

# Victoria Miro Gallery

## Press Release

### FRANCESCA WOODMAN

28 June to 28 July 2000

Following on from recent successful showings of her work at the **Cartier Foundation** in Paris and the **Photographers' Gallery** in London, we are pleased to announce a solo exhibition of work by **Francesca Woodman** in collaboration with the **Marian Goodman Gallery** in New York.

**Woodman** took her first self-portrait at the age of thirteen and for the next several years she created a body of work that was prolific for its singularity of style and range of innovative techniques. Finding her forte, **Woodman** used photography as a means of articulating her voice during her childhood spent in Colorado, as a student at the Rhode Island School of Design and in Italy and New York.

**Woodman** is remarkable due to the overall sophistication of the photographs she created during her young life, and for her skilful incorporation of Italian futurism, surrealism, symbolism and performance art into a consistent yet often disarming narrative. Her work is ground breaking due to her unconventional methods of imaging the female body. By radically placing her own body at the fore of her photographs as a means of inquiry and self-expression, **Woodman** is firmly situated alongside her contemporaries of the late 1970's such as **Ana Mendieta** and **Hannah Wilke**. Her work also presaged artists such as **Cindy Sherman**, **Sarah Lucas**, **Nan Goldin** and **Karen Finley** in their subsequent dialogues with the self and reinterpretations of the female body.

**Woodman** was intrigued by how the body's three-dimensionality could be captured and contracted into a two-dimensional plane. So one sees her flattening herself as well as others, underneath large glass plates, massive frames, and behind layers of wallpaper. She frequently posed as the protagonist in theatrical settings staged in dilapidated buildings, industrial spaces and crumbling facades, which starkly contrasted with her youthful body, that in turn served as a landscape upon which she projected inventive portrait dramatisations.

**Woodman's** photographs are deeply emotive, and are fragmented statements of an extraordinary inner life: a nude girl transcending the body and becoming an angel; spilling out of a diorama and becoming as lifeless as the animals around her; or transforming into a blurred, elusive image as if an apparition. Like the Mexican surrealist **Frida Kahlo** a generation before, **Woodman** images her complex psyche with an uninhibited candidity, bringing the viewer into the profound sanctum of her life.

In 1981, at the age of 22, **Woodman** committed suicide by jumping from the window of her New York apartment. Although her photographs seem to stand as a premonition -- indeed she displays a tireless and deep examination into the life/death axis -- **Woodman** left behind a greater legacy. She was a maverick in overturning more traditional usages of photographic portraiture, challenged preconceptions of femininity and femaleness, and laid the groundwork for other artists to follow.

**Victoria Miro Gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am until 5.30pm, Saturdays 11am-1pm**

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