

# NAN GOLDIN THIS WILL NOT END WELL

«I don't choose people in order to photograph them; I take photos straight from my life. These photos come from relationships, not from observation.»

Nan Goldin

## **NAN GOLDIN**

### **THIS WILL NOT END WELL**

Exhibition organized by Moderna Museet, Stockholm, in collaboration with Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and Grand Palais Rmn, Paris.

The presentation at Pirelli HangarBicocca is curated by Roberta Tenconi with Lucia Aspesi.

#### **Pirelli HangarBicocca**

11.10.2025 – 15.02.2026

#### **Public Program**

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of events that allow visitors to learn more about some of the themes of the show and of Nan Goldin's work.

#### **Museum Mediation**

Museum mediators are present in the exhibition spaces to answer questions from the public, provide information and contextual elements that can deepen the fruition of the artworks.

#### **Catalog**

A comprehensive catalog accompanying the touring exhibition "This Will Not End Well" is available at the Pirelli HangarBicocca bookshop and online.

Discover more on our website.



*Nan as a dominatrix, Cambridge, MA, 1978. Still from The Ballad of Sexual Dependency, 1981–2022*

## The Artist

Nan Goldin (Washington D.C., USA, 1953; lives and works in New York City) is one of the most high-profile artists of our time. Her deeply personal approach to storytelling has had a profound impact on contemporary photography and visual culture for decades. From 1979 to the present, Goldin has produced numerous slide-shows composed of thousands of still images—capturing intimate snapshots of everyday life, her close circle of friends, accounts of family events, while exploring themes ranging from childhood to identity, violence, and addiction. Intensely raw and emotionally resonant, these stories stand as universal tales of love and loss that continue to move generations of audiences.

Goldin grew up in a suburb of Boston as the youngest of four children in a Jewish family. At the age of fifteen she moved into a commune and attended Satya Community School in Lincoln, Massachusetts—an alternative institution inspired by the progressive educational philosophy of Summerhill School in England, known for its unconventional methods that gave students the freedom to decide whether or not to attend lessons. When teachers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) were able to secure a donation of Polaroids for the Satya school, she became the school photographer. After purchasing her first camera at the age of sixteen, Goldin began experimenting with black-and-white photography. Among her earliest subjects—and one of the first people she collaborated with in the darkroom as she developed a more intentional approach to the medium—was her classmate and photographer David Armstrong. The two also shared a deep passion for film and went to movie screenings almost every day, as Goldin recalls: «We would go to the Harvard Film Archive and see all of the films with Marlene Dietrich and Marilyn Monroe, all of Douglas Sirk's films, all of Joan Crawford and Bette Davis—all of the Hollywood goddesses we were obsessed with. I saw a lot of European cinema: Michelangelo Antonioni, Robbe-Grillet, and Jacques Rivette. I've also been very influenced by Andy Warhol's films since I was a teenager. I've absorbed cinema so fully that my work has unavoidably been influenced by it.»

After attending the Satya school, Goldin moved in with a group of friends who were drag queens in Boston in the early 1970s. She began portraying the life she shared with her community of friends, which centered around a bar called The Other Side. These early photographic works were presented in her first solo exhibition in 1973, held at Project, Inc. in Cambridge. During this time, Goldin decided to push her work further by attending the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, where she had her first encounter with the history of photography. While in Provincetown, a queer community, on a sabbatical during art school, Goldin had no access to a darkroom to develop and print images, so she began working with slides to present her work. This soon developed into a practice of making slideshows.

During the last year of school, Goldin received a travel scholarship and went to London where she photographed skinheads and the nascent punk movement. This was her first important color work. After graduation, Goldin relocated to New York in 1978, where she captured moments with her friends and lovers in clubs and bars, underground cinemas, and at her home in the Bowery. Like notes in a diary, these photographs stem from a personal impulse to preserve fleeting moments before they fade away, reflecting a deep desire to convey the emotional essence of everyday life. As the artist stated: «For me, it is not a detachment to take a picture. It's a way of touching somebody—it's a caress. I think that you can actually give people access to their own soul.» Building on these early experiences and relationships, Goldin began working on her first major slideshow, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1981–2022). *The Ballad* captures images from Goldin's relationships over the years, telling stories of intimacy, violence, gender identity, love, and loss. Composed of slides that the artist initially inserted manually into projectors, the work is accompanied by an eclectic soundtrack of more than 30 songs. Constantly reedited and updated over the years, the piece evolved into a multimedia presentation of nearly 700 slides. The artist experimented with pacing, length, and sound, bringing still images closer to the film experience. She recalls: «The point is what I've done with the pictures. The point is about making cinematic work out of still images, and the editing is where I feel my intelligence lies.» Initially projected in nightclubs and private gatherings, the work was later included in the groundbreaking "Times Square

Show” in 1980 in New York. This radical, artist-run exhibition brought together over 100 filmmakers, visual artists, and independent musicians, allowing them to continue their practice outside of cultural institutions, bringing to public attention themes such as urban marginality, street culture, and social identity in New York at the time. Following these early presentations, *The Ballad* began to receive invitations for screening in independent cinemas throughout the United States and Europe. In 1985 the work was presented at the Whitney Biennial in New York, expanding its audience to the institutional context.

