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“VIVIEN’S WILD RIDE,” A DEEPLY PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY MEMOIR, PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS JANUARY 26, 2026

In Her Directorial Debut, Trailblazing Film Editor Vivien Hillgrove Explores Resilience and Artistry as She Faces the Loss of Her Eyesight

(San Francisco, CA) October 22, 2025— “Vivien’s Wild Ride,” the directorial debut from sound and picture editor Vivien Hillgrove, will premiere on INDEPENDENT LENS on January 26, 2026. After an acclaimed career in cinema, Hillgrove begins to lose her sight, forcing her to reexamine her past and to reinvent herself and her art in this unconventional memoir.

Woven with a look back at the earthshaking ’70s and ’80s Bay Area narrative film scene and the art of film editing, “Vivien’s Wild Ride” is a deeply personal exploration of Hillgrove’s past traumas and her new reality as an artist learning to live with a disability. The film captures a story of transformation on many levels, reimagining what it means to see and to belong through acts of creation, connection, and caring, not just biology.

At 78 years old, Hillgrove reflects on a career working alongside many filmmaking greats: Francis Coppola, Philip Kaufman, Milos Forman, Walter Murch, and celebrated documentary filmmakers Lourdes Portillo and Deann Borshay Liem. But as her eyesight, which she has depended on for her craft, begins to deteriorate, she navigates a transition to a new way of being and seeing.

Taking the helm as director for the first time in this documentary feature, Hillgrove begins to confront the shame and loneliness she felt earlier in her life—having relinquished her baby as an unwed teenage mother. Now, diagnosed with macular degeneration, she faces a new feeling of isolation and loss. Supported by her longtime partner, Karen Brocco, Hillgrove works to uncover the past, recalling and summoning the resilience she found as a young woman, while also finding solace living on a quiet farm and with their garden sanctuary, Mom’s Head Gardens.

The documentary received funding via ITVS's Open Call Initiative. "Vivien's Wild Ride" premieres on PBS's INDEPENDENT LENS on January 26, 2026, at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS app](#).

Visit the "[Vivien's Wild Ride](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Vivien Hillgrove, Director/Producer

Vivien Hillgrove is a documentary director and a picture and dialogue editor in the San Francisco Bay Area, with over 50 years of experience in the film business. She has worked extensively on both narrative and documentary films. She is a member of AMPAS and has served as an advisor for numerous Sundance Documentary Composer/Edit Labs.

Deann Borshay Liem, Producer

Deann Borshay Liem is an Emmy Award-winning documentarian known for films that explore adoption, war, and memory. Her films include *First Person Plural*, *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, *Geographies of Kinship*, *Memory of Forgotten War*, *Crossings*, and the oral history project, *Legacies of the Korean War*. She is producer for *Vivien's Wild Ride*.

Jessica Anthony, Producer

Jessica Anthony is a producer, writer, director and impact strategist with over two decades of experience in live action, animation and visual effects. Producing credits include *The Mask You Live In*, *In the Bones*, *Supreme Court vs. The American Voter*, *Ayiti Mon Amour*, and *In Waves and War*, directed by Jon Shenk and Bonni Cohen.

Janet Cole, Producer

Janet Cole received Oscar and Emmy nominations and a Peabody Award as Producer/Executive Producer of *Regret to Inform*. Her producing credits include *Paragraph 175* with directors Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. Her Executive Producer credits include *Promises*, *Heart of the Sea*, *Granny D Goes to Washington*, and *Freedom Machines*.

Dawn Valadez, Producer

Dawn Valadez is a second-generation Xicana, disabled, fiercely independent, queer filmmaker and artist. Dawn is the Producer/Co-director of *The*

Pushouts (with Katie Galloway, 2018). Her producing and co-producing credits include *All We Carry*, *Hummingbirds*, and *Manzanar, Diverted*.

CREDITS

Director	Vivien Hillgrove
Producers	Vivien Hillgrove Deann Borshay Liem Jessica Anthony Janet Cole Dawn Valadez
Executive Producers	Carrie Lozano Lois Vossen Royd Chung Lisa Kleiner Chanoff Bonni Cohen Megan Gelstein

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, *Independent Lens* documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries *Philly D.A.* and the Emmy® award-winning *The Invisible War*, *Independent Lens* provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities.

Independent Lens is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: a private corporation funded by the American People, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or YouTube. Learn more at pbs.org/independentlens



ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Services (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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