What if you looked at war as though women mattered?
In conversation with Filmmaker Abigail Disney at Stanford University

(STANFORD, Calif.) Filmmaker and Stanford alumna, Abigail Disney, returns to Stanford University to engage students, faculty and the community on Women, War & Peace as part of Stanford’s ongoing Ethics & War series.

Disney’s latest project began with a simple question, “What if you looked at war as though women mattered?” Disney’s answer to that question is Women, War & Peace, a bold five-part PBS miniseries that highlights the stories of women in conflict zones from Bosnia to Liberia, and Columbia to Afghanistan. By inserting a female face, voice, and perspective into the dialogue about conflict and security, Woman, War & Peace challenges the notion that these issues are only in the domain of men.

Women, War & Peace is the newest chapter in Disney’s longstanding personal and intellectual interest in the gendered experience at war – an interest that began for her as a Master’s student at Stanford University, where she was introduced to the value of looking at the world through a gendered lens.

Given that Disney’s gender consciousness was piqued at Stanford, it is fitting that she will be returning here to launch Women, War, & Peace, the day after the series airs its inaugural program. On October 12th 2011 at 7pm, in conversation with Debra Satz, Director of the Center for Ethics and Society at Stanford, and philanthropist Anne Firth Murray, Disney will discuss the creation of Women, War & Peace and talk about why she is committed to raising awareness about the “second front” of war.

Calling attention to the ignored “second front” of war

As the granddaughter of Roy Disney and grandniece of Walt Disney, Abigail Disney steered clear of the family business for most of her life. However, a trip to Liberia in 2006 provided Disney with a reason to become a filmmaker. While there, she heard the remarkable story of how a small group of Liberian women were able to stop a civil war through nonviolent action. “It was
horrifying to me that I had never heard of these women and knew that it was going to be forgotten. I was in a position to make sure their story was honored.”

Disney’s desire to tell these women’s story culminated in the award-winning documentary Pray the Devil Back to Hell, which she produced with Emmy winning filmmaker, Gini Reticker. Disney worked with Reticker again on Women, War & Peace, along with Pamela Hogan, a producer/writer at the forefront of making PBS’s Emmy-winning documentary series WIDE ANGLE, a standard setter in the coverage of global women’s issues.

In Women, War & Peace, Disney upends the usual way war is discussed by placing women, rather than men, at the forefront of the story. What Disney wanted to do instead was to see what war would look like through women’s eyes. “What would happen,” Disney asked, if you “were…to sew the camera into a sari or a headscarf [of] a woman? How would it look different? How would the vocabulary change, the ethics change? How would the cost-benefit analysis look?”

By looking at war through women’s point of view, Women, War, & Peace illuminates what Disney calls the ignored, “second front” of war – and “that’s the fight of women’s lives,” Disney explained, “the fight to make life continue…to find a way…to thrive as a family and as a community…while enduring [the] trauma of losing loved ones, the worry…of watching their sons go off and become not just victims but also monsters.”

Understanding women’s experience of war is all the more important because of the changing nature of armed conflict, added Disney. Gone are the days when war involved nation states with large armies. Today’s conflicts are fought by informal groups – gangs, warlords, and insurgents. The post-Cold War proliferation of small arms has altered the landscape of war, with women becoming the main targets and bearing unprecedented losses.

Featuring celebrity narrators Matt Damon, Tilda Swinton, Geena Davis, and Alfre Woodard, Women, War & Peace, is the most comprehensive global media initiative ever mounted on the experience of women in armed conflict and peace building efforts. Co-produced by THIRTEEN and Fork Films, the series will bring its groundbreaking message to a global audience through numerous channels such as primetime television, radio, internet, and worldwide community screenings. The series will be accompanied by and educational and outreach initiative designed to bring international accountability to issues of women and security.

As part of a special series of launch events, Disney chose to come to Stanford to kick off the series because of Stanford’s commitment to global problems that require global solutions. Moreover, it is a place where she can share her message with the next generation. Part of the Ethics and War Series, Disney’s talk is co-sponsored by the Clayman Institute for Gender Research, the Center for Ethics in Society, the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society and the Social Entrepreneurship Program of the Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of the Law.

Importantly, the campus will continue the discussion as student groups lead Talk Backs on the final four segments of the series.
Event details: Abigail Disney, producer of *Women, War & Peace* will speak on October 12, 2011 at 7:00pm. The event will take place at Cemex Auditorium, Stanford University, located in the new Knight Management Center. Free underground parking available. The event is free and open to all, but tickets are required. Tickets are available through Stanford Tickets: [http://www.stanfordtickets.org/tickets/calendar/view.aspx?id=4101](http://www.stanfordtickets.org/tickets/calendar/view.aspx?id=4101)

Audio files:
On YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/user/ClaymanInstitute?feature=mhee#p/a/u/0/bJ14bfPQLTU](http://www.youtube.com/user/ClaymanInstitute?feature=mhee#p/a/u/0/bJ14bfPQLTU)


Abigail Disney is a filmmaker, philanthropist, and scholar. She holds degrees from Yale, Stanford, and Columbia. Her work in philanthropy, women's engagement and leadership, and conflict resolution has been recognized through the Epic Award from the White House project, the Changing Landscape for Women Award from the Center for the Advancement of Women, and the prestigious International Advocate for Peace (IAP) Award from the Cardozo Law School's Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution.

The Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University creates knowledge and seeks to implement change that promotes gender equality at Stanford, nationally, and internationally.

The Center for Ethics in Society is committed to bring ethical reflection to bear on important social problems through research, teaching, and engagement.

The Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society develops and shares knowledge to improve philanthropy, strengthen civil society, and affect social change.

Social Entrepreneurship Program of the Center on Democracy, Development and Rule of the Law, Ripple to Waves will actively integrate the on-the-ground experience of social entrepreneurs from around the world with cutting edge academic research in creating innovative approaches to shaping more inclusive models of democracy, advancing sustainable and equitable development, and ensuring the rule of law.