

## A Guide for The Everyday Woman Surfer:

### How Surf Culture's Patriarchy Marginalizes Ocean Lovers

I have been a Southern California female surfer for six years and experienced the antifeminism in surf culture outlined in this paper. From my experience surfing for sport and leisure at So Cal's famous Malibu and Ventura breaks, I have an awareness of the culture as well as years of experience observing its social structures inside and outside of the water. Surf culture is something that I strongly identified with for many years, until I began to question how it categorized me as a woman. The sport of surfing that once gave me freedom began to feel entrapping the more involved I became with its culture, which led me to wonder how other minority communities are affected by white-supremacist patriarchal standards, and why this is still an ongoing issue.

### Aggression And The Patriarchy

At Southern California's famous County Line, which just so happens to be my home break, I once observed a highly skilled shortboarder verbally assault a man who did not speak English and who was new to the sport. The shortboarder followed the man around the lineup, berating him for cutting him off during one of the many waves the shortboarder caught that day. The man tried to distance himself, but the shortboarder continued to follow him. I verbally intervened and diffused the situation, but that aggression incredibly intimidated me, as the shortboarder was much larger than me and that kind of behavior is not something that women are taught to exhibit, nor is it something safe for us to handle when we do not have the upper-hand in strength if the situation becomes physical.

It does not always take much for someone to be aggressive in the water. Cutting someone off once is often enough to elicit aggression and bad rapport. Women fear not only physical and verbal but also sexual assault if they get into an altercation inside and outside of the sport of surfing. For women of color, these threats are more likely, even in the water (Crellin, n.d.). Thus, it is no wonder that women do not always feel comfortable inserting themselves into lineups and the aggressive culture of surfing, especially when the lineups are male dominated.

Shortboarders are stereotypically known for having aggressive surfing styles, performing maneuvers that ‘rip’ through the wave. They are also known for exhibiting aggressive behavior in the water, their surf styles matching their attitudes and putting them at the top of the hierarchy in lineups because of their aggression. Longboarders are stereotypically known for their laid-back surf styles, moving at the pace of the wave. Skilled longboarders are the 2<sup>nd</sup> in line within these hierarchies because they are less aggressive. These hierarchies perpetuate the misconception that aggression elicits ultimate respect, creating unhealthy social dynamics in the water. People often assume women are longboarders because longboarding is associated with less aggression, putting women at the bottom of the hierarchy and establishing sexist misconceptions that women are less skilled than men when surfing. Although longboarding is at the bottom of the hierarchy, it takes an equal amount of skill to master and should not be subordinate to shortboarding because of its unaggressive nature, nor should women be inferior in the water because of surf culture’s white, male hegemony that supports hypermasculine standards of dominance and submission.

Non-surfers usually observe the salt-haired, dehydrated, and lethargic surfer post-session. But what they do not observe from the beach is the tension between surfers as a set wave forms, the constant maneuvering for position around one another, the seal-like barking between them before someone claims priority over the wave, and the patriarchal culture that excludes women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ communities from lineups. After sessions at heavily localized spots, it is no wonder that we look ‘chill’ post-surf; we are more exhausted from battling one another than we are from battling the elements.

My goal with this paper is to provide information for the everyday surfer, so they can understand the negative patterns within surf culture and how these patterns are shifting as more people begin to surf. Fitting into surf culture is almost a status requirement for California’s coastal residents and people from all social groups are returning to the water as the growing number of individuals starting to surf increases worldwide. Because of the growing population of surfers, it is increasingly more important that surf culture adapts to become more inclusive to all social groups. The old systems of dominance and aggression in the water are no longer acceptable as surf culture becomes more inclusive. The growing

number of individuals starting to surf worldwide are those most susceptible to the exclusive culture this sport exhibits. Oftentimes, surfers who become skilled at the sport adopt the aggressive ideology that they have ultimate dominance in the water, which only perpetuates negative patriarchal patterns and exclusivity as these aggressive ideologies originate from white heteronormativity. New surfers eager to adopt its lifestyle inevitably try to fit in with the systems of dominance and aggression already in place that define 'the skilled surfer.' These ideologies were created to keep white, male surfers in power over beaches and if they continue to persist as surf culture's norm, these ideologies will continue to discriminate. The more I dive into my research, the more I realize that race, gender, and sexuality are best explained together because they are all impacted by the same surf culture that sells the false narrative of freedom and stoke.

