



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

News release

Thursday 11 January 2024

Major exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery to showcase rare vintage prints by two of art history's most influential photographers – Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron

More than 160 rare vintage prints will be exhibited as part of *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In*, as the two photographers – who worked 100 years apart – are presented in parallel for the first time.

The exhibition will present a thematic exploration of the photographic work produced throughout both artists' entire careers, including their best known and less familiar work.

Artist's books by Francesca Woodman, which have never been exhibited in the UK, will be on display.



L-R: *The Dream (Mary Hillier)* by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1869. Wilson Centre for Photography; *Untitled*, 1979 by Francesca Woodman. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation. © Woodman Family Foundation/DACS London.

From 21 March to 16 June 2024, the National Portrait Gallery will display a major retrospective exhibition of work by two of the most significant photographers in the history of the medium – Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) and Francesca Woodman (1958-1981). Bringing their work together for the first time in an exhibition of this scale, it will showcase more than 160 rare vintage prints from galleries, museums and private collections, including 96 works by Woodman and 71 by Cameron, spanning the entire careers of both photographers – who worked 100 years apart.

Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In will offer a new way to consider



these two artists, by moving away from the biographical emphasis that has often been the focus of how their work is understood. The exhibition challenges this approach in its insistence on experiencing the physical print, taking the picture making of Woodman and Cameron as a starting point for consideration of their work. While neither artist aimed for technical perfection in their printing, for each it was a dynamic and essential aspect of their creative process used to explore and extend the possibilities of photographic image making.



L-R: *The Dream* (Mary Hillier) by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1869. Wilson Centre for Photography; *Untitled*, 1979 by Francesca Woodman. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London; *Annie* (*My very first success in Photography*), by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1864. *Annie* (*My very first success in Photography*), by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1864. © National Science & Media Museum / Science & Society Picture Library -- All rights reserved.; *Self Portrait at Thirteen* by Francesca Woodman, 1972. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London.

After an extensive curatorial research period, works by Julia Margaret Cameron have been selected for loan from major museums internationally including the Getty, Los Angeles; the Metropolitan Museum, New York City; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford; the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; and the National Portrait Gallery's own Collection. Prints made by Francesca Woodman in her lifetime, nearly 20 of which have not been previously published or exhibited, have been loaned primarily from the Woodman Family Foundation in New York, who have collaborated closely on the making of the exhibition and accompanying publication, with further loans from Tate and the Rhode Island School of Design

The exhibition's title, *Portraits to Dream In*, suggests that when seen side by side, both artists conjure a dream state within their work as part of their shared exploration of appearance, identity, the muse, gender and archetypes. The title of the exhibition comes from an observation made by Woodman that photographs could be 'places for the viewer to dream in'. Both Woodman and Cameron produced work that was deeply rooted in mythology and storytelling and each made portraits of those close to them to represent these narratives. Further, both women explored portraiture beyond its ability to record appearance.

Following a thematic approach, visitors will experience the work of Woodman and Cameron moving forward and back in time between the nineteenth and twentieth century; and also within the relatively short span of years that each artist was active - neither worked for more than fifteen years. Themes on display will comprise: Declaring intentions & claiming space; Angels & Otherworldly Beings; Mythology; Doubling; Nature & femininity; Caryatids & the classical form; Men and Models & Muses.

Key works on display will include the first forays both artists made into the medium of photography, as they began to portray their unique perspectives and carve out distinctive styles. These include Cameron's self-declared 'first success', a portrait of Annie Wilhemina Philpot in 1864, accompanied by Woodman's *Self-portrait at thirteen*, taken during a summer holiday in Antella, Italy in 1972. Photographs depicting angelic and otherworldly figures will be presented in a dense constellation with pieces from Woodman's evocative and often abstracted *Angel* series contrasted against Cameron's more direct representations of cherubic beings and winged cupids. Not to be missed images by Francesca Woodman will include *Polka Dots #5* and *House #3* both made in 1976, seen alongside ethereal portraits of the British actress Ellen Terry made by Julia Margaret Cameron in 1864.



L-R: *I Wait* (Rachel Gurney) by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1872. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; *Untitled*, from the *Angels* series by Francesca Woodman, 1977. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London; *Sadness* (Ellen Terry) by Julia Margaret Cameron (1864) Albumen silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 84.XZ.186.52; *Polka Dots #5* by



Francesca Woodman, 1976, Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London.

Other defining works by Woodman include *Caryatid* pieces from a major photographic project developed in the last year of her life in which she experimented with large scale diazotype prints, including depictions of herself and other models as caryatids – carved female figures which take the place of columns in ancient Greek temples. The exhibition will be the first to draw significant attention to Woodman's portraits of men as well as exploring the importance of her ongoing photographs of friends. Providing additional insight into her practice, contact sheets and examples of Woodman's artist's books will be on display, exhibited in the UK for the first time.