In the late 1980s, many of Goldin’s friends and community were decimated by the AIDS epidemic. Channeling a collective sense of grief and urgency, the artist became involved in groups such as ACT UP and Visual AIDS. In 1989 she organized the show “Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing” at New York’s Artists Space—the first exhibition about AIDS featuring the work of artists living with HIV, those who had died, or those whose art responded to the disease. The show included works by David Armstrong, Peter Hujar, Greer Lankton, and David Wojnarowicz, among others. A small catalogue of the show included a brilliant, furious text by David Wojnarowicz about living with AIDS in the face of political inertia, which ignited a firestorm. Through both her photographs and activism, Goldin captured the emotional and political impact of the epidemic, portraying a generation devastated by loss.

*The Ballad* remained the focus of Goldin’s practice—and the only slideshow—until the early 1990s, when she began working on other narratives, which she presented on the occasion of her retrospective “I’ll Be Your Mirror” at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1996. That same year, Goldin collaborated with the British director Edmund Coulthard on the BBC-commissioned film *I’ll Be Your Mirror* (1996), offering an autobiographical exploration of her work and interviews with her close friends and subjects. The 2000s saw various exhibitions across Europe, hosted by major institutions, as well as opportunities for the artist to travel and further expand her repertoire. A unique occasion came in 2010 when the Musée du Louvre in Paris invited Goldin to photograph its collection over an eight-month period. From this experience, the artist produced hundreds of shots of masterpieces, later edited togeth-

er with portraits she had taken over the years. The result is the slideshow *Scopophilia* (2010), an exploration of the fulfillment of an intense desire through the act of looking, which developed into *Stendhal Syndrome* (2024), a work investigating the overwhelming sensations art can provoke.

Goldin’s relationships and sense of community progressively expanded, also through extensive travels in Asia and Europe—including Italy, particularly Naples—and periods of living in Paris, Berlin, and London. While most photographers and filmmakers adopt the role of observers within the realities they explore, her work is a result of her direct experience. Using multifaceted techniques such as slideshows, films, books, curation, and activism, Goldin tells stories that are not always told or heard. Her output depends on the human need to share and affirm others.

The artist’s experience of the AIDS crisis prompted her to form the direct action group P.A.I.N. (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now) in 2017, focusing on a contemporary epidemic: the overdose crisis. Since the late 1980s, the consumption of prescription opioids has skyrocketed due to aggressive and unethical marketing. These drugs generate vast profits for large pharmaceutical companies that turn a blind eye to the addiction and deaths they cause. The number of overdose deaths continues to rise worldwide. P.A.I.N. succeeded in compelling museums to acknowledge their relationship to dark money, and take the Sackler name—a family who owns a large pharmaceutical company and has given huge donations to museums—off their walls. Goldin was also involved in a spinoff group called OxyJustice that followed the Sacklers into bankruptcy court, resulting in a settlement of six billion dollars from the Sackler’s massive fortune.

Today, Goldin keeps fighting against the stigma attached to using drugs. To bring the devastating reality of the opioid crisis into the global spotlight, Goldin collaborated with director Laura Poitras to follow the group’s campaign. This culminated in the film *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* (2022), awarded the Golden Lion at the 79th Venice International Film Festival and nominated for an Academy Award. Currently, Goldin uses her platform to fight for the freedom of Palestine.

## The exhibition

“This Will Not End Well” is the first major exhibition showcasing Nan Goldin’s work as a filmmaker and multimedia artist. The concept came from a collaboration between Nan Goldin and Fredrik Liew, chief curator at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, where the show debuted in 2022. The show traveled to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (2023) and the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (2024). After Milan, it will continue at Grand Palais Rmn in Paris (2026). Goldin’s deep interest for slideshows stems from the nature of the medium itself, which the artist sees as a form of cinema, viewing her work as closely related to filmmaking: «My slideshows are films made up of stills.» While framed photographs invite closer inspection, in the slideshows the images are driven by a soundtrack, a narrative, and a rhythm, with each picture being projected for only a few seconds and allowing for an immersive experience for the viewer.