If I asked you to construct the quintessential surfer in your mind, what features would they have? Many people may imagine that they are white, blonde, tan, light-eyed, and male. Most people do not question where this image comes from, who constructed it, and what effect it has on today's surf culture. And often, people fail to actualize what effect this image has on women, people of color, and queer communities. In this paper, I will analyze the racist history of surfing that created white beauty standards and hyper sexualization of female athletes in the surf industry and how heteronormative standards for female surfing negatively impact LGBTQ+ communities. I will take an interdisciplinary approach to outline inequalities in surfing as this issue cannot be understood without the help of gender, race and sexuality studies. My goal is to educate my fellow ocean lovers so that we can develop self-aware and dynamic surf communities that encourage equality, one day changing our accepted culture that fails to be inclusive.

### A History of Surfing's Transition into Whiteness

American imperialism historically transformed surf culture, leading to white dominance in the surf industry that persists today. After the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, America used surfing to attract white tourists to Hawaii to boost the American economy. After white tourists began surfing, their racist ideals translated to the water as they believed they were superior in the water to all other races. As a

result, they began transforming surf culture, claiming it as a white man's sport. It was believed in 1912 that white men were intrinsically better surfers than people of color, even though communities of color created surfing long before white communities encountered it. Surf competitions were created for native Hawaiians and white men and women to compete for racial dominance. Surfing competitions in Hawaii became a way to test whether white competitors were better in the water compared to surfers of color and these competitions were controlled by white men who inevitably won these competitions (Laderman, 2014). Around 1912, America accepted the false narrative that white males continued surfing traditions and were superior in the water to those of color (Crellin, 2022; Laderman, 2014). Because of white imperialism in Hawaii and racist ideals of white superiority, white communities transformed the image of the quintessential surfer to blonde-haired and blue-eyed, radically shaping the Californian surfer into what it is stereotypically known as today. But what these stereotypes fail to teach the everyday surfer is that Ghanians from Ghana, Africa were documented surfing during the 1640s which was long before Americans were introduced to the sport in the 1900s (Dawson, 2020).

California's famous beaches in Malibu are home to some of the best waves in the world, yet the surfing population historically consisted of white men and women as surfers of color did not live locally. In 1949, Nick Gabaldon, a Black and Latino surfer from Santa Monica paddled 12 miles to surf Malibu's famous Surfrider break. He paddled from a beach commonly referred to as "The Ink Well" which was a beach where African Americans were less likely to experience harassment. It was not until Nick Gabaldon that Black surfers were documented surfing Southern California's beaches (SurferToday, n.d.).

Racism at California's beaches kept women and men of color from access to coastlines and allowed for white, wealthy individuals to populate iconic beaches and build multimillion-dollar beachfront homes that are currently owned by white families. Bruce's Beach is a beachfront property previously owned by Willa and Charles Bruce, a black family who faced racial discrimination and harassment for owning the southern California property. Their property was ultimately seized by Manhattan Beach officials in 1924. It was not until George Floyd's death in 2020 that a movement formed to return Bruce's Beach to the descendants of the Bruce family. In 2021, Governor Gavin

Newsom signed to return this land to its descendants (Davis & Lozano, 2021). California's beachfront homes are primarily owned by white families as black families who were wealthy enough to afford beachfront property were racially harassed and pushed out of their own property into inland property. The few beaches that were inclusive to people of color did not include California's popular surf spots such as Malibu. Communities of color forced inland by white dominance in the 1920s to 1950s are generationally kept from owning beachfront property as white families continue to dominate California's beachfront residential neighborhoods, generationally keeping black populations small at these breaks. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, families of color were harassed at beaches and pushed out from coastal residencies, which made beaches exclusive to white elites who could afford to spend leisurely time by the coast, establishing white social dominance at coastlines and contributing to predominately white populations at California's popular surf spots to this day. When sun exposure tanned white, upper-class beachgoers, tanning became another way to establish white social elitism by the coast and the stereotype of the blond-haired, blue-eyed, suntanned surfer became surf culture's poster child (Davis & Lozano, 2021; Laderman, 2014; Martin et al., 2009).

