



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***FIRING:  
WOMEN PHOTOGRAPH***

**Brooklyn, New York - Thursday, January 3, 2018** : *Picture Farm Gallery* presents “FIRING : Women Photograph” a photo and video exhibition featuring the work of female photographers and filmmakers with an opening reception in Brooklyn from 6-9 pm on January 5th, 2018 at Picture Farm Gallery, 338 Wythe Avenue.

A (heretofore) rare group show of all female voices, presenting distinct styles and perspectives on capturing a vision of surfing. The show, conceived of and curated by photographer Andreea Waters and co-curated by Picture Farm’s Toddy Stewart, features the work of Julia Briere, Alexandra Uzik, Liz Magee, Elisa Bates, Katrina Del Mar, Andreea Waters, Nina Choi, Jianca Lazarus and Carla Phillips. As is the norm for New York, it is a cosmopolitan group of image makers, but each have spent part, or all, of their formative artistic years in and around the coastal culture of the New York area. The exhibition will include multiple images from each photographer

and a video presentation space looping the work of the filmmakers throughout the opening reception.

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***Firing: In The Eye of the Beholder - An exhibition preview by Rebecca Olive***

Images have long been key in surfing culture. From the songs to etchings to paintings to photography and video, capturing images of people riding waves remains a vital component in how we make sense of surfing - how we know it, how we share it and how we come to experience it. Since the 20th century, photography and video have been the most prolific, with images of waves and boards and surfers filling magazines and plastering bedroom and shaping bay walls.

Surfing is like a supermodel of sport. Jeweled blues of tropical seas, the dusty green water under a stormy sky with ice and snow and sand and cliffs all offering a backdrop to the main event; wave riding. Surfers elegantly poised on perfect peelers or dropping through the air on Hawaiian giants; threading turquoise barrels, negotiating the stormy cold and ice, rag-dolling after a caught rail, spinning finless, trimming high, boosting airs, nose-diving, wiping out, or kicking off triumphantly. Camping and road-trips and beers and fires and laughter, and tanned, salty skin, sun-bleached hair and beautiful bodies. These aren't only fragments of surfing life, these are images we have all seen and know, which have come to define what surfing is. These images are surfing culture and life.

Historically, and in every way, surfing photography was dominated by men. Since the rise of surf magazines and films, the people in the images we have seen have tended to be men riding shortboards, with a focus on high performance. This is partly because those men were some of the best and deserved to be captured, but it was also because surfing culture itself was dominated by men, not just as surfers, but also as the people reeling the stories and running the key media. For many reasons, most of the stories we know about the surfing past and present have been men's stories. There are some exceptions, and it is certainly much easier to find images of women surfing in America than in Australia, but in truth, we could likely describe the majority of the images that have been published of women riding waves, and would struggle to name many, if any, female surf photographers. In 2011's 'Ninth Wave: 100 Great Surfing Images of The Modern Age and the Stories Behind Them', there was not one woman included – not as a surfer, writer or photographer. The more recent, 'The Best of the Best: Australia's Greatest Surf Photographers' is a catalogue of the winner and finalist of the Nikon/Surfing Australia Surf Photo of the year Award from 2013 to 2017 – there are 100 images. In this book things have improved. Slightly. Stephanie Gilmore wrote the intro essay and was in two of the photos. There were two other female surfers pictured, a portrait of Westerly Windina, and an image of an unnamed "young lady slider". And there are three images by and photographer, Deb Morris, whose images are not of surfing, but are sort of macro images of micro waves. Of one hundred images and two hundred chances for women to be represented, the inclusion of four women is what progress looks like. This is a problem. Seeing photos of and by men almost exclusively has had effects on what surfing can be. As it manifested in Australia, *'Chicks can't surf!*

But that was then.

Of course, chicks can and do surf, and part of the coming to know this is the increase in women in other aspects of surfing culture, as storytellers. Photographers are especially important in how we know surfing, and the men whose images have been so visible have come to define surfing culture in certain ways, putting men's stories at the front, and leaving women as an anomaly. It's not unusual that men tell men's stories, because often women tell women's stories too. But that is why we need more diversity amongst our storytellers – so we see world views different from our own.