The title “This Will Not End Well” encapsulates the emotional complexity that runs through Goldin’s practice: a darkly ironic warning, yet one infused with tenderness, defiance, and her unmistakable joie de vivre.

Each slideshow is displayed in a dedicated pavilion, created through close collaboration between Goldin and architect Hala Wardé. Together, they have orchestrated a spatial arrangement that resembles a “village,” where every structure is specifically designed in relation to a work. Aspects such as the pavilion’s form, color of lighting, interior layout, entrances, and modes of inhabiting the space, are all shaped by the content of the work. In addition to six of her most significant slideshows presented at previous venues, the exhibition at Pirelli HangarBicocca includes two new pieces: *You Never Did Anything Wrong* and *Stendhal Syndrome*, both reedited in 2025 and shown here for the first time in a museum context. Additionally, the work *Sisters, Saints, Sibyls* (2004–22) installed in the Cubo space echoes the setup and atmosphere of its original presentation in the chapel of the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière in Paris in 2004.

In the Navate space the audio piece *Bleeding* (2025) has been specially commissioned and realized, in close collaboration

with the artist, by Soundwalk Collective as a prelude that guides visitors into Goldin’s symbolic village of slideshows. Formed by contemporary artist Stephan Crasneanscki and producer Simone Merli, the duo has been collaborating with Nan Goldin since 2015, creating soundtracks for projects such as the film *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* (2022).

A site-specific installation, *Bleeding* adds a further sensorial dimension to the exhibition and incorporates ambient binaural recordings—that simulate human auditory perception—captured on-site during the previous iterations of Goldin’s retrospective in Stockholm, Amsterdam, and Berlin. These preserve the sonic “bleed”—random overlaps of sounds that drift between the pavilions—highlighting their proximity and interconnection. The acoustic “traces” are re-channeled through a custom-made regenerative synthesizer suspended at mid-height in the space. Continuously recomposing, the instrument transforms fragments of cacophony into shifting tonalities, generating ethereal harmonic frequencies that saturate the architecture with resonance and anticipation. The resulting installation functions as an acoustic threshold—an unstable chorus of spectral residues—inviting visitors to pause, listen, and attune themselves to the lingering voices and reverberations of Goldin’s oeuvre, before entering the visual and emotional density of the slideshows.

The eight works range from 15 to 42 minutes in length.  
The full duration of the exhibition is 192 minutes.

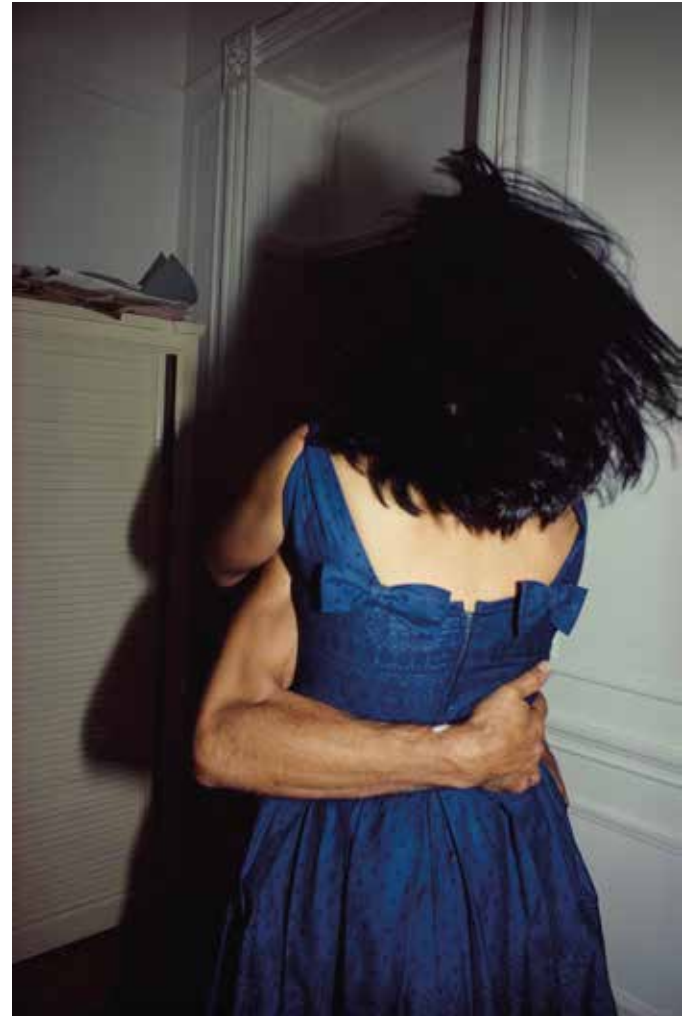
## 1. *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, 1981–2022