#### How Racial Ambiguity Exotifies Women Through Tanning Culture

The *National Library of Medicine* analyzed beauty magazines, articles, and tanning advertisements during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, to research the historical shift from pale skin to tan skin being the ultimate beauty standard for white women. In the past, pale skin was a social indicator of upper-class status, wealth, and health. The working class, which performed outdoor labor were tanned, and leisure meant indoor activity and less sun exposure. Upper-class women who could afford to be leisurely did not spend time outside, their pale complexions becoming a standard for beauty and indicator of wealth. But as more wealthy people immigrated to California's coastline in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, beauty magazines, articles, and tanning advertisements promoted tanning through sun exposure and decreased their promotion of skin-lightening agents during 1927 and 1928, catalyzing tanning as a new standard for wealth, leisure, upper-class status, and health

(Martin et al., 2009). Those who could afford to travel to beaches for leisure were upper-class white citizens who began a new era of tanning culture that persists today.

As America's beauty standard transitioned from pale to tan skin in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, racial ambiguity became a new beauty metric that persists within the surf industry. Billabong, a popular lifestyle surf brand, has a YouTube channel called "Billabong Womens" that features their sponsored surfers. Some of Billabong's models and sponsored surfers are of south American and Polynesian descent, although the majority of their surfers and models are predominately white. Billabong's channel did not begin to feature Black women with darker complexions in their videos until 2022 (Billabong Womens, 2022).

Billabong models and surfers who are women of color have lighter complexions in part due to the beauty standard of a 'tanned' surfer (Billabong Womens, 2022). Women who are considered light enough to 'tan' under the sun are what surf lifestyle brands such as Billabong look for in their models. Their women are often racially ambiguous, meaning that their race is not obvious upon first impressions and that people struggle to racially categorize them; they typically have lighter skin and white features (Young, 2018). Women who are racially ambiguous have enough features that pass for white, but darker complexions that are 'just dark enough' to be a part of tanning culture, and not 'too dark' to decentralize beauty from white standards.

The term 'exotic' originates from the Greek word ἐξωτικός which translates to "from the outside" (WordSense, 2023). The term 'exotic' is itself ambiguous because it is often used to identify something foreign and unfamiliar. When it is used to describe a person's physical appearance, it is used to describe someone who is racially ambiguous, with dark skin and facial features that coincide with white beauty standards. Surf brands choose racially ambiguous models that fit into tanning culture to aesthetically portray the sun-kissed, island lifestyle in their marketing, exotifying women who they believe fit into tanning culture because they maintain white features that still coincide with America's beauty ideal. This trend in lifestyle marketing fails to represent indigenous women and their cultures, further failing to properly portray surfing's Polynesian and African origins. Surfing's tanning culture originates from

systematically racist, white beauty standards that perpetuate America's current fetishization of tanning and exoticism. America's creation of the 'exotic' surfing woman allows color to be beautiful only if it originates from white, tanned skin that is not colored from birth. Racial ambiguity and tanning culture perpetuate America's racist beauty standards because racial ambiguity does not recognize color as beautiful, but rather glorifies the ambiguity, or uncertainty of race and recognizes feminine beauty for its whiteness and exotifies the color.

While it is a step in the right direction that woman with darker complexions are featured for their beauty to the public eye and modeling for major corporations such as Billabong, it is evident that America has yet to separate its beauty ideals from whiteness and that these corporations fail to promote black female surfers because the public eye continues to compare beauty to whiteness through tanning culture.

Surf brands that market white women with 'tanned' skin establish tanning as a new beauty metric that women seek to fit into, whether through natural or artificial means without recognizing the systematic racism within tanning culture. Artificial tanning is another common trend in the US. White women often desire to have darker complexions, changing their skin coloring with artificial products. Below is an excerpt from Gal-Dem, a website that promotes women of color's voices to speak and be heard:

"This is the melanin I was born with that I do not get the option to choose. I do not have the option to apply this colour as I like, still benefit from white privilege, and then wash off all the systemic racism that comes along with it. So often, when a white person applies a tan they are praised for how dark they have become, while people of colour are still systematically oppressed and mocked for being that same colour if not darker. So often, when non-PoC [people of color] pick and choose black features and apply it to themselves it is seen as trendy and fashionable, whereas we are ridiculed for them" (Allen, 2016).

When white women tell biracial women that they desire their skin coloring, they do not comment on changing their other features that identify them as white. When they fake tan, they fit into tanning culture in relation to whiteness, but do not comment about changing their racial identity, as their white features put them in positions of pretty privilege. Artificial tanning is another example of appropriating

characteristics from communities of color, much like white Americans appropriated surf culture from African and Polynesian communities.