L-R: *Untitled*, from the *Caryatid* series by Francesca Woodman, 1980. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London; *House #3* by Francesca Woodman, 1976. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London; *These People Live in That Door*, 1976-77. Courtesy Woodman Family Foundation © Woodman Family Foundation / DACS, London.

The exhibition will include many of Julia Margaret Cameron's most famous and much loved portraits, including those of her niece and favorite model, Julia Jackson, who would later be the mother to Bloomsbury artists Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell; her striking depiction of Alice Liddell as the goddess Pomona; her portraits of prominent Victorian men including John Frederick William Herschel who she captured as he posed dramatically in *The Astronomer* (1867); and her frequent muses, May Prinsep and Mary Ann Hillier.



L-R: *Julia Prinsep Stephen (née Jackson, formerly Mrs Duckworth)* by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1867. © National Portrait Gallery, London; *Pomona (Alice Liddell)* by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1872. The Metropolitan Museum of Art., New York. David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1963; *The Astronomer (Sir John Frederick William Herschel)* by Julia Margaret Cameron, 1867. Courtesy of the RISD Museum, Providence, RI.

"It is a great pleasure to bring together the work of Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron for the first time in this innovative and imaginative exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. Though, of course, Cameron could not have known Woodman, and Woodman did not explicitly reference Cameron, they shared thematic and formal interests uncovered through the exhibition. Paired in this way, we see their work – individually and together – in a new light; one that feels contemporary and timeless. We are immensely grateful to our lead curator Magdalene Keaney for conceptualising this exhibition with great expertise and for the team at the Woodman Family Foundation in New York who have been wonderfully collaborative partners."

Dr. Nicholas Cullinan OBE
Director, National Portrait Gallery

"Both Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron were utterly committed to the practice of photography and to their practice as artists without reservation. They both worked incredibly hard at times when women were marginal in the history of art and photography. I hope that visitors relish the physical experience of seeing such a large collection of prints that each artist made. They are beautiful, subtle, intricate, and beguiling. Then of course to come away knowing more about these two women artists who have defined the history of photography. I hope it poses questions about how we might think in new ways about relationships between 19th and 20th century photographic practice and what a portrait is and can be."



Magdalene Keaney
Curator, *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In*

The exhibition will be accompanied by the publication, *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In* by curator Magdalene Keaney, which will include essays and contributions from the collections curator of the Woodman Family Foundation, Katarina Jerinic, and leading photography historian, Helen Ennis.

Associated Exhibition Events

Magda Keaney in conversation

Friday 22 March 2024

19.00-20.00

£15 on site, £8 online livestream, booking essential

Join Magda Keaney, curator of *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In*, as she explores the work of these two leading photographers, working 100 years apart, in conversation with a contemporary artist. Together, Magda and the artist will discuss how themes explored by Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron resonate with the contemporary artist's own work, including masculinity, femininity and vulnerability, appearance and identity, self-portraiture, and constructed worlds within everyday experiences.

Poetry performance

Saturday 23 March 2024

14.00-14.30

Free, drop in

Immerse yourself in magical realism and the notion of a dream space with a unique poetry experience inspired by upcoming exhibition, *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream In*.

Digital photography workshop: BLUR

Saturday 23 March 2024

11.00-17.00

£125 on site, booking essential

Drawing on Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron's use of movement, soft-focus imagery and creative imperfections throughout their work, this workshop will focus on experimenting and innovating through the medium of photography. In this one-day digital photography workshop, led by contemporary photographer, Axel Hoedt, participants will learn techniques to transform imagery by purposefully allowing works to appear out of focus, incorporating movement into images and experimenting with double exposures and imperfections.

Lecture: Women's representation and the female gaze

Thursday 25 April 2024

13.00-14.00

£10 on site, booking essential

Held to coincide with the upcoming exhibition *Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron: Portraits to Dream in*, join us as we explore the representation of women working in photography throughout history and contemporary arts. The lecture will address how women have often been positioned in relation their bodies and appearance, in a way male artists and creatives seldom are. Join academic, Professor Patrizia Di Bello, as they explore photography through the female gaze and aim to redefine what it means to be a woman working in the arts today.

ENDS

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:
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Portraits to Dream In: Francesca Woodman and Julia Margaret Cameron

21 March – 16 June 2024

National Portrait Gallery, London

Tickets £8.50 with concessions from £4.25

Notes to editors

Press tickets can be arranged by contacting press@npg.org.uk in advance of visiting and are subject to availability. Press tickets will not be available in the last week of the exhibition run.

National Portrait Gallery Membership offers free unlimited access to our reopening year of exhibitions. An annual subscription starts from just £5.50 a month: npg.org.uk/members.



National Portrait Gallery

Founded in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery tells the story of Britain through portraits, using art to bring history to life and explore living today. From global icons, to unsung heroes, our Collection is filled with the stories that have shaped, and continue to shape a nation. We celebrate the power of portraiture and offer encounters with some of the world's greatest and most exciting new artists, promoting engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide- ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

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