

11 February 2026

Flinders University Museum of Art to open 2026 with Nan Goldin

Nan Goldin's Seminal Photography Series – 'The ballad of sexual dependency' – arrives at FUMA in February



Image: Nan Goldin, *Nan and Brian in bed, NYC, 1983*, National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra, purchased 2021 in celebration of the National Gallery of Australia's 40th anniversary, 2022 © Nan Goldin

Media images and newsreel for *Nan Goldin: the ballad of sexual dependency* (courtesy the National Gallery of Australia): <https://nga.gov.au/about-us/media/media-kits/nan-goldin/>

Flinders University Museum of Art (FUMA) will open its 2026 exhibition program with the Adelaide premiere of one of the most influential bodies of photographic work of the late twentieth century: Nan Goldin's *The ballad of sexual dependency*.

A deeply personal and unflinching chronicle of intimacy, love and addiction, the series lays bare Goldin's own life as she documents her friends, lovers and chosen family in New York, Boston, Berlin and beyond.

Titled after a song from Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, the work was originally presented as a raw, immersive slideshow in the clubs, bars and apartments of New York's downtown art scene.

Presented for the first time in Adelaide, the complete series comprises 126 photographs from the National Gallery of Australia's collection and is widely regarded as Goldin's magnum opus.

National Gallery Curator of Photography Anne O'Hehir said Goldin's rich and evocative series shaped a generation captivated by the unvarnished intimacy of her storytelling.

"Goldin took a genre of photography that was about intimacy and deep connection with her subjects to new heights and, in many ways, redefined it: *The ballad*, it has often been said, set the standard for this approach to photography by which all others must be judged," said O'Hehir.

"Almost 40 years after its creation, it still stands up as one of the most compelling and moving studies of a particular time and place –the images primarily revolving around the lives of the young people who ended up on

the Bowery on the Lower East Side in the late 1970s and early 1980s – those kids, Goldin has remarked, on the run from America.

“The theatricality, the obsession and familiarity with film language combined with *The ballad*’s compelling emotional arcs, meant that she was able to transform the series into something that flew high and continues to connect and speak to new audiences and artists as new generations encounter the work.”

Flinders University Museum of Art Director Fiona Salmon said, “This exhibition offers Adelaide audiences a rare and powerful opportunity to engage with Goldin’s deeply human and uncompromising vision.”

“Inviting audiences to empathise with rarely depicted stories and experiences, it urges us to reflect on intimacy, vulnerability, and resilience.”

Presented by Flinders University Museum of Art for the Adelaide Fringe Festival, *Nan Goldin: The ballad of sexual dependency* will be on display at the museum’s Bedford Park gallery from **16 February to 10 April 2026**. Admission is free. *Content Advisory: The exhibition includes works depicting explicit nudity, sexual acts, drug use, and the impacts of violence against women. Viewer discretion is advised for audiences under 15 years.*

For further information, visit <https://www.flinders.edu.au/museum-of-art/exhibitions/nangoldin>.

Nan Goldin: The ballad of sexual dependency is a National Gallery Touring Exhibition, presented as part of the Bowness Family Foundation Photography Touring Program.

PRESENTED BY



Opening event:

When: Tuesday 24 February 2026 | 5:00 – 7:00pm

Where: Flinders University Museum of Art, Ground Floor Social Sciences North building, Bedford Park

5:15pm: National Gallery, Curator, Photography Anne O’Hehir in conversation with FUMA Senior Curator Dr Belinda Howden

6:00pm: Formalities commence; Guest speaker, Flinders University’s Professor Barbara Baird

Free film screening:

All the Beauty and the Bloodshed (R18+, 121mins)

When: Thursday 26 March 2026 | 6:30pm

Where: The Mercury Cinema, 13 Morphett Street, Adelaide

In conjunction with the exhibition, FUMA presents a free screening of *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*. Directed by award-winning filmmaker Laura Poitras, the documentary is an epic, emotional and interconnected story about internationally renowned artist and activist Nan Goldin, told through her slideshows, intimate interviews, groundbreaking photography, and rare footage of her personal fight to hold the Sackler family accountable for the opioid crisis

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