

# Heather Hudson

PHOTO: LARRY CLARK

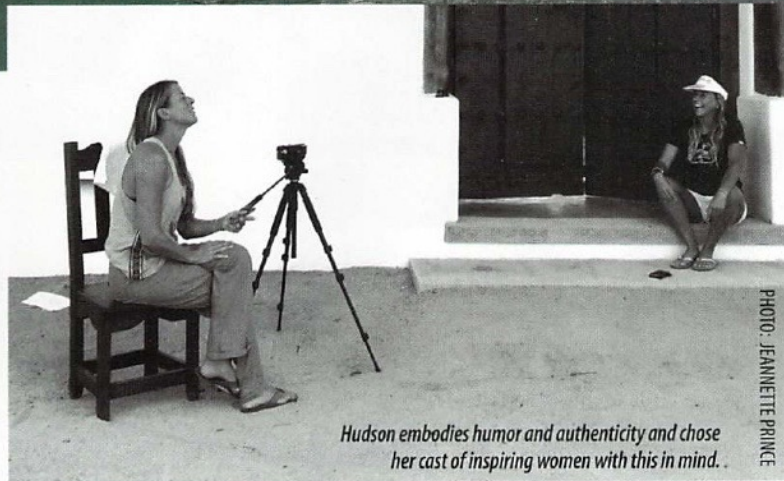
*The filmmaker herself: light-footed and always committed, getting a glassy one to herself.*

BY NICOLE DE LEON

As soon as she showed up to meet me at the Good Cup coffee shop in Santa Barbara, with her down to earth, fun-loving demeanor and long, swinging braid, I knew Heather Hudson and I would have a lot to talk about. This longtime surfer, director and filmmaker of the renowned surf film *The Women and the Waves* that launched in 2009, has always been strong-willed and self-assured when it came to following her passions. With her inherent grace and an affinity for laughter, Heather is an accomplished “accidental filmmaker,” who started surfing with mostly men in Southern California back in the 70’s, and is currently getting ready to launch *The Women and the Waves 2*, much to the elation of her fans all over the world.

This film, that depicts six passionate female surfers including Demi Boelsterli, Jeannette Prince, Kristy Murphy, Mary Bagalso, Ashley Lloyd Thompson, and Isabelle Radis, debuts in San Luis Obispo March 18th and in Santa Barbara May 21st, as well as other venues throughout the U.S. Although this is a busy and exciting time for Hudson, her vibe is very balanced and present when she speaks about her love of filmmaking and this “43 minute slice of life”. This mother of two boys who has lived in Santa Barbara with her husband since the 1990’s, is also one of the driving forces behind Heal the Ocean, where she also devotes her passion and attention.

Although her days were already quite busy, she felt the passing of her longtime friend “Zeuf” to cancer, and pregnancy news from Ashley Lloyd Thompson in 2013, was a serendipitous sign for her to begin planting seeds of intention towards a second *The Women and the Waves*. Hudson felt it represented “a beginning and an ending of life that inspired me to find the present moment and use filmmaking as a way to speak for female surfers on a worldwide level.” When speaking of her process, Hudson recalls “I basically set up these films and go with the flow and let things happen. I can see something but it doesn’t necessarily have words yet until it comes to fruition.” For the last two years she travelled to Central America, Hawaii and all over California to get the perfect footage, especially the “candid, in between moments” of surf travel that she adores. As a surfer knows, it isn’t always easy to be the one “behind the camera” when the surf is pumping, but Hudson man-



*Hudson embodies humor and authenticity and chose her cast of inspiring women with this in mind.*

PHOTO: JEANNETTE PRINCE

aged to sneak at least one surf session on most filming days.

In between both films, Hudson not only surfed, paddled or dog walked everyday down at one of her favorite breaks, she has also created shorter films. One of these films, *Hope*, beautifully depicts the story of her friend and longtime surfer, Robin Janiszewski-Hesson “Zeuf” who battled through 20 years of cancer, all while devouring what she could of this life. Zeuf had such an impact on Hudson with her positive attitude and strong will, that she has felt her perspective changed quite profoundly and really believes that even being able to surf at all in this life is such a blessing in and of itself. In fact, Hudson’s latest film is also dedicated to Zeuf’s life and her legacy.

After spending only a couple of hours with this vivacious lover of life, I can clearly see she is a natural born creative force. Those of us who get to watch her films get to experience the magic of someone bravely following their intuition and creating a gift for the world to see. The gift she gives us is a film showcasing “a feminine surfing perspective” of beautiful, unique and soulful women, all from different walks of life and surf styles, and that is what Hudson feels represents what surfing is really about. Reflecting on her journey as a surfer, mother and filmmaker, Hudson poses the question: “We only have the present moment. How will you live it?”

Make sure to check her out at [www.TheWomenAndTheWaves.com](http://www.TheWomenAndTheWaves.com), Facebook “the women and the waves” and Instagram “graciegirlsurfproductions”. 💧