FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 12, 2006

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO invites visitors to
LOOK INTO A SLICE OF LIFE AS PHOTOGRAPHED BY
BARNY / DICORCIA / GOLDSIN / MANN / SULTAN

Museum Sole Venue for Major Exhibition So the Story Goes

All Five Artists to Host Public Opening Day Events September 16, 2006

The Art Institute of Chicago will showcase nearly 200 works by five of the best contemporary photographers—Tina Barney, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Nan Goldin, Sally Mann, and Larry Sultan—in one of the largest photography exhibitions mounted by the museum. So the Story Goes, on view at the museum’s Regenstein Hall September 16–December 3, 2006, explores how this select group of artists has used their own lives as the inspiration for and subject matter of their work during the past three decades. The works on view here are thus highly personal, shifting, and intriguing visions of the lives of these five photographers—from Tina Barney’s orchestrated depictions of her friends and family in affluent New England settings to Nan Goldin’s unabashed portrayal of intimate, and often brutally honest, moments. Sally Mann turns her attention on to her children and their surroundings, and Larry Sultan considers his parents’ relationship. Finally, Philip-Lorca diCorcia offers up his “storybook life” in photographs that intrigue with their nonlinear sequence and narrative.

Barney, diCorcia, Goldin, Mann, and Sultan are all expected as honored guests at “Snap”—the first ever benefit gala organized by the Art Institute’s Photography Department—on September 15, 2006. In addition, the five artists will speak during an
opening day celebration, September 16, from 11:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.. More detailed information to come. Please check Art Institute Web site for updated information.

*So the Story Goes* also celebrates recent important acquisitions made by the Department of Photography at the Art Institute: 31 promised gifts of Sultan images to the Photography Department, and the first Sultan purchase to enter the collection, *Mom Posing for Me* (1984); the first Barney to enter the collection, *Jill and Polly in the Bathroom* (1987); and selections from Mann’s landmark *Immediate Family* series (1985–1992). More new acquisitions in conjunction with this exhibition to be announced late summer.

*So the Story Goes* begins with the works of [Tina Barney (American, b. 1945)](https://www.artinstitute.edu/exhibitions/portraits). “I began photographing what I knew,” she said, and for much of the 1980s and 1990s, she has consistently captured images of her family and friends in their East Coast affluent surroundings. Employing a large-format view camera enables Barney to create highly detailed images that retain their focus and richness even when made into 4-by-5-foot prints. Nearly a decade before the super-sized photographs of artists such as Andreas Gursky or Thomas Struth, Barney presented color work on a scale that rivals most 20th-century paintings.

The exhibition follows with a series of [Sally Mann’s (American, b. 1951)](https://www.artinstitute.edu/exhibitions/portraits) photographs of her children and their surroundings in Virginia. Mann has consistently turned her camera on two most immediate subjects—her family and the land—and the resulting images are at once ordinary and profoundly personal senses. Photographing her three children—Emmett, Jessie, and Virginia—every summer for a decade since their infancy in the mid-1980s, Mann recorded their playful, beautiful, and
messy lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mann’s field of vision slowly expanded so by the mid-1990s her children had become but one component of a broader sense of place. Two years ago, Mann returned to photographing her children, who are now grown. The recent portraits retain the fierce sense of presence of the earlier pictures and are a testimony to time’s passing that comes from Mann’s studied appreciation of those things held most dear.

The focus of So the Story Goes then shifts to the 2003 project A Storybook Life by Philip-Lorca diCorcia (American, b. 1951), a collection of 76 photographs spanning three decades of his career, which constitutes both an installation and a publication. Neither a single body of work nor a sampling of past photographs, A Storybook Life instead constructs its meaning as the viewer interprets the relationship of one image to another. Unlike his other projects, for which he hired models or photographed strangers on the street, the subjects in A Storybook Life are almost entirely drawn from his own daily experiences, family members, and friends.

The next section of So the Story Goes features Larry Sultan’s (American, b. 1946) decade-long project titled Pictures from Home (1982–1991). In his collection of images, Sultan portrays his parents as they go about their lives—post-corporate retirement for his father and entrepreneurial home-selling for his mother—against the quintessential backdrop of the American dream: a ranch house in the suburbs, a heated garage, and wall-to-wall carpeting. He used his own contemporary photographs as pendants to his parents’ old home movies and snapshots,
exploring a more complete and complex sense of family. The chronological distance separating these two components raises questions of history, memory, and time.

Arguably no artist, and certainly no photographer, of this era has created a more symbiotic relationship between life and art than Nan Goldin (American, b. 1951)—who is featured in the final section of the exhibition. For more than 40 years, she has recorded her world, not once arranging or directing the subjects of her verité images. Goldin created a sense of family among her friends in the artistic demi-monde of New York City’s lower east side, where she moved in the 1980s. Goldin, much like an early Kodak enthusiast, snaps away, fully embracing photography’s potential for immediacy, emotion, and anecdote. Quite unlike either historical snapshots or today’s family photos, her pictures present the very subjects considered outside the socially regulated realm. As viewers, we witness moments of utmost intimacy—funerals, love-making, hospitalization—and the rollercoaster of human emotions that accompany them. The Art Institute will be the first Chicago venue to screen Goldin’s legendary slideshow *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* in its entirety, which is included in this section of the exhibition.

With *So the Story Goes*, the Art Institute—the only venue for this groundbreaking exhibition—brings together the work of the best contemporary photographers to create a trenchant meditation on everyday life, notions of family, and self.

*So the Story Goes Catalogue*

A catalogue exclusively distributed by Yale University Press will accompany *So the Story Goes*. The publication will feature an introductory essay by exhibition curator Katherine Bussard, Assistant Curator of Photography, entries on each of the five artists, four-color reproductions of nearly 20 photographs by each artist, and a handful
of historical illustrations. Bussard, a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at the City University of New York, specializes in contemporary photography and has worked previously for the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Clark Art Institute. Numbering 128 pages, this softcover book sells for $24.95 and will be available in September 2006 in The Museum Shop.

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**Images included in this press release:**


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**The Art Institute of Chicago** is a museum in Chicago’s Grant Park.  
**NEW MUSEUM HOURS FROM JUNE 3 TO LABOR DAY**  
10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
10:30 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday and free after 5:00 p.m.  
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday.  
Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. Please check [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu) before your visit.

**Admission:** Adults, $12.00; children 12 and over, students, and seniors, $7.00; children under 12 free; members always free. Ford Free Evenings are free to all, except for certain special exhibitions that may require full or extra admission fee. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a “Check Us Out” card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago. To reach the Art Institute on the World Wide Web, contact us at: [http://www.artic.edu/aic](http://www.artic.edu/aic)  
**The Art Institute of Chicago** is a museum in Chicago’s Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park.