



Nan Goldin Remembers Your Face - New Documentary Screens at Art Basel Miami Beach

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by Sandra Hale Schulman

It's hard to look, but harder to look away from the beautiful mess that Nan Goldin records on film. The beauty and the bruises, the drag queens and the drags on countless cigarettes—smoke and mirrors and nary a Photoshop in sight.

A new documentary portrait of the New York photographer [Nan Goldin](#), "[I Remember Your Face](#)," directed by Sabine Lidl, will have its American premiere at the Colony Theater in Miami Beach for the Art Basel Miami Film Sector on Friday, Dec. 6, 2013 at 8:30 p.m. Lidl and Goldin will both be in attendance and will host a Q&A following the screening. The film was screened earlier at the Ninth Annual [Zurich Film Festival](#) on Sept. 29, 2013.



Poster for "I Remember Your Face."

"I Remember Your Face" follows Goldin on a trek alone with her camera from Paris to Berlin, where she meets old friends. Along the way the photographer gives insights into her personality, her experience and her career with humor, directness and the kind of intimate intensity that mirrors her body of work over four decades.

Way before cellphone cameras let everyone break through all boundaries of privacy, Goldin took pictures in the secret dark places of the heart and in the homes of her friends, artists, lovers, bohemians and urban dandies, as well as herself. She never spared herself or those close to her in the images she captured, which document without filters life's dramatic ups and downs.



Nan one month after being battered, 1983.

As a middle class teenager in Boston in the 1960s, Goldin was jolted out of her moderately liberal and progressive upbringing when her older sister Barbara Holly, then 18, committed suicide. She moved to New York in the 1970s, taking intensely personal, spontaneous, and often sexual photographs of her family, friends, and lovers. She gravitated to the downtown semi-underground scene of gay men and drag queens, capturing jarring images of the daily aftermath of a rough time in the city's history.

In 1979 she eschewed the idea of a conventional gallery show, instead putting together a series of images with music in a slide show called [*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*](#). The short piece eventually grew into a 45-minute multimedia presentation of more than 900 photos.



"Heart Shaped Bruise" by Nan Goldin.



"Joana with Valerie in the Mirror" by Nan Goldin, 1999.

Most of her *Ballad* subjects, including some of her closest friends, were dead by the 1990s, lost either to drug and alcohol abuse or drug overdoses.

As Goldin pointed out in an interview in the print and online editions of [Fototapeta magazine](#): "Yes, photography saved my life. Every time I go through something scary, traumatic, I survive by taking pictures. My work is mostly about memory. It is very important to me that, everybody that I have been close to in my life, I make photographs of them.

"The people are gone, like Cookie, who is very important to me, but there is still a series of pictures showing how complex she was," Goldin continued. "Because these pictures are not about statistics, about showing people die, but it is all about individual lives. In the case of New York, the most creative and freest souls in the city died. New York is not New York anymore. I've lost it and I miss it.

"They were dying because of AIDS. *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* is very much about gender politics, before there was such a word, before they taught it at the university. A friend of mine said I was born with a feminist heart."



"Cookie at Tin Pan Alley" by Nan Goldin, 1983.

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Her images live in a creepy limbo between private scrapbook and portraiture. Neither pretty nor too posed, her photos capture raw unguarded moments that may sometimes be painful to experience, but the viewer never feels she has taken a shot the subject didn't want taken.

"Actually, I take blurred pictures, because I take pictures no matter what the light is," Goldin told Fototapeta. "If I want to take a picture, I do not care if there is light or no light. If I want to take a picture, I take it no matter what. Sometimes I use very low shutter speed and they come out blurred, but it was never an intention."

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"At the bar C Toon and So Bankok" by Nan Goldin, 1992.

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Goldin's work since the early *Ballad* shots includes collaborative book projects with famed Japanese photographer [Nobuyoshi Araki](#); New York City skylines; landscapes (notably with people in the water); her lover, Siobhan; and babies, parenthood and family life.

A show last summer at [QF Gallery](#) in East Hampton, NY showed a more peaceful world of time spent at her home in Sag Harbor and summers overseas with friends.

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"Valerie Floating in the Sea" by Nan Goldin, 2002.

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More recently Goldin has been commissioned to shoot ad campaigns for the likes of [Bottega Veneta](#), shoemaker [Jimmy Choo](#) and [Dior](#).

BASIC FACTS: "Nan Goldin: I Remember Your Face" has its American premiere at the Colony Theatre, 1040 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, FL on Friday, Dec. 6, at 8:30 p.m. The film is directed by Sabine Lidi.

Admission is free, but seating is limited. This year's film and video program for Art Basel Miami Beach was curated by David Gryn and This Brunner and it includes films by Dara Birnbaum, Martin Creed, Rineke Dijkstra, Joan Jonas and Kehinde Wiley.

For details and information on the international art fair, visit www.artbasel.com.

To watch a trailer of “Nan Goldin: I Remember Your Face”, click [here](#).

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