FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT
Voleine Amilcar, ITVS   415-356-8383 x 244   voleine_amilcar@itvs.org
Mary Lugo   770-623-8190   lugo@negia.net
Cara White   843-881-1480   cara.white@mac.com

*For downloadable images, visit **itvs.org/pressroom/photos/***
*For the program companion website, visit **pbs.org/independentlens/helvetica***

<p style="text-align:center">

"HELVETICA,"
A FILM ABOUT HOW THE WORLD'S MOST UBIQUITOUS TYPEFACE
CHANGED GLOBAL VISUAL CULTURE

Premieres on PBS Series Independent Lens
Tuesday, January 6, 2009

"This one of the wittiest, most diligently researched, slyly intelligent and quietly captivating
documentaries of the year." —David Jenkins, *Time Out London*

</p>

(San Francisco, CA)—Born in 1957 of Swiss origin, Helvetica was a typeface for the modern age. Sleek, streamlined and simple, it became the font that launched a thousand corporate logos—from Minneapolis to Melbourne to Munich. As neutral as the country of its birth, Helvetica was capable of being invested with the aspirations of millions of consumer products, a typeface whose meaning was created in the eye of the beholder. **HELVETICA** will have its television premiere on Tuesday, January 6, 2009, at 10 PM (check local listings) as part of the seventh season of the Emmy® Award–winning PBS series *Independent Lens,* hosted by Terrence Howard.

From the New York City subways to the vacation getaway ads in your morning newspaper to the Push and Pull signs on your office door, the Helvetica typeface has made a sans-serif assault on the world since its creation in 1957. How did a typeface drawn by a little-known Swiss designer become one of the most popular ways for us to communicate our words more than 50 years later? And what are the repercussions of that popularity? Has it resulted in the globalization of our visual culture? How do we interact with type on a daily basis? And what about the effects of technology on type and graphic design and the ways we consume it? Most of us use computers and digital fonts every day, so are we all graphic designers now, in a sense?

Director Gary Hustwit set out to answer these questions and to look at the past 50 years of graphic design in order to make people who aren't in the design trade think about the words that surround them and the effect that typefaces have on the way we process those words. At the same time, he created a fluid discussion with renowned designers about their work, the creative process, and the choices and aesthetics behind their use of type.

-More-

HELVETICA encompasses the worlds of design, advertising, psychology and communication and invites us to take a second look at the thousands of words we see every day. The film was shot in high-definition on location in the United States, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, France and Belgium.

To learn more about the film and the issues, visit the companion website for **HELVETICA** at **pbs.org/independentlens/helvetica/.** Get detailed information on the film, watch video clips, read an interview with the filmmaker, and find related links and resources to explore the subject in depth. The site also features a Talkback section for audiences to share their ideas and opinions.

About the Filmmaker
Gary Hustwit (Producer /Filmmaker)
Gary Hustwit has produced five feature documentaries, including *I Am Trying to Break Your Heart,* the award-winning film about the band Wilco; *Moog,* a documentary about electronic music pioneer Robert Moog; and *Drive Well, Sleep Carefully,* a tour film about the band Death Cab for Cutie. **HELVETICA** is Hustwit's directorial debut. Hustwit worked with punk label SST Records in the late 1980s, ran the independent book publishing house Incommunicado Press during the 1990s, was vice president of the media website Salon.com in 2000 and founded the indie DVD label Plexifilm in 2001. His next project, *Objectified,* is about industrial design and the people who reexamine, reevaluate and reinvent our manufactured environment on a daily basis.

About the Typeface
The typeface Helvetica was developed by Max Miedinger with Edüard Hoffmann in 1957 for the Haas Type Foundry in Münchenstein, Switzerland. In the late 1950s, the European design world saw a revival of older sans-serif typefaces, such as the German face Akzidenz Grotesk. Hoffmann, director of the Haas Type Foundry, commissioned Miedinger, a former employee and freelance designer, to draw an updated sans-serif typeface to add to their line. The result was called Neue Haas Grotesk. When Haas's German parent companies, Stempel and Linotype, began marketing the font internationally in 1961, the name was changed to Helvetica, derived from Helvetia, the Latin name for Switzerland. Introduced amidst a wave of popularity of Swiss design and fueled by advertising agencies selling this new design style to their clients, Helvetica quickly appeared in corporate logos, signage for transportation systems, fine art prints and myriad other print formats worldwide. Inclusion of the font in home computer systems, such as the Apple Macintosh in 1984, further cemented its ubiquity.

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 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. Further information about the series is available at **www.pbs.org/independentlens.**

###