In the last 10 years in particular, there has been a rise in the visibility of women as surf photographers. Surfing images and films by women are common in festivals and books, and the WSL's official photographer for CT contests was, for nine years, Kirsten Scholtz, who is described by the WSL as being "responsible for some of the sport's most iconic images". A woman! In my own surfing world of Byron Bay, women are a dominant force representing surfing in many ways, and building careers around their different take on what a surfing life looks like. Many of these women still struggle to get their images into mainstream surf magazines but have proven successfully using digital and social media to promote their work and perspectives. Websites, blogs and Instagram have allowed women to bypass the men gatekeepers of the magazines, and to share their work directly with people all over the world. I've loved seeing different kinds of stories emerge as a result of new storytellers, of seeing a world of surfing more like, and sometimes more different than, my own.

So I was beyond thrilled when I saw the Picture Farm exhibition, 'Firing: An Exhibition of Women Photographers' advertised featuring the waves that will be the motif for the whole show. When I looked through the list of photographers, I didn't recognize a single name, which made me even more excited because that means there will be new perspectives to see, new things to learn. The photographers are a mix of established and emerging artists, with various years of experience as surfers, and of photographing surfing.

Andreea Waters images of surfing at Rockaway Beach highlight the humanity of it all – the people in amongst the white and green waves, summer crowds on the beach, the buildings and fences that shape the shore. I have every intention of ordering her book, Surf NYC. Julia Brière has a focus on flow and movement. Her images are often abstract and blurred, giving a sense of what it's like to fall and tumble in the water, what it's like to fly along a wave. In video and film, Liz Magee has made two surf films, including one about Cuban surfers, and Elisa Bates charming film, 'Away', about women who surf in NY, was a highlight of numerous film festivals. Katrina del Mar's film, 'Surf Gang', offers a very different take on women as surfers, and is far from the dreamy mermaid trope that can sometimes dominate women's surfing. Her photography shares that raw documentation of culture. Alexandra Uzik's images are like surfing with friends, with a kind of laughter and fun and lightness that made me feel as though I was immersed in the water. Nina Choi uses her highly-trained eye to show what coastal life is like. Her images show the things around surfing, like a pulled back view from the sand. I got lost in Carla Phillips images, where the waves, the water, the landscape sets the scene, which is in contrast to Jianca Lazarus, who focuses on bodies in motion in the sea. Her images get up close and personal, acting as portraits of movement in water.

These women come from South Africa, Romania, Slovakia, and east and west coast USA, have diverse cultural backgrounds, and varied relationships to surfing, all of which shapes what they see and are able to show us. But they're all talented, and their work deserves more recognition and inclusion in broader surfing narratives. The more diverse images we see, the more we realize how different surfing is for different people in different places. Yet at the same time, we realize how much we share through our surfing experiences.

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## **Bios of the Artists**

*Andreea Waters*, originally from Bucharest, Romania, discovered Rockaway Beach in 2012 where her documentary about the New York surf culture began. In 2016, Andreea released a photography book titled, Surf NYC - a visual story and celebration of the unique spirit of New York's ocean community. Andreea's work is part of a permanent collection at The Museum of The City Of New York, exhibited in New York galleries and published internationally.

*Julia Briere* grew up in Los Angeles, CA and is currently based in Brooklyn, NY. She studied photography at Parsons School of Design where she began a documentary project

photographing public spaces and leisurely activities surrounding the beach to reconnect with the scenery she grew up in living in Los Angeles. This led her to photographing different facets of contemporary surf culture. Julia also works with other media including video, installation, and stop motion animation. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Berlin, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

*Liz Magee* grew up on the New Jersey Shore where she learned to surf at a young age. Inspired by the images in Surfing Magazine, she started shooting film with her dad's Nikons camera and was hooked. After graduating from Bennington College, Liz moved to NYC to pursue a career in film and TV. She joined the Directors Guild of America in 2015 as an Assistant Director. She has co-produced and shot "The Call From The Sea" (2016) and "Cuban Wave Riders" (2017).

*Alexandra Uzik*, originally from Slovakia, she is now based in New York. Her true passion is the ocean. She loves to spend time in the water with her friends and hopes that that love is reflected (back) in her photographs. Her work shows the atmosphere of the place. In her portrait photography she aims to capture the twinkle sparkling within a person when they do what they love, and the beauty of the true self. Her photography has been exhibited in galleries in New York and Slovakia.

*Elisa Bates* is a creative director, designer and filmmaker. Her debut film "Away" is a short documentary that looks at the subculture of NYC surfing through the lens of three women, divulging the highs and lows of riding waves at Rockaway Beach, Queens. "Away" made its premiere at the New York Surf Film Festival (NYC 2012) and was an official selection of 10 film festivals world-wide. Elisa has an MFA in Design from the School of Visual Arts and her work has been recognized by the Type Directors Club and the Promax BDA awards. She is a native New Yorker who recently left NYC to live closer to the ocean in Asbury Park, NJ with her husband and faithful Boston Terrier, Yardley.