### Lifestyle Brands Promoting Gender Stereotypes

America's history with systematic racism continues into present-day female surfing. Sponsors choose white, heterosexual female surfers to profit from their images through lifestyle marketing, which perpetuates American imperialism's white beauty standards (Carpenter & Franklin, 2018; Schmitt & Bohuon, 2022). Lifestyle marketing is when a product is marketed to attract customers who identify with the lifestyle associated with the product. Lifestyle marketing is a tactic to attract specific audiences to a product based on the customer's identity as the product corresponds with the customer's lifestyle aesthetic. Surf culture has its own set of aesthetics that marketers cater their products to using stereotypical gender norms to get their customer's attention. Clothing is often sold in tropical print and women's sections sell bikinis in pastel shades, while mens' sections sell board shorts in neon colors. Although surfing is a sport, it is also an aesthetic where people go to purchase not only surf gear, but also everyday clothing that fits male and female surfer identities.

Sponsors of professional female athletes often choose whom to sponsor based upon stereotypical beauty standards, underrepresenting skilled women who do not match these sponsors' preferred beauty images. Sponsors expect that female professional surfers "will engage in a transformative process that produces a commodified image of a blonde-haired, attractive girl that is recognizable and marketable" (Franklin & Carpenter, 2018, p. 2). Bianca Valenti, a professional big-wave surfer, almost quit surfing because she could not afford to travel to competitions without a sponsor. She states that "[she] realized if you didn't have model looks, you weren't going to be paid" (O'Mara, 2018). Bianca Valenti is now a founder of the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing and advocated for women's competitive heats at Mavericks, a famous big-wave break in northern California (O-Mara, 2018). Silvana Lima, a Brazilian professional female surfer, also struggled to find a sponsor. In *STAB Magazine*, Lima mentions:



“The surf wear brands, when it comes to women, they want both models and surfers,” Silvana continued. “So if you don’t look like a model, you end up without a sponsor, which is what happened to me.” It’s an issue she sees as exclusive to women: “You’re excluded, you’re disposable. Men don’t have this problem” (STAB, 2016).

Surf brands such as Billabong have gained popularity by playing along with female beauty standards that encourage leisure and discourage athleticism. The commodified heterosexual “surfer girl” wearing a bikini on the beach with darker complexions are marketed more frequently than the female surfer who performs dynamically and athletically in the water. Billabong’s website and YouTube channel continue to feature men during action shots and women leisurely modeling on the beach (Billabong, 2022a; Billabong, 2022b). Although this is changing as the female surf industry continues to grow, there is still a discrepancy between displaying male and female performance. Male professional surfers most likely get more action shots than women because of generational bias that women’s status depend on beauty and leisure rather than athleticism. Beauty and leisure determining women’s status creates the false narrative that women are not capable of performing as skillfully as men and are thus not expected to perform well for the public to consider them a surfer. The public identifies women as surfers if they look the part, while males are expected to perform well to identify as a surfer.

Sponsors have historically discouraged skilled female athletes because of heterosexual norms in surf culture that continue to encourage white, patriarchal gender norms. When Keala Kennelly, an accomplished female big-wave surfer, came out as gay, her sponsors dropped her because she was no longer viewed as “marketable” (Schmitt & Bohuon, 2022). Jodie Cooper, a famous female surfer of the 80s and 90s, was also dropped by her sponsors when they found out she was gay, and her sexuality was non consensually leaked to the public by fellow competitors on tour (Nelius, 2021).

In the current age of surfing post-2016, strong female professional athletes are disproving the biased perception that female beauty and heterosexuality outweighs performance. Kealea Kennelly is the first openly gay surf athlete to win a world surfing title (Rozell, 2022). Currently, there are young female surfers performing advanced ariel maneuvers on sizable waves that adult, male surfers have spent their

careers developing the skills to perform successfully. Erin Brooks, a fifteen-year-old professional female surfer, was the first to compete in the 2022 Padang Padang Cup in a heat with all adult men at Indonesia's hollow and formidable break. She earned 4<sup>th</sup> place and beat out many male competitors who were much older (Howell, 2022). It is increasingly more evident that women, if not young women and girls, are performing at higher levels than their adult male competitors were at the same age. When Erin Brooks competed with all men in the 2022 Padang Padang cup at one of the most dangerous breaks in the world, it was widely broadcasted, and the public watched very closely because no young girl had achieved what she did on tour. She showed the world that girls who surf are not restricted in movement by their anatomy, gender, or age. Upcoming generations of female surfers are changing the way the public views female performance. As women continue to push boundaries for female performance, brands will transition away from early 20<sup>th</sup> century beauty ideals of heterosexuality and leisure and begin to use action shots to represent feminine athleticism.

