

Photographer Nan Goldin denounces Israel's “live-streamed genocide” in Gaza—the mass murder takes the lives of 2 more Palestinian artists

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At the Rencontres d'Arles international photography festival in southern France on July 8, American photographer and activist Nan Goldin once again denounced Israel's genocidal rampage in Gaza. Goldin, named the most influential person in art in 2024 by *ArtReview*, has consistently used her prominence to express outrage over the mass killings of Palestinians.

According to a report in the *Art Newspaper*,

Goldin said: “The Rencontres are very brave to give me an award at this point in the world, and I'm not sure they're going to be happy.” She went on to describe the conflict in Gaza as “the first live-streamed genocide”.

“Every day, despite Israel targeting journalists, despite shadow banning on social media, and despite the blackout of access to information from mainstream media, we can see what is happening,” she said.

Goldin, who is Jewish, further told the 2,000 people attending the Rencontres d'Arles,

Anti-Zionism has been totally conflated with antisemitism, which is convenient for Israel. This has made the rise of real antisemitism more dangerous. Anti-Zionism is weaponized to shut the mouth of anyone criticizing the violent actions of the Israeli government.

Goldin, the recipient of this year's Kering's Women in Motion award, took the stage at the open-air Théâtre Antique, a Roman theater built during the reign of Augustus Caesar (27BC-14AD), for a discussion with French novelist Édouard Louis.

Louis read their statement, later posted on Instagram, which

explained

We talk with friends, we say this is horrible, and we think it's enough, but this is not enough. We watch children dying on Instagram, and we say, it's horrible, and we think it's enough, but it's not enough. Don't clap at what we say, it's too easy. Our own field has betrayed us, the world of culture has been participating in the silence. Who could have imagined that we could not express our opinions? Hundreds of artists, writers and teachers have had shows, talks, conferences, canceled because they refused to remain silent. Culture has become complicit.

Responding to a heckler, who demanded to know why she didn't talk about the Israeli hostages, Goldin said, “Now 75,000 Palestinians have been killed. Whose life matters? Whose lives matter?” A round of applause followed.

Louis commented on Instagram:

We could have talked about art and beauty. But as Nan once told me, in some contexts of extreme violence, it is more important to have a mouth than to be an artist.

Thousands of children killed, 93% of the hospitals destroyed, journalists and health workers intentionally targeted by the Israeli army. This has to stop. The world of culture should not remain silent.

Le Monde observed that the “American photographer and winner of the Women in Motion award took advantage of Tuesday's opening night ... to project images of the Palestinian

territory ravaged by the Israeli conflict and call for action.” The newspaper pointed out that “Nearly 2,500 people, seated all the way up to the stage, had reserved their seats, drawn by the presence of Goldin, the winner of the Women in Motion award, which honors women photographers.”

In Berlin, last November, at the opening of an exhibition entitled “This Will Not End Well,” at the Neue Nationalgalerie [New National Gallery], Goldin condemned both Israel and Germany for their roles in the genocide in Gaza and its extension into Lebanon.

Referring to her own Jewish background, Goldin told the packed audience at the Berlin event, “My grandparents escaped pogroms in Russia. I was brought up knowing about the Nazi Holocaust. What I see in Gaza reminds me of the pogroms that my grandparents escaped.”

She denounced the German authorities for their suppression of criticism of Israel and its murderous policies. The artist noted that “the ICC [International Criminal Court] is talking about genocide. The UN is talking about genocide. Even the Pope is talking about genocide.” In Germany, however, anyone who spoke this truth, whether Palestinian, Jew or German, faced cancellation. “Yet we’re not supposed to talk about this as genocide. Are you afraid to hear this, Germany?” Goldin demanded to know.

On this occasion too, observing that anti-Zionism “had nothing to do with antisemitism,” Goldin said to cheers, that the campaign to conflate the terms increasingly endangered Jews who had previously regarded Germany as a refuge from antisemitism.

As we reported on the WSWs,

To tremendous applause from the audience, Goldin declared that “Never again means never again for everyone,” referring to the phrase “Never again,” the central conclusion drawn in Germany from the Nazi annihilation of six million Jews in World War II.

The well-known photographer’s courageous speech in Berlin sent shock waves through the political and cultural establishment in Germany and beyond.

The Israeli war of extermination in Gaza continues to take the lives of artists, along with those of many others. Whether, in a given case, the artists and intellectuals are being targeted, or whether they are simply victims of a blanket policy of Zionist mass murder, it is difficult to determine. In any event, the result is the widespread killing of journalists, scholars, educators and visual artists on a scale not seen for decades.

On June 30, an Israeli air strike on the crowded seaside Al-Baqa café resulted in 30 deaths, among those killed were Amna Al-Salmi—a visual artist known as Frans—and photographer and filmmaker Ismail Abu Hatab.

Art Newspaper explains that the café,

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which offered internet and charging facilities, had become a hotspot for journalists, artists, and activists. It was one of the sites targeted by Israeli forces that day, in attacks that reportedly killed more than 70 people, including Palestinians seeking humanitarian aid.

Frans’s younger brother Rafiq Al-Salmi told the *Art Newspaper* from Belgium

that he had been in touch with his sister around an hour before she was killed. In their final exchanges...Frans checked on her brother’s wellbeing before describing her own struggles. “Life can be cruel, it puts us in situations that make us realise just how vulnerable we are when we’re alone, and how much strength we draw from the people we love,” she wrote, before expressing how much she missed fighting over paint colours with him.

One of ten siblings, 36-year-old Frans graduated with distinction in fine arts photography from Gaza’s Al Aqsa University, and spent her career working across painting, murals, sculpture and digital art.... Frans remained artistically active despite numerous hardships, including the death of her father in December 2023 due to a lack of medical care, many displacements and her brother’s severe spinal injury caused by shrapnel.

Abu Hatab, a 2014 graduate of Gaza’s University College of Applied Sciences with a bachelor of arts, also continued to work throughout the war, despite being seriously injured in an Israeli attack while he was filming a documentary about Palestinian struggles.

Poet Anees Ghanima, who knew both of the deceased, told the *Art Newspaper* that

“They found strength in people, in the details of daily resilience, and in our shared belief that this war would not silence creativity,” he says. “They both believed that art and words are weapons just as powerful as anything else. That belief was what united them—and what propelled them,” he adds.



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