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**CONTACT**

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS 415-356-8383 x 244  
Mary Lugo 770-623-8190  
Cara White 843-881-1480

voleine\_amilcar@itvs.org  
lugo@negia.net  
cara.white@mac.com

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***THE WOODMANS, THE HAUNTING STORY OF LATE PHOTOGRAPHER  
FRANCESCA WOODMAN AND HER FAMILY, PREMIERES ON PBS'S  
INDEPENDENT LENS ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2011***

(San Francisco, CA) — *The Woodmans* is a fascinating, unflinching portrait of the late photographer Francesca Woodman, told through the young artist's provocative work and remarkably candid interviews with her parents, who have continued their own artistic careers while watching Francesca's professional reputation eclipse their own. With unrestricted access to all of Francesca's photographs, private diaries, and experimental videos, *The Woodmans* traces the story of an unforgettable family broken and then healed by their art. Produced and directed by C. Scott Willis, *The Woodmans* will premiere on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens* on Thursday, December 22, 2011 at 10 PM (check local listings).

Francesca Woodman, born in 1958, was the daughter of artists George and Betty Woodman. She and her brother Charles grew up psychically and physically immersed in art, eating from plates that Betty made and surrounded by George's paintings. In the Woodman household, art was life's guiding principle and something that required constant, committed work. Inevitably, the children began to create art of their own.

Precocious and uncommonly determined, Francesca left home on her own initiative for boarding school, where she discovered and fell in love with photography. There she quickly developed an advanced, mature style, becoming her own nude model in complex, textured environments. At 17 she arrived at the Rhode Island Institute of Design like a rock star, with sophistication, confidence, and ambition to spare.



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In the late 1970s, she moved to New York and worked as a photographer's assistant, working odd jobs to help support herself. Drawing on her childhood obsession, she did fashion photography, trailblazing a stylish, sensual aesthetic that would later become an industry standard.

In 1980, eager to jumpstart their own careers, George and Betty joined Francesca in New York. But it soon became apparent that their daughter was in the throes of a serious depression. Unhappy in love and unable to work, she became withdrawn and attempted suicide. She recovered, but not for long, dying by her own hand in 1981.

More than thirty years after her death, Francesca's haunting photographs are seen as among the most important and distinctive of her time. Maintaining her legacy has become a major part of her parents' lives. Even as they strive to honor her work, they remain individually ambitious and competitive. After over fifty years of marriage, George and Betty stick together, and stick to making and living with art, on into the future.

To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the companion website at [www.pbs.org/independentlens/woodmans](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/woodmans). Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

### **About The Woodman Family**

**Betty Woodman** (b.1930) is an artist and ceramic sculptor whose works have been exhibited around the world. In 2006, a retrospective of her work was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2009 she was awarded an honorary degree by the Rhode Island School of Design, her daughter's alma mater. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, among others.

**George Woodman** (b. 1932) is a painter and photographer. He attended Harvard University and earned a master's degree in painting from the University of New Mexico. His paintings were associated with the "Pattern and Decorations" movement of the 1970s. In the early 1980s, he turned to photography. His work is represented in the collections of the Guggenheim and Whitney museums among others.

**Charles Woodman** (b.1955) is an assistant professor of electronic art at the University of Cincinnati. His recent works have "concentrated on the integration of video in live performances... in collaboration with musicians and dancers." He is a founding member of the video performance group "viDEO sAVant."

**Francesca Woodman** (1958 - 1981) attended the Phillips Academy in Massachusetts and graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 1979. In 1979 she moved to New York and one year later was an artist-in-residence at the McDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. She committed suicide January 19, 1981. Her work went largely unrecognized until Ann Gabbart organized a retrospective at the Wellesley College Museum in 1986. Since then her work has been shown extensively in museums worldwide, most recently at the Tate

Modern in London. Her work is in the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. A major retrospective of Francesca's work will open at SFMOMA in November 2011, and continue to the Guggenheim Museum in New York in Spring 2012.

### **About the Filmmaker**

**C. Scott Willis (Director/Producer)** is a thirty year veteran of the news, current affairs, and documentary world. He is the winner of eleven Emmys® and two duPont-Columbia Awards for television documentaries that range from the fall of the Soviet Empire to the rise of the Clinton years. Willis had a 27-year career with ABC News, working his way from producer in the Middle East and London to senior producer of *Nightline* and executive producer of ABC News primetime series. In 2001, Willis started his own production company, C Scott Films LLC, and has produced and directed nearly a dozen documentaries for television, most notably a series of investigative stories for the PBS series NOVA. *The Woodmans* is his first feature documentary for theatrical release.

### **About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities, and moments in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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