Nan Goldin's magnum opus *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, captures life in New York, Provincetown, Berlin, and London from the 1970s through the 1990s. Accompanied by an eclectic soundtrack, the slideshow comprises nearly 700 portraits of Goldin's inner circle of friends and lovers with raw tenderness, unveiling intimacy and coupling, the quotidian and wild parties, the bedrooms and the bars. Essentially depicting her tribe as it evolved from Satya forward, Goldin originally referred to *The Ballad* as «the diary I let people read. These pictures come out of relationships, not observation.» Constantly updated and reedited, the work has never been shown in the same version twice, as it continues to evolve. Goldin often said, «my favorite audiences were from the early days, when they were made up of the people in the pictures.» Over the decades, *The Ballad* has been shown dozens of times internationally in many iterations. It has continued to touch subsequent generations who identify with the universal theme of the struggle between autonomy and dependency. Named after a song from *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), a play by Bertolt Brecht with music by Kurt Weill, the work references the song's central theme of sexual vulnerability and violence while at the same time reflecting on traditions of storytelling and the medium of the ballad itself. Although music and sound have always been an important part of Goldin's artistic practice, her slideshows were initially accompanied by the music of the places where they were being shown. The selection of songs evolved organically over time. They range from the Velvet Underground's *I'll Be Your Mirror* (1967) to Yoko Ono's *She Hits Back* (1973), Louisiana Red's *Sweetblood Call* (1975) to Edmundo Rivero's *Packard* (1968): «Some of the music is obscure; my friends gave me music, and I collected music from around the world. Wherever I went to do the slideshow, people would turn me on to another piece of music.»

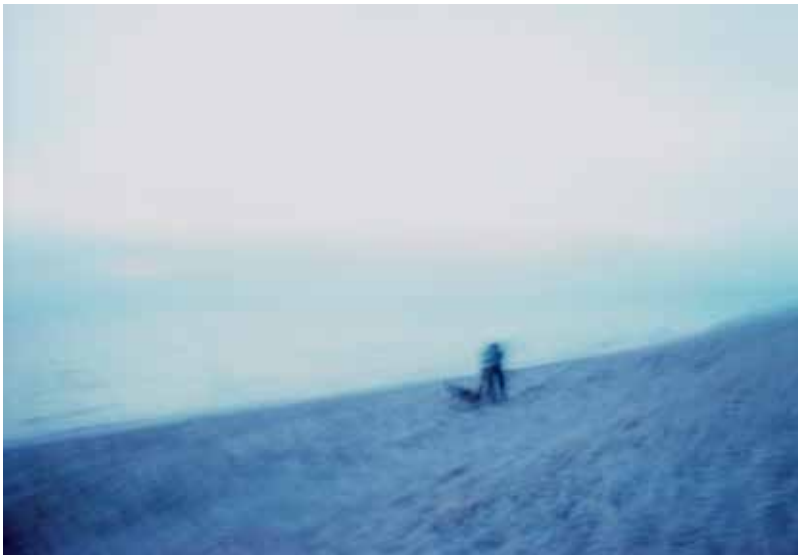
The soundtrack of the work we hear today was edited by Goldin in 1987 and has remained the same ever since. A companion book was released in 1986 and continues to be in print.

In *The Ballad's* end credits Goldin lists the names of 30 of the people in the slideshow who have passed, mostly from AIDS, showing how much of that world has been lost.

*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* is 42 minutes long.



*The Hug*, New York City, 1980  
Still from *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, 1981–2022



*Couple on the blue beach, n.d.*  
Still from *Memory Lost*, 2019–21

## 2. **Memory Lost**, 2019–21

Nan Goldin considers **Memory Lost** as her most important piece since *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. In this slideshow the artist traces a deeply moving and emotional narrative about the dark side of drug addiction, withdrawal, and the veil of the world. The work is composed of newly discovered photographs and footage from the artist's extensive archive. It is accompanied by an evocative soundtrack composed by Mica Levi, with a cacophonous piece by CJ Calderwood and operatic music by Soundwalk Collective, as well as music by Eartha Kitt and Franz Schubert. The intimate and personal images presented in the slideshow question the nature of memory, not only as lived experience, but also as witnessed, altered, and lost through addiction. The images are characterized by the blurred nature of their subjects, including expansive landscapes or the infinite sky on the one hand, and claustrophobic

rooms that, in contrast, evoke a strong sense of anxiety and confinement. The artist, who lived through an addiction to opioids, gives a very personal insight into this period of her life in her work, including contemporary audio of interviews of her friends and messages from the artist's telephone answering machine in the 1980s. One hears her friend ask «Nan, are you there? Are you sleeping? Can you hear me? Let me know what's happening.» Despite Goldin's extensive documentation of this particular time in her life, and the numerous photographs that seem to capture and preserve these moments, she refers to it as a time of "lost memory." As a friend shares in the voiceover about his own struggle with drugs: «I looked at myself and I went, "I've been trying to miss my whole life, man, and I'm not in pain. I'm just, just trying not to feel anything".»

