

# GUGGENHEIM

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Retrospective of Francesca Woodman on View at the Guggenheim in Spring 2012**

**First Comprehensive Examination of Woodman's Brief Career Assembles Over 120 Works Including Newly Released Photographs, Artist Books, and Videos**

**Exhibition:** *Francesca Woodman*  
**Venue:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York  
**Location:** Annex Level 4  
**Dates:** March 16-June 13, 2012  
**Media Preview:** Thursday, March 15, 10am-noon

(NEW YORK, NY – January 25, 2012) — *Francesca Woodman*, the most comprehensive exhibition of the artist's work since Woodman's untimely death in 1981 at the age of 22, will be on view at the Guggenheim Museum from March 16 through June 13, 2012. Spanning the breadth of her production, the exhibition includes more than 120 vintage photographs, artist books, and a selection of recently discovered and rarely seen short videos, presenting a historical reconsideration of Woodman's brief but extraordinary career.

*Francesca Woodman* is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). The exhibition has been curated by Corey Keller, Associate Curator of Photography, SFMOMA, where it opened in November 2011. The New York presentation of *Francesca Woodman* is organized by Jennifer Blessing, Senior Curator, Photography, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

This exhibition is supported by the Leadership Committee for the Guggenheim Museum's 2012 Photography Exhibitions.

Woodman's oeuvre represents a remarkably rich and singular exploration of the human body in space and of the genre of self-portraiture in particular. Her interest in female subjectivity, seriality, Conceptualist practice, and photography's relationship to both literature and performance are also the hallmarks of the heady moment in American photography during which she came of age. This retrospective offers an occasion to examine more closely the maturation and expression of a highly subjective and coherent artistic vision. It also presents an important and timely opportunity to reassess the critical developments that took place in the 1970s in American photography.

Born in 1958 into a family of artists, Woodman began photographing at the age of thirteen. By the time she enrolled at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in 1975, she was already an accomplished artist with a remarkably mature and focused approach to her work. During her time at RISD, she spent a year in Rome, a place she had visited as a child, and which proved to be a fertile source of inspiration. After completing her degree, she moved to New York, where she continued to photograph. While making several large-scale personal projects, she also experimented with fashion photography, engaging in the age-old artist's struggle to reconcile making art and making a living. In 1981, at the age of twenty-two, she committed suicide. Woodman's tragic death is underscored by the startlingly compelling, complex, and artistically resolved body of work she produced during her short lifetime.

Woodman's favorite subject was herself. From the very first time she picked up a camera, she used it to thoroughly plumb the genre of self-portraiture. Using a square-format camera, Woodman photographed her body in a variety of spaces. She had an affinity for decaying and decrepit interiors, particularly the richly layered surfaces of walls covered with graffiti or peeling wallpaper. In these settings the body is evanescent, appearing and disappearing behind objects, pressed into cupboards and cabinets, camouflaged against walls, or dissolving into a blur of movement. She frequently included objects within the frame—gloves, eels, mirrors—thereby investing them with a symbolic charge, and often making deliberate allusions to tropes from the Surrealist and gothic fiction she admired.

The presentation at the Guggenheim will comprise approximately 120 vintage photographs, including Woodman's earliest student experiments at RISD, work from her time spent studying in Rome, her forays into fashion photography upon moving to New York, and the late, large-scale blueprint studies of caryatid-like figures for the ambitious *Temple* project (1980). The exhibition will include two of her artist books—diaristic collages of her own photographs and writings—which were an important form of expression, particularly at the end of her career. Woodman also experimented with moving images; six recently discovered and rarely seen short videos will be presented in the exhibition.

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. In addition to beautifully reproduced plates including images never before published, this 224-page book includes an introduction and essay by Corey Keller, which contextualizes Woodman's photography within the emergence of a new photographic avant-garde in the 1970s and offers a compelling argument for why a consideration of her work is urgent today. A contribution by Julia Bryan-Wilson, associate professor of art history at the University of California, Berkeley, puts Woodman and her initial reception by feminist scholars—in particular, Abigail Solomon-Godeau and Rosalind Krauss—in perspective. An essay by Jennifer Blessing focuses on Woodman's videos and explores the relationship between the still and moving image in her body of work. The hardcover catalogue is \$49.95 and will soon be available at [guggenheimstore.org](http://guggenheimstore.org).

### **Education and Public Programs**

Details on the public programs presented in conjunction with *Francesca Woodman* will be posted on [guggenheim.org/publicprograms](http://guggenheim.org/publicprograms). Highlights include:

## Guided Tours

Free with museum admission.

**Curator's Eye:** Led by exhibition curators  
Friday, March 30, 2 pm – Jennifer Blessing  
Friday, April 13, 2 pm – Jennifer Blessing  
Friday, April 27, 2 pm – Susan Thompson

**Conservator's Eye:** Led by museum conservators  
Friday, May 11, 2 pm – Jeffrey Warda

## Public Program

*Art in the 1970s, Through the Lens of Francesca Woodman*

Friday, May 18, 4pm

This program examines the relationship between the still and moving image in Woodman and other artists' production during the 1970s, particularly as associated with Post-Minimalism, performance, and video. Organized by Jennifer Blessing, Senior Curator, Photography. Reception follows. \$10, \$7 members, free for students with RSVP. For tickets visit [guggenheim.org/publicprograms](http://guggenheim.org/publicprograms) or call the Box Office at 212 423 3587.

## About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Currently the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation owns and operates the Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the Grand Canal in Venice, and provides programming and management for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin is the result of a collaboration, begun in 1997, between the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art designed by Frank Gehry on Saadiyat Island, adjacent to the main island of Abu Dhabi city, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is currently in progress. More information about the foundation can be found at [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

## VISITOR INFORMATION

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**Admission:** Adults \$18, students/seniors (65+) \$15, members and children under 12 free. Admission includes an audio tour with highlights of the Guggenheim's permanent collection and of the building, available in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

**Museum Hours:** Sun–Wed, 10 am–5:45 pm; Fri, 10 am–5:45 pm; Sat, 10 am–7:45 pm; closed Thurs. On Saturdays, beginning at 5:45 pm, the museum hosts Pay What You Wish. For general information, call 212 423 3500 or visit the museum online at:

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For publicity images visit [guggenheim.org/pressimages](http://guggenheim.org/pressimages)  
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#1225  
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