwalk Collective (Stephan Crasneanscki and Simone Merli). Among the images on display will be *The Crowd, Paternò* (2004), an image chosen by Goldin from *Memory Lost* (2019-2021) in which she excavates the complexity of memory, the horror of addiction, and her “narrow” escape after becoming dangerously dependent on the notorious prescription drug OxyContin.

Having influenced succeeding generations of image-makers to document the truth of their own communities, enlarge empathy and understanding of lives lived on the margins, or confront the difficulties and trials of their own complicated realities, Nan Goldin is one of the most significant and influential artists of her time. As her images go on display in this prominent public installation, we speak to five photographers who, in their own unique ways, have all drawn from Nan Goldin’s life, work, and attitude.



Marie Tomanova, "Serena"



Marie Tomanova, "Massima"

## MARIE TOMANOVA

"Nan Goldin feels almost mystical to me... or maybe it is mythological, something that is almost beyond reality. But that almost makes no sense as her work is also so real and honest – and that is what I connect to, deeply. Nan's work moves me, and that is what I really want from art – to connect and to be moved. I want my spirit to be moved.

"I saw *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* in 2015 at the Whitney. I cried. And I felt it for the next few days – I couldn't get away from it. She brought close, side-by-side, living and loss. It overwhelmed me and left me disturbed. There was everything there, just laid bare. Life... all of the pieces, the moments. I was in MoMA in spring 2017, and I saw the *Ballad* was there but I stood on the periphery of it, I couldn't stay, I couldn't get too pulled in because I didn't feel like I had it in me at the time. And this is the most beautiful thing. I don't know if any other work does that to me, makes me feel like that, moves me to the point that I need to be careful around it."

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/55751/1/real-raw-honest-how-nan-goldin-inspired-a-generation-of-photographers>