The loss of Goldin's community of AIDS and overdose is a driving force in the whole piece. In a video that the artist shot of her late friend Greer Lankton, she says: «I had a phone book and every time someone got sick or died, I would write it down. And then once when I got to forty, I stopped. And then I finally was like, "I can't take it. It's too much".»

Another driving force of this piece is to destigmatize drug use. It's summed up by Dr. Gabor Maté's voiceover: «First question that I ask them is, "What's it doing for you?" And they'll say, "Gives me a sense of connection, sense of control, sense of power, soothes the pain, relieves the stress, makes me feel less isolated, makes me feel more excited, less bored with life".»

Goldin describes the slideshow as «basically made out of out-takes»—blurred, damaged, or technically imperfect photos that for her hold a unique beauty: «I'm more attracted to the magical ones that are not literal, the out-of-focus ones, the damaged ones.»

The piece is dedicated to P.A.I.N, her activist group who targeted the pharmaceutical companies whose inhuman greed ignited the overdose crisis.

*Memory Lost* is 24 minutes long.

Still from *Sirens*,  
2019–20



### 3. *Sirens*, 2019–20

*Sirens* is the companion piece of *Memory Lost* that shows the pleasure and sensuality drugs can induce. It is Nan Goldin's first work made from appropriated images. It contains a series of short clips from thirty films including *Drunken Angel* (1948) by Akira Kurosawa, *White Nights* (1957) by Luchino Visconti, *Screen Tests* (1964–66) by Andy Warhol, *Satyricon* (1969) by Federico Fellini, and *Anna* (1974) by Alberto Grifi, among others, as well as footage from a 1988 London rave and the Charles Manson Family.

The title of the work refers to the figure of the Siren from Greek mythology, a female creature and hybrid who lures

passing sailors to their death with her beguiling song as an analogy for the quicksand of addiction. The image of the siren, combined with the hypnotic soundtrack of the work, evokes another state of being, a euphoric high. At the same time, the title alludes to the risk of drug use. *Sirens* and *Memory Lost* are the first works in which Goldin has engaged composers.

The score of *Sirens* is a collaboration with Mica Levi.

The work pays homage to Donyale Luna, the world's first Black supermodel, who died of a heroin overdose in 1979.

*Sirens* is 16 minutes long.





*Superman flying,  
Providence, RI, 1991  
Still from *Fire Leap*,  
2010–22*

#### 4. *Fire Leap*, 2010–22

Nan Goldin approaches children as beings from another planet. She says «Children are born knowing everything and as they become socialized, they forget it.» Between 1978 and 2014, the artist photographed her godchildren and the children of her friends, exploring their realities. Beginning with images of pregnant, giving birth, and breastfeeding women, Goldin photographed kids on their terms. She explores their relationships with adults, but is most interested in how they relate to each other.

Goldin has long been fascinated by the freedom and innocence of childhood, by the way children live by their own rules. In 2014, she published *Eden and After*, a book of photographs dedicated to images with kids. As the title suggests, the paradise of childhood does not last forever.

As is often the case with Goldin's work, the choice of lyrics serves as the narrative voice for each chapter of the piece. All the songs featured in the slideshow are sung by kids. These include *Little Child* (1953) by Wayne Shanklin, *Please Don't Go Topless Mother* (1972) by Troy Hess, and a youth choir rendition of *Space Oddity* (1976) by David Bowie. The music and imagery in *Fire Leap* create a complex interplay in which the artist delves into the world of children's fears and joy.

The title alludes to the 1973 cult film *The Wicker Man* (1973) directed by Robin Hardy, from which the eponymous song is also drawn. This reference sets the tone for the work, evoking themes of ritual, transformation, and the liminal space between innocence and experience.

*Fire Leap* is 15 minutes long.



*Ivy on the way to Newbury St.,  
Boston Garden, Boston, 1973  
Still from *The Other Side*,  
1992–2021*

## 5. *The Other Side*, 1992–2021

Named after a queer bar in Boston in the 1970s, *The Other Side* pays homage to Goldin's transgender friends whom she lived with and started photographing in the early 1970s. These were times of widespread stigma. Her friends were pioneers who paved the way to allow for the visibility of trans people now.