As surf culture began to realize that women perform equally to men, the public continued to compare highly skilled professional female surfers to male surfing performance. Highly skilled surf athletes who are known for generating power and speed on waves have been told that they "surf like men" (The Inertia, 2015). Comparing strong female performances to male athleticism discredits female performance and gives too much power to male performance, as women do not need to perform like men to be athletic. When women surf dynamically, performing maneuvers traditionally understood to be masculine, they do not need to be compared to male surf performance as this fails to recognize women as their own individual surfers capable of both femininity and athleticism. As explained by Blickley (2015):

"Women's surfing will only excel when the public (men?) understand a universal truth: men and women surf differently. We don't surf better, and we don't surf worse. We surf differently. We surf like women. Just like men, we surf with power and grace and skill. Just like men, we surf with style, strength and poise. But unlike men, we surf like women. Our surfing is not in comparison to the surfing of men, because we define a class of surfing all to our own. It's a realm that men cannot even imagine inhabiting. We throw spray, we get barreled, and we surf better

than that guy, and that guy, or that guy. And at the end of the day, it all comes down the fact that, like men, we got to go surfing”.

These comparisons are no longer necessary in the modern era of surfing because they fail to recognize women for their skilled performances. The old, outdated ideology that femininity must be associated with leisure, grace, and beauty while masculinity must be associated with athleticism and aggression no longer needs to continue as young, female surfers prove that women can embody all these traits simultaneously. Dynamism and athleticism are not inherently gendered, yet there is a common misconception that women are not physically capable of surfing as athletically as men because of their anatomical differences (Brennan, 2016). Olive et al. (2014) argue, “It is not so much women’s surfing performances that are problematic, but rather the male-dominated culture of surfing that continues to limit women through representations, assumptions and exclusions” (p. 262). When the World Surf League and the public stop comparing male and female performance and recognize women as equal to men in the sport of surfing, gender inclusivity will be the new social norm in surf culture.

### Patriarchy in Recreational and Professional Surfing

Recreational surfing is slowly catching up to professional surfing regarding equality, but there are still patriarchal dynamics in recreational surfing that persist which continue to negatively impact women. Female recreational surfers often feel threatened by male attitudes when paddling out into male-dominated surf spots (Roy, 2014). Many women have felt the pressure to perform at a high level to gain respect from their male audience, even at their own local surf spots. To combat male localism, women are also paddling out in all-women surf groups to crowd surf spots in hopes of catching more waves (Comley, 2016). While surfing continues to maintain its patriarchal culture, more women are surfing than ever before, allowing female surfers to create their own communities that support other women in surfing for future generations of women to grow into. Further, professional big-wave female surfers have been unwelcomed at highly competitive surf spots dominated by male surfers. As a result, these women must establish their credibility as skilled surfers more than their fellow male peers, as there is often uncertainty that women can accomplish big-wave surfing, even if they are more experienced than men entering the

same lineup (Schmitt & Bohuon, 2022). In recreational surfing, women also conform to hegemonic and patriarchal structures in place (Brennan, 2016; Comley, 2016; Schmitt & Bohuon, 2022). In Southern California's favorable and competitive surf conditions, women adopt aggressive behaviors to catch waves at heavily localized male surf spots. Though men created and continue to enforce aggressive, hegemonic patriarchal structures in surf culture, women sometimes exhibit the same behaviors towards other women. According to Olive (2016), women feel pressure to play into surfing's egotistical and political male surfing structures.

It is important that women do not further establish gender roles in surfing by conforming to male ideologies, which fail to support other women in surfing. While it is acceptable to enforce rules in lineups that maintain respect amongst one another and to be assertive in the water, it is unacceptable to demonstrate aggression with one another, no matter how new someone is to the sport. As more women enter the water, it is the responsibility of women who came before them to encourage their success, establishing a new social order in the water that women are a part of, and not excluded from.

