

## Francesca Woodman | Zigzag

9 September to 4 October 2014

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St George Street, London W1S 1FE



Francesca Woodman, *Untitled, New York, 1979-80*

**Victoria Miro Mayfair is delighted to present the first solo exhibition of Francesca Woodman's work at the Mayfair gallery. In her short career Woodman produced an extraordinary body of work – over 800 photographs – acclaimed for its singularity of style and range of innovative techniques.**

This exhibition considers the zigzag and other abstract geometrical forms as recurring visual themes in Woodman's work. Woodman's practice is often discussed in terms of its surreal and symbolic imagery, but her work was grounded in a sophisticated understanding of form. Her photography exemplified strong compositional motifs, and the repetitive, regular shape of the zigzag, with its strong lines and angles, was a form she used in images of disparate subjects.

Many of Woodman's gelatin silver prints feature this strong, idiosyncratic abstract lineage, and she also extended her investigation of the serial geometrical form in her large-scale diazotype prints. The artist described one of these works in a letter to a friend in 1980: 'It will be ... a long string of images held together by a long compositional zigzag, thus the corner of a building in one frame fits into the elbow of a girl in the next frame into a book in the third frame, the images are both very personal mysterious ones and harsh images of outdoor city life. It is had to get the adjoining images to fit the rigorous structural scaffold'.

As George Woodman, the artist's father, has pointed out, 'Modernist abstract art devotes itself to the form of the square, the rectangle, the box, the intersection of streets, the whole right angle world of horizontal and vertical. Domination by a zig-zag motif is very rare... It creates a world of flux without horizon, a rhythmic oscillation. Francesca made studies of zig-zags: from representations of houses, noses, hands and baby's legs. A related investigation was the series Bridges and Tiaras. In these prints, the bridge, arching over the river, and the tiara, arching over the woman's head, are contrasted and linked by the logic of analogy. Francesca creates visual puns, jokes and poetry in this series'.

Formal correspondences and echoes abound in the work in this exhibition, which includes ten works newly released from the artist's estate.

Born in 1958 in Denver, Colorado, Francesca Woodman lived and worked in New York until her death in 1981. Since 1986 her work has been exhibited widely. Significant solo presentations of Woodman's work include Francesca Woodman at the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (2011-12) that subsequently toured to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2012); Francesca Woodman: Retrospective at the Sala Espacio AV, Murcia, touring to SMS Contemporanea, Siena (both 2009); Francesca Woodman: Photographs at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (2003) and Francesca Woodman at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (1998), that subsequently toured to Kunsthall, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (1998); Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon, Portugal (1999); The Photographers' Gallery, London (1999); Centro Cultural TeclaSala, L'Hospitalet, Barcelona (1999-2000); Carla Sozzani Gallery, Milan, (2001); The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2001) and PhotoEspaña, Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid (2002). Woodman's work is represented in the collections of major museums including The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Whitney Museum of American Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Detroit Institute of Arts; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Tate/National Galleries of Scotland.

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