For several years, Goldin shared their lives and they became the source of inspiration for the young photographer: «From my first night at The Other Side . . . I came to life. I fell in love with the queens and within a few months moved in with them. Completely devoted to my friends, they became my whole world. Part of my worship of them involved photographing them. I wanted to put them on the cover of *Vogue*, to show

them how beautiful they were.» This has continued to be one of the major motivations for her work. *The Other Side* expands to include chapters of trans friends and communities from 1992 to 2010 in New York, Bangkok, Paris, and Berlin. Each chapter is accompanied by a song from that period: Charles Aznavour, Marianne Faithful, John Kelly, Peggy Lee, Klaus Nomi, among others.

In the updated version of book *The Other Side*, published by Steidl in 2019, Goldin reaffirms it as «a record of the courage of the people who transformed the landscape to allow trans people the freedom of now. The invisible has become visible.»

*The Other Side* is 17 minutes long.

## 6. *Stendhal Syndrome*, 2024

The photographs in this recent slideshow contrast images from Renaissance masterpieces with Goldin's intimate portraits of friends, family, and lovers. *Stendhal Syndrome* is an evolution of Goldin's earlier work *Scopophilia* (2010), born from her repeated visits to the Musée du Louvre in 2010 in which she had an experience she defined as *Scopophilia*, from the Greek *skopein* ("to look") and *philia* ("love"), the intense desire fulfilled through the act of looking. The piece has developed into an exploration of *Stendhal Syndrome*, which the writer Stendhal described as a collapse provoked by the overwhelming beauty of art. Goldin recalls her own experience in museum, «I found the faces of my friends in the paintings. Stendhal spoke of paintings as a surface for the imagination to complete.»

Spanning across centuries, these photographs engage in a dialogue, revealing striking parallels in composition, color, form, and emotional resonance. Goldin says that her friends and community always existed, raising profound questions about traditional hierarchies within art and the enduring human compulsion to memorialize beauty in works fueled by love, and grief.

The narrative of the piece is drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 BCE), as told in Goldin's voiceover. She edited it into six stories of mythological figures: Pygmalion, Cupid, Narcissus, Diana, Hermaphroditus, and Orpheus, and cast her friends in roles that relate to their lives.

The symphonic soundtrack is scored by Soundwalk Collective with single pieces by Mica Levi and Arvo Pärt.

The images of paintings and sculptures featured were taken over the past twenty years in major collections and museums, including Galleria Borghese in Rome, Musée du Louvre in Paris, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid.

*Stendhal Syndrome* has been recently reedited for Pirelli HangarBicocca and is presented here for the first time in a European museum.

*Stendhal Syndrome* is 26 minutes long.



*Veiled Woman*, 2010  
Still from *Stendhal Syndrome*, 2024



Still from *You Never Did Anything Wrong*,  
2024

## 7. *You Never Did Anything Wrong*, 2024

A poetic montage of scenes centered around the totality of the solar eclipse, *You Never Did Anything Wrong* is a film shot on Super 8 and 16mm. It weaves an abstract and spiritual story about the consciousness of all species and the condition of inhabiting this planet together. Its title comes from an epitaph on a pet's gravestone in Portugal and is followed by a sequence of other pet graves—sometimes accompanied by their human companions. These monuments speak to the ways humans regard animals, imbued with a sense of love and loss, questioning the definition of the construction of owners and pets versus the autonomy of animals. This first segment is accompanied by the mournful accordion of composer Valerij Fedorenko. After the viewer experiences the slow revelation of the eclipse, the world is wholly inhabited by animals. Following the ambient recordings of natural sounds during an eclipse, the cacophonous score by

Mica Levi is a haunting introduction to the confrontational gaze of cats, dogs, and horses.

The viewer is drawn into the inner lives of animals that no longer exist within the human sphere. The film then shifts into a series of tender and evocative portraits of animals' lives: a pig making its bed, rabbits mating, turtles fighting, and goats nursing.

The sky is a consistent footnote. Goldin uses the eclipse as a symbol of transformation based on myths in which animals steal the Sun resulting in an eclipse. The myth of eating the Sun is a story of ending and rebirth—an extension of Goldin's ongoing exploration of reincarnation.

*You Never Did Anything Wrong* has been recently reedited for Pirelli HangarBicocca and is presented here for the first time in a European museum.

*You Never Did Anything Wrong* is 17 minutes long.



