

Nan Goldin – 2007 Hasselblad Award Winner

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation has chosen American photographer Nan Goldin as the recipient of the 2007 Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. The prize, consisting of SEK 500,000 (approximately USD 70,000) and a gold medal, will be presented at a ceremony held in Göteborg, Sweden, on November 10, 2007. A new exhibition of Nan Goldin's work, curated and organized by the Hasselblad Center, will be opened in conjunction with the ceremony.

The Foundation's citation regarding the decision to award the 2007 prize to Nan Goldin is as follows:

Nan Goldin is one of the most significant photographers of our time. She has been documenting her own life and that of her friends – her extended family – for more than 30 years, focusing on the urban scene in New York and Europe in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, marked so dramatically by HIV and AIDS. Her work, while based on the direct esthetics of snapshot photography, presents her personal life as work of arts; intimate, formally beautiful, and with intense use of color. The presentation of her work in the form of slide shows resonates in the work of photographers of more than one generation. Her use of photography as a memoir, as a means of protection against loss and as an act of preservation responds to the needs of our times.

This year's prize committee, which submitted its proposal to the Foundation's board of directors, was composed of:

- Christine Frisinghelli, (Chair) Director of Camera Austria, Graz, Austria,
- Frits Gierstberg, Head of Exhibitions, Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands,
- Lars Schwander, Director of Fotografisk Center, Copenhagen, Denmark,
- Teresa Siza, Director of Centro Português de Fotografia, Porto, Portugal,
- Liz Wells, Reader in Photographic Theory and Director of the research group for Land/Water and the Visual Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, Great Britain.

Nan Goldin is an outstanding contemporary photographer, and her work has shaped several generations of photographers, making her one of the most influential artists of our times. Her opus magnum, "The Ballad of Sexual Dependency" has added significant new facets to the debate about documentary truthfulness in photography. In her work, moments of the greatest intimacy – desire, pain, death, and violence – are exposed to the gaze of the viewer, and thus to the public – with relentless candor. The touching simplicity of her use of photography: Taking pictures to remember, as protection against the loss of the loved ones, as self-representation, as proof of the group's, the family's, belonging together, these social functions of the photographic image have their common basis in the radical equation of life and photography, giving each picture its own intimate truth and historical position in a story, written and continuing to be told by the photographer.

Few public débuts in the art world have been as remarkable and remain as memorable as Nan Goldin's: in the mid 1980's, "The Ballad of Sexual Dependency" was first presented as a slide show only for those involved, the artist's "extended family". Later, with a soundtrack and a more structured arrangement, it was shown in New York clubs, in Europe first at film festivals and finally – with the simultaneous appearance of the book – at galleries and in art spaces in the form of exhibitions.

Moreover, few positions in the last few decades have polarized as much as Nan Goldin's work. Her topics are well described in the title of one of her exhibitions, "Life, Loss, Obsession". The passionate, sensitive, raw photographs of the artist's extended family reflect the socio-political topics of her generation such as the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, to which the public long closed its eyes as it was considered relevant only for groups deemed a priori deviant by society: homosexuals and drug addicts. This world of an urban artistic milieu, to which Nan Goldin belongs and into which she offers the viewers of her work insight, forms the historical and social framework for her photographs. Nan Goldin's work has continued to take new directions and forms in parallel with the changes in her own life. Her work shows the depth and breadth of her own experiences of loneliness and depression alongside a deep love of the beauty of human relationships. Her photographs draw the viewer into the internal spaces of intimate family relations, inside mental hospitals and empty rooms and outward to landscapes and objects dear to her.

Associating one's own biography with artistic work is a feature of the work of many photographers, filmmakers and writers: Jonas Mekas, Robert Frank, Nobuyoshi Araki, and on to Nan Goldin. Her portraits draw on their truthfulness, stemming from trust between subject and photographer. The almost oblivious manner of the subjects shows us how natural the presence of the photographer is. This vulnerability and intimacy forces the observer to think about his/her own position, in short: to examine the voyeurism with which we regard a world that may be foreign to us.

Nan Goldin began photographing at the age of 15. Her first exhibition of black and white photographs took place in the early 1970s. She received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University, Boston, in 1977. She moved to New York in 1978 where she continued to document her "extended family". These photographs became the subject of her slide shows and Goldin's first book, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. It was groundbreaking work, as she was the first woman to use photography to present the intimate details of her personal life as a public work of art, and inspired a new generation of artists. In 1985 her work was included in the Biennial of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and she gained international renown. In 1991 she moved to Berlin, Germany on a DAAD grant, and she continued to live there until 1994. She has participated in many artistic collaborations, including the books *Tokyo Love* with Japanese photographer Nobuyoshi Araki, and *A Double Life* with her old friend David Armstrong (both published in 1994). In 1996, a major retrospective exhibition of her work, "I'll be Your Mirror," opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and toured to museums in Europe. In 2000 she moved to Paris. Today she works and lives both in Paris and New York. In 2001 a second retrospective, "Le Feu Follet," was held at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and it, too, toured internationally under the title "Devil's Playground" to institutions such as the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, the Reina Sofia, Madrid, Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Castello di Rivoli, Turin and Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Her multimedia installation "Sœurs, Saintes et Sibylles" at the Festival d'automne in 2004 drew the largest attendance ever at the Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière. This piece, a combination of film and still images projected on three screens, is a story of three women trapped in a male hierarchy. It pays homage to her sister Barbara, whose rebellion and suicide have so deeply marked her own life and work.

The awards and fellowships Goldin has received include:

1979 The Camera Austria Award for Contemporary Photography by the City of Graz; 1986 Englehard Award, Boston; 1987 Kodak Photobuchpreis, Stuttgart; 1991 DAAD Artists-in-Residence program, Berlin; 1994 Brandeis Award in Photography; 2004 Medal of the city of Paris; 2006 Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres, Paris.

Nan Goldin's publications:

The Ballad of Sexual Dependency, 1986; *The Other Side*, 1992; *Tokyo Love*, 1994; *A Double Life*, 1994; *I'll Be Your Mirror*, 1996; *Devil's Playground*, 2004; and as well as countless catalogues and other books.

The Erna and Victor Hasselblad Foundation

The Hasselblad Foundation was instituted by a bequest from Erna and Victor Hasselblad. The purpose of the Foundation is to promote scientific education and research in the natural sciences and photography. One of the awards, the annual international award for outstanding achievement in photography, being given this year to Nan Goldin, is among the most important photography prizes worldwide. In 1989 the Foundation opened the **Hasselblad Center** in Göteborg, Sweden. Its mission is to promote scholarly research and education in photography. The exhibition hall of the Center has five shows per year, one of which is always the work of the Hasselblad Award winner. Exhibitions from the Hasselblad Center are currently on tour in Sweden and abroad. The Hasselblad Center also organizes seminars, lectures and research projects, and has a library and archives for students and researchers. The Center is gradually assembling a photo collection, concentrating on the work of Nordic photographers and Hasselblad award winners.

The exhibit of Nan Goldin's work will be opened on the occasion of the award ceremony on November 10, 2007.

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ERNA AND VICTOR HASSELBLAD FOUNDATION

Ekmansgatan 8

SE-412 56 Göteborg

Sweden

Phone +46 31-778 2150

Fax +46 31-778 46 40

e-mail: info@hasselbladfoundation.org