

CLOSE-LOOKING EXERCISE



Nan Goldin, *Twisting at my birthday party, New York City 1980*
(from *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*), 1980, Cibachrome print, 11 x 14 inches,
The Jack Shear Collection of Photography at the Tang Teaching Museum, 2018.39.1.94

CLOSE-LOOKING EXERCISE: NAN GOLDIN

Look closely: Examine the image closely.

Investigate: What do you think is going on in this image? Take about 10–15 minutes to write down and/or discuss everything you're noticing. Here are some things to think about to help you get started:

- What is recognizable immediately?
- What do you think is happening in the image? What is being captured? What is hidden? What references or symbolism could be present?
- Is there dialogue between you, the viewer, and the artist? Are there stories within the objects in the work itself?
- What larger ideas could the artist be trying to communicate through this work?
- Does this image remind you of something you have seen before? If so, what are those connections?

Explain your ideas about the artwork, including how you are understanding the image and why. What are you seeing that leads you to those ideas? Back up your ideas with visual evidence from the image. Ask yourself and others: What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can you find? Refer back to the image and look closer.

Reflect: What have you discovered from looking closely and writing and/or discussing the artwork with others? What did you discover about how to unpack and understand this image?

- Is the artist trying to elicit an emotional response from you, the viewer? Why or why not? Is that relevant?
- How does this artwork, and the ideas opened up from this artwork, relate to what's going on in your community and in the world today? What connections can you make from this work and our world right now, or from history?
- How does this experience relate to how we understand our world through technology and other forms of image-based media?
- What lingering questions do you have?