*Barbara in mask, Washington D.C., n.d.*  
Still from *Sisters, Saints, Sibyls*,  
2004–22

## 8. *Sisters, Saints, Sibyls*, 2004–22

*Sisters, Saints, Sibyls* is a deeply personal installation, an ode to the life of Goldin's older sister, Barbara Holly Goldin. Barbara, who was institutionalized as a teenager, died by suicide at the age of eighteen. The loss of her sister became a defining moment in Goldin's life, who was only eleven at the time. Barbara's refusal to conform to the expectations of suburban American life, her search for identity and sexuality, and her defiant spirit served as an early source of inspiration for Goldin. A talented musician, Barbara's rebellion stirred up anxieties about gender and sexuality that were unacceptable to society in the early 1960s.

The work opens with the myth of Saint Barbara, a Christian martyr imprisoned and executed by her father. In analogy to the classical triptych, Goldin presents the story as a three-channel video installation. The first chapter depicts images of Saint Barbara imprisoned and beheaded by her father, accompanied by haunting medieval choral music. The second chapter recounts Barbara Holly Goldin's life through family photographs and documents from the hospitals she was sent to, narrated with the voiceovers by Nan Goldin herself. The final chapter turns inward, as Goldin recalls her own adolescence and later periods of addiction, institutionalization, and self-harm.

By interweaving elements of the private and the collective, Goldin reflects on the universal aspect of mental illness and addiction, female suffering, and the enduring scars of trauma: «It is a story about women trapped—figuratively and literally—in mythological, psychological, and physical spaces.»

Originally commissioned in 2004 for the chapel of the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière in Paris—the hospital where the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot conducted his studies on female hysteria—the work is restaged at Pirelli HangarBicocca faithfully to its original installation. In Paris, the architectural structure evoked a tower, referencing Saint Barbara's imprisonment, and included a viewing platform reminiscent of the observation arenas once used in medical settings.

Rising over 20 meters high, the Cubo space closely mirrors the proportions and verticality of the chapel de la Salpêtrière. The installation in Milan also features the two wax figures and the sculptural elements included in 2004, which have never been shown since. At the center, in a narrow bed a girl is held down by two men's hands. The girl represents Barbara. The bed and bedside table are based on Goldin's room in a rehab hospital. Nearby, a second wax figure of a man representing the father, is elevated on a stand positioned on the left side. Through this spatial and emotional layering, the artist evokes a sense of ambiguity and fear, powerfully confronting the intersection of personal memory and cultural history.

Standing on the high viewing platform the public experiences intense claustrophobia.

*Sisters, Saints, Sibyls* is 35 minutes long.

## Exhibited Works

1.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*,  
1981–2022  
Slideshow, 41'52"
2.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*Memory Lost*, 2019–21  
Digital slideshow, 24'26"
3.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*Sirens*, 2019–20  
Single-channel video, 16'1"
4.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*Fire Leap*, 2010–22  
Digital slideshow, 14'53"
5.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*The Other Side*, 1992–2021  
Slideshow, 16'44"
6.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*Stendhal Syndrome*, 2024  
Digital slideshow, 26'2"
7.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*You Never Did Anything Wrong*, 2024  
Single-channel video, 17'

8.  
**Nan Goldin,**  
*Sisters, Saints, Sibyls*,  
2004–22  
Three-channel video  
with sculptural elements  
and ephemera, 35'17"  
Kramlich Collection

For all works, if not otherwise stated:  
Courtesy Nan Goldin and Gagosian

- a.  
**Soundwalk Collective,**  
*Bleeding*, 2025  
Multichannel audio,  
regenerative modular system,  
woven fiberglass, copper, gold  
Commissioned and produced  
by Pirelli HangarBicocca

Artistic Direction and Field Recording:  
Stephan Crasneanski  
(featuring ambient sounds from  
Nan Goldin's traveling retrospective  
"This Will Not End Well")  
Sound Design and Generative  
Synthesizer Patch: Simone Merli  
with Sofia Sanseverino  
Suspended Synth Case Design:  
Lavendel Kranz /  
Schreibmaschine Modular  
Project Management: Tessa Nijdam