*Nina Choi* is a Korean American photographer based in NYC with a formal training in fine art photography since the age of 13. She further honed her skills by graduating from the BFA photography department at Parsons School of Design. From dark room days toting around a 4x5 camera to the rise of digital, her vision and technique have continually evolved. Choi's commercial photography embraces a diverse range of subjects including architecture, travel, still life, food, and fashion. A spirit of travel and adventure inspire this body of work where her passion behind the lens is combined with her love affair with the ocean and a quest for perfect empty waves around the world.

*Katrina del Mar* is a New York-based art and commercial photographer, as well as an award winning film director. Her work has been described as "beautiful" exuding an "intimate chemistry" and also as "filth of the highest quality." Her short film, SURF GANG, about a gang of women surfers from Rockaway Beach in New York City, landed Katrina a prestigious Fellowship in Video from the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) and Best Experimental Film Award from the Planet Out Short Movie Awards announced at the Sundance Film Festival in 2006, and was screened at the Museum for Contemporary Art (CAPC) in Bordeaux, France. Katrina's art work has been shown at Participant Inc., Deitch Projects, ArtNow NY (Joseph Gross Gallery), The Museum for Contemporary Art (CAPC) in Bordeaux, France, Wrong Weather Gallery in Porto Portugal, American Fine Arts Company, Binz 39 in Switzerland, the Bass Museum of Art in Miami, the Miami Light Project, P.S. 122 in New York City, FabLab in Berlin, and the University of Cardiff in Wales.

*Carla Phillips* is a native New Yorker. Since she bought her first used Nikon FE at the age of 15, Carla has been driven to connect with others through sharing her photography. Whether capturing the athletic, artistic or the living landscape, Carla's photographs probe the subtle power of her subjects. She has transitioned from working as a freelance fashion stylist and publicist to attending the International Center of Photography where she studied Documentary and Digital Photography. Carla's photographs have been published in a large variety of media. Her clients

have included Rayban, Tribeca film Festival, Vogue, Furla, Help Usa, I-to-I volunteer adventure travel, Fitness magazine and Google.

*Jianca Lazarus* was born in Johannesburg and raised in Cape Town, South Africa, learning to surf at Glen Beach and picking up her first camera at age 16, quickly learning to combine her twin loves during in a formative year around the varied South African breaks. Seeking further adventure, Jianca moved to New York City when she was 17, finding work in the production side of the film and event industry. She established herself in New York, focusing on shooting photography professionally in 2007. With four group shows and three solo shows under her belt, she divides her time between New York, Hawaii and regular jaunts to the far ends of the earth on commission or to document the things she loves. She is co-founder of the Changing Tides Foundation, an organization that facilitates seamless community and environmental service for tourists and adventurers.

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The *Firing* preview was penned by *Rebecca Olive*, a cultural studies researcher and lecturer at The University of Queensland, Australia. She has been researching women's experiences of surfing for the last 10 years, with a focus on recreational and media cultures. She has published widely on topics related to surfing including sexism, localism and the use of social media in surfing culture. In 2016 she co-edited the book, 'Women in Action Sport Cultures'. She regularly publishes in surf media and has been running a surf culture oriented blog, *Making Friends With the Neighbours*, since 2006.

The *Firing* poster and announcement artwork was provided by *George Bates*, who's work has been recognized by the Art Directors Club, American Illustration, Society of Illustrators, Society of Publication Designers, and the Promax BDA awards.

*Firing: Women Photograph* was organized by photographer *Andreea Waters* (bio above) and co-curator *Toddy Stewart*, whose role at Picture Farm includes gallerist, creative director and filmmaker.

Special thanks to *Montauk Brewing Co.* for providing beer for the opening event and to *Fast Ashley's* for all the logistical support they've provided over the years.

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**Picture Farm Gallery** is an art & community space hosting a regular offering of multi-week shows, pop up exhibitions, craft workshops and cultural events. During its seven year run in Williamsburg, PF Gallery has aimed to champion local and/or under-represented artists and organizations – our goal to offer up a financially viable exhibition space for our talented peers and the causes we passionately support.

The gallery is an off-shoot of **Picture Farm Production**, a photo, video & content production company working in the advertising, feature film and art worlds.

PICTURE FARM GALLERY 338 WYTHE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11249 718-218-8001