### Female Inclusivity in Modern Surfing

In recreational surfing, the lineup's hierarchy of dominance ensures that those who are at the bottom of the social order do not impede upon a local dominant figure's waves. Those who live locally at these surf spots have ultimate priority over waves and the culture surrounding that location, whether that means acceptance or aggression of new arrivals to keep crowds out of their breaks. Technological advancements in surfing such as wave pools are transforming this hierarchy. Wave pools create consistent, predictable waves where surfers pay to have full accessibility to the wave pool. Those who have priority over the waves are paying customers, not locals. With the emergence of wave pools, paying customers have priority and localism is no longer the means by which hierarchy is established. These pools create a utopia for surfers, one where crowds are no longer an inconvenience, the waves are consistent, and locals no longer control the dominance hierarchy.

Young athletes using these wave pools are creating a new and gender inclusive culture around female surfing. Wave pools allow women to progress and practice their skills faster and at younger ages than ever before because women are allowed to catch more waves and are not subjected to patriarchal dominance in the water. Footage from young athletes surfing wave pools raises public awareness that young girls, and women are surfing dynamically and performing advanced maneuvers. These waves break almost perfectly, making the waves the controlled variable that allows athletes to practice their skills without the inconsistency and unpredictability of ocean waves. These waves being the controlled variable allow surfers to demonstrate their skill without interference and gives women the opportunity to showcase their skills without outside factors impeding their performance. Young girls are surfing these waves and performing maneuvers at levels that professional male surfers have yet to progress to, breaking the misconception that females are incapable of surfing dynamically (Stab: We Like To Surf, 2021). Wave pools provide the necessary environment to prove to the public that performance is not subjected to gender, racial, and sexual differences and that equality in surfing is more than possible.

Big-wave surfing is also a way that women are disproving the common misconception that women are not capable of performing as well as men (Schmitt & Bohuon, 2022). Big wave conditions are especially formidable compared to smaller waves. In big wave surfing, athletes are judged based upon whether they make it down the face of the wave without falling and the wave's size. There is a further misconception within society that women do not engage in risk-taking behavior and are thus unlikely to succeed in risky situations. Women like Justine Dupont and Maya Gabeira have broken world records for biggest waves surfed by women and are representations of women successfully conquering this formidable environment. I had a conversation with Garrett and Nicole McNamara at the San Luis Obispo Film Festival on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 where their tv series, *100 Foot Wave*, premiered. Garrett is the man who surfed the one-hundred-foot wave at Nazare, a coveted spot in Portugal for big wave surfing with the largest waves in the world. His wife, Nicole has also surfed Nazare. I asked them where they see female big-wave surfing going and they said Nazare is an incredibly female-inclusive break and indicated that

the future of female big-wave surfing is looking positive (G. McNamara & N. McNamara, personal communication, April 28, 2023).

### The Interdisciplinary History of Surfing

Male hegemony as well as the surf industry's commodification of the female surfer has perpetuated antifeminism in surf culture through white, heteronormative beauty standards that originated from America's racist ideals. Historical white-supremacy transitioned surf culture into whiteness and made beachgoing the new social status for wealth and leisure within white communities. Communities of color were pushed inland and away from coastlines as a result from these racist ideologies, keeping lineups predominately white to this day at popular breaks. White, wealthy women who could afford to travel to beaches adopted tanning as a new beauty standard. Today, tanning culture continues to accept beauty in relation to whiteness, exotifying color without recognizing women for their indigenous beauty. Surf brands continue the same racist ideals that historically created the blonde-haired, blue-eyed surfer. These brands such as Billabong sponsor white, heterosexual, female surfers based upon their beauty rather than their skill, allowing white pretty privilege to dictate female success. Surf culture's patriarchal ideologies have disadvantaged women in recreational surfing, and women are adopting new ways to combat this. In professional surfing, young generations of female surfers are disproving the stigma that men perform better than women, and wave pools as well as female big-wave surfing are ways that women are challenging patriarchal expectations that women are inferior in the water to men.

### Surfers of Change and Moving Forward

As the surf industry grows and more people from all social groups return to the water, gender, racial, and sexual equality needs to be a standard by which surf culture operates. When we pick up a surfboard, we carry with us much more to the water. We carry our biases from generations of hegemony that fail to be inclusive. Yet, it is imperative that upcoming generations understand how surf culture views them individually for their race, gender, and sexuality to create a culture that transitions from racist, sexist, and homophobic ideologies into one that is progressive inside and outside of the water. My hope

for all of us is that surf culture no longer restricts social change, but that its growing population uses it as a great catalyst for change as more people return to the ocean, all drawn to it by the same tide that does not discriminate.

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