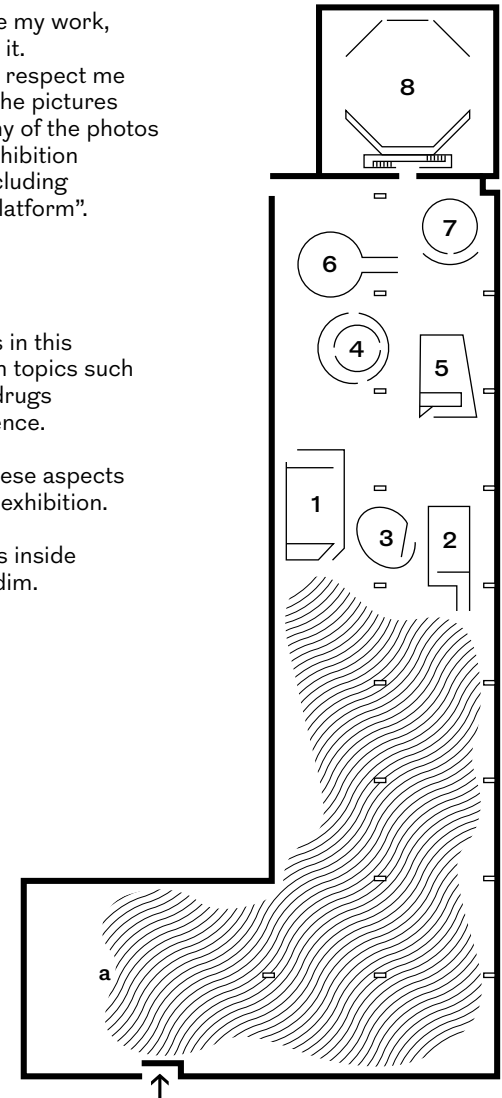
No photography  
or filming allowed.

"Please experience my work,  
rather than record it.  
I trust that you will respect me  
and the people in the pictures  
and won't share any of the photos  
or videos in this exhibition  
on the Internet, including  
any social media platform".  
**Nan Goldin**

Some of the works in this  
exhibition deal with topics such  
as suicide, use of drugs  
and domestic violence.

Please consider these aspects  
before visiting the exhibition.

Lighting conditions inside  
the exhibition are dim.



## Selected Exhibitions

Many international institutions have hosted Nan Goldin's solo exhibitions, including the National Gallery of Australia (2023); Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (2022); Art Institute of Chicago (2020); Tate Modern, London (2019); Triennale di Milano, Milan (2017); MoMA Museum of Modern Art, New York (2016); Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (2012); Louvre Museum, Paris (2010); Kiasma, Helsinki (2008); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2007, 2001); La Chapelle de la Salpêtrière, Paris (2004); Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, Quebec (2003); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin, Museu Serralves, Porto, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2002); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2001); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (1998); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Fotomuseum Winterthur (1997); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (1996); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (1994); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1993); and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (1985). Her work has been featured in multiple editions of the Whitney Biennial in New York (1985, 1993, 1995) and in the Biennale of Sydney (1996). After four decades of artistic practice, she was honored with a prestigious invitation to exhibit at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2022 with her video *Sirens* (2019–20). Goldin was appointed Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture in 2006 and has received several prestigious awards, including the Käthe Kollwitz Prize, Berlin (2022), the Centenary Medal from London's Royal Photographic Society (2018), the Edward MacDowell Medal, New Hampshire (2012), and the Hasselblad Award, Gothenburg, Sweden (2007).

This publication accompanies the exhibition "This Will Not End Well" by Nan Goldin

The exhibition is organized by Moderna Museet, Stockholm in collaboration with Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin and Grand Palais Rmn, Paris

Curated by Fredrik Liew, Chief Curator, Moderna Museet. The presentation at Pirelli HangarBicocca is curated by Roberta Tenconi, Chief Curator, with Lucia Aspesi, Curator

Lenders  
Gagosian  
Kramlich Collection  
Nan Goldin Studio

Exhibition architecture  
HW architecture  
Hala Wardé, Mark Davis

Sound installation  
Soundwalk Collective  
Stephan Crasneanski, Simone Merli

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**Our mission is to make art  
open and accessible to everyone.**

Pirelli HangarBicocca is a non-profit foundation dedicated to producing and promoting contemporary art. It was conceived and is supported by Pirelli. Established in 2004, Pirelli HangarBicocca has become a benchmark institution for the international art community, local public and region. It is a museum that is free of charge, accessible and open, and a place for experimentation, research and dissemination, where art is a point of reflection on the most topical themes of contemporary culture and society. It caters to a broad and diverse public with a program of major solo exhibitions by both Italian and international artists, a multi-disciplinary program of accompanying events and in-depth discussions, theoretical and informational publications, and educational courses. A team of museum facilitators is on hand at all times to help the public connect with the art. Vicente Todolí has been the foundation's artistic director since 2012.

Situated in a former industrial building, once a locomotive manufacturing facility, Pirelli HangarBicocca occupies 15,000 square meters, making it one of the largest single-level exhibition spaces in Europe. This vast area comprises the Shed and Navate spaces, which are used for temporary exhibitions, and the permanent display of Anselm Kiefer's *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004–2015*. This monumental installation with seven reinforced concrete towers has become one of the most iconic works in Milan. The building also houses a number of services for the public: a spacious entrance with reception area, facilities for educational activities, space for conferences and meetings, Bookshop and bistro with a charming outdoor area.

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