

## Introduction

Nan Goldin documented her life and the people in it with an eye towards representing the relationship between her subjects and herself.

Goldin's photographs, taken in the snapshot style, possess a timeless quality that has remained influential and popular today.

## Research Question

Why are Nan Goldin's photographs so significant in the overall discourse of social documentation and representation of those with AIDS?

## Thesis Statement

Nan Goldin's photographs subvert the stereotypical ideas of voyeurism and exploitation found in social documentation. Instead, she documents her emotional connection to her photographic subjects.

## Conceptual Framework

Snapshot and the ethics of subculture photography

- Photographs subjects such as drag queens in a way that is empowering rather than degrading.

*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*

- Goldin reinvents the family album in her first photo book, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*.

Affective Documentation and Loss

- Goldin takes people's history, her emotional connection, and her unavoidable loss and makes them equal parts of the photograph.

Art Depicting AIDS

- While advertisements and art often showed an idealize, marketable

form of AIDS through attractive, upper class figures, Goldin's photo's depicted those with AIDS with a brutal honesty.

## Main Case Studies

*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*

- First exhibited as a photographic slideshow, then compiled into a book, *Ballad* is Goldin's visual diary she lets people read.

- She creates an alternate version of the family album to show aspects of life that normally hidden from the established family album.

- Critics claim that Goldin isn't voyeuristic enough in these photos.



Nan One Month After Being Battered, 1984

# Affective Documentation In the Photographs of Nan Goldin

## Research Problems Encountered

- Access to Goldin's photographs and research specifically about Goldin's AIDs work was particularly difficult to find. Research on Goldin also tends to gloss over her later career, as she is still alive and making art.

## Main Conclusion

- Goldin's photos are an archive of her memories and history with the subjects. They celebrate and normalize those in subcultures, as she uses them to cherishing her surrogate family and her relationship to them.

- Thus, the critique that Goldin isn't voyeuristic enough is illogical, as her works are created for herself, rather than the viewer.

## Citations

Goldin, Nan. "The Ballad of Sexual Dependency". New York, N.Y: Aperture, 1996.

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Trixie on the cot, NYC 1979



Nan and Brian in bed, NYC 1983



Gotscho Kissing Giles, Paris 1993

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# Nan Goldin