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***BEAUTY IS EMBARRASSING, A PORTRAIT OF ARTIST WAYNE WHITE,
PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 2013***

“I think the future for Wayne is recognition for the fact that he was a founding father of the current state of pop art.” – Mark Mothersbaugh

(San Francisco, CA) — Part biography, part live performance, *Beauty Is Embarrassing* is a funny, irreverent, joyful, and inspiring portrait of Wayne White, a one-of-a-kind visual artist. As a designer, painter, puppeteer, sculptor, and musician, he has created some of the most arresting and iconic images in pop culture. The film traces White’s career from his early work as an underground cartoonist in New York’s East Village to his big break on *Pee-wee’s Playhouse*, for which he won three Emmys. It follows his subsequent success designing and animating for other children’s shows and for music videos through a dark period of struggle and self-reflection, to his current incarnation as a respected painter and performer. *Beauty Is Embarrassing* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, January 21, 2013 at 10 PM on PBS (check local listings).

For two years, filmmaker Neil Berkeley traveled with White through Houston, Miami, New York, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Los Angeles, retracing Wayne’s life from his childhood in Tennessee, through his marriage to artist Mimi Pond, and their family life with two children who are also artists. Throughout the course of the film, Berkeley peels back layer after layer of Wayne’s singular creative process and explores his astonishingly prolific career. The film is interwoven with video made by White throughout his career, including never-before-seen behind the scenes footage of the making of *Pee-wee’s Playhouse*.

Wayne White’s early creative success was followed by a fall. Yet, as Wayne explains in the film, there are sometimes second acts in life that take us to new heights. At its core, *Beauty Is Embarrassing* shows what it takes for one uniquely talented, profanely hilarious, and utterly uncompromising artist to make it in America.

The film also features interviews with Matt Groening, Mark Mothersbaugh, Todd Oldham, Paul Reubens, Gary Panter, Jonathan Dayton, Valerie Faris, and many others.

To learn more about the film, visit the *Beauty Is Embarrassing* interactive companion website (www.itvs.org/films/beauty-is-embarrassing), which features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

About the Filmmakers

Neil Berkeley (Producer/Director/Writer/Cinematographer) has been working as a designer and director in film and television for over ten years. His work includes main title design for some of TV's most popular shows and he has directed several national commercials. He has also developed main titles for documentaries including *The Cool School*, *Johnny Cash's America*, *Air Guitar Nation*, and *Respect Yourself: The Story of Stax Records*. Since 2009, Berkeley has operated his design-based production company, BRKLY, which developed most of the animated sequences in *Beauty Is Embarrassing*, including the Mimi Pond Cartoon, the *Pee-wee's Playhouse* sketches, and the end credits. *Beauty Is Embarrassing* is his first feature length documentary.

Chris Bradley (Producer/Editor/Cinematographer) has directed, photographed, and edited feature-length films including *Pittsburgh*, a feature length mockumentary which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and starred Jeff Goldblum, Ed Begley, Jr., Illeana Douglas, and Moby; *Fired!*, a comedic documentary starring Tim Allen, Harry Shearer, Fred Willard, Sarah Silverman, Bob Odenkirk, David Cross, Jeff Garlin, Illeana Douglas, and others; and *Jon E. Edwards Is in Love*, a documentary winner of the SXSW Special Jury Award as well as the Santa Fe Film Festival's Creative Spirit Award.

Morgan Neville (Producer) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who has specialized in making music documentaries including *Muddy Waters Can't Be Satisfied*, *Respect Yourself: The Stax Records Story*, *Johnny Cash's America*, and *Troubadours*. His non-music films include *The Cool School*, *The Joy of Lex*, and *Shotgun Freeway*. Neville's company Tremolo Productions is a major producer of arts documentaries, including *Pearl Jam Twenty*, *Pacific Standard Time*, and *The Union*.

Eddie Schmidt (Executive Producer) is an Oscar®-nominated filmmaker (*Twist of Faith*) who has produced four documentaries that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, including *This Film Is Not Yet Rated* (which he co-wrote) and the Emmy®-nominated, all-star music documentary, *Troubadours*. His films have appeared on HBO, IFC, PBS, BBC, and Sundance Channel, as well as theatrically and at major film festivals around the world. For television, Schmidt has directed, written, and produced documentary and comedy series and specials for HBO, IFC, NBC/Universal, Lionsgate, PBS, E!, A&E, and Current. Recently, Schmidt was executive producer of the pop documentary *Candyman*, distributed Harry Shearer's documentary *The Big Uneasy*, and has been producing a new feature documentary with BMP Films (*Autism: The Musical*). Schmidt served as Board President of the International Documentary Association (IDA) for three years. He will soon join Steve James, Barbara Kopple, and others in directing a short film for Morgan Spurlock's Focus Forward initiative with Cinelan and GE.

Kevin Klauber (Writer/Editor) has spent the last five years working on feature documentaries. He has edited projects on behalf of PBS, the National Science Foundation, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and Sean Penn. Last year, he worked with Cameron Crowe to shape over two decades worth of footage into the feature documentary, *Pearl Jam Twenty*. 2012 brought his second nomination for the Golden Reel Award by the MPSE. Klauber graduated from the USC School of Cinematic Arts with an emphasis in film production, as well Werner Herzog's

Rogue Film School.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information at www.pbs.org/independentslens.

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