

BOOGIE-WALL PRESENTS ELIZABETH WATERMAN: MONEYGAME



Lilith with dollar bills, Cheetahs, Hollywood, 2019

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Elizabeth Waterman
Moneygame

Boogie-Wall
193 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9EU

Exhibition dates: 13 October – 20 November 2022

Private View: Thursday 13 October, 6-9pm, Performance 7pm

For five years, American photographer Elizabeth Waterman spent her Saturday nights taking photographs in strip clubs. She says, *'It's a world that has always been in the shadows. I wanted to explore it and bring it into the light.'* Now, Boogie-Wall, the London gallery that only exhibits work by female artists, will present a selection of these photographs in Waterman's first ever UK show, *Moneygame*, opening 13 October 2022.

Comprised of eleven medium-scale, black and white and colour photographs, the exhibition

opens up a world unknown to many, with each portrait made more intimate by the relationship Waterman built up with her subjects. Inspired by Susan Mieselas' 1976 work, *Carnival Strippers*, the women are captured not only pole-dancing and performing but in quieter moments, putting on their makeup, as well as counting their dollars at the end of a long night.

Travelling throughout New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Las Vegas and Miami, the photographs – some of which have been published in an acclaimed book in America – were taken at numerous clubs. Waterman spent copious time with the performers, focussing on their athleticism and sexuality in a non-objectifying, female centric way. Both humanising and compassionate, her employment of the female gaze provides the viewer with a not often seen, authentic look at the performers who work inside these clubs.

For example, Malice Alice, whose portrait appears in the show, was photographed by Waterman on several occasions. In her late forties, she has built a twenty-five year career out of performing in clubs. Others turn to stripping from professionally trained dance backgrounds looking to make ends meet, whilst several girls use it to pay off student loans and college fees.

Talking to the girls, helping them gather their bills at the end of the night and going backstage helped the photographer foster an intimate and close relationship with her subjects. This intimacy evinces itself in the portrait of Genesis – one of the most striking pieces in the show – who agreed to be shot in a studio, as opposed to the clubs. In the arresting image, she can be seen wearing a skin-tight leather jacket belonging to Waterman, staring directly into the camera as she exhales a stream of cigar smoke.

Moneygame combines portraits and photographs of the real and now of the strip world in the USA and captures the dancers' beauty, playfulness and power. In a nod to the show's title, Waterman states that, *'It's a game. You are making money off of playing with people's instincts. You are toying with something.'* The dalliance and nuanced complexities embedded within this world are brought to light by Waterman's camera, as men aren't — and choose not to be — seen, and instead the women at the centre of these worlds are celebrated.

The closeness with the project led Waterman to become politically involved, attending various protests. One of these protests opposed the 2018 FOSTA-SESTA act, a controversial bill that intended to make it easier to cut down on illegal sex trafficking, but instead has had a disproportionate impact and disruption to the lives of consensual sex workers. For this reason, Waterman believes her work is also inherently political, and a percentage of sales will go to SWARM collective, a sex-worker led advocacy group based in the UK.

Providing an honest and authentic look at those who have been ignored is typical of Waterman's work, which often explores the intersections between art, artistry and sexuality, as her next project will focus on photographing porn stars and alternative strippers, particularly members of the LGBTQ+ community.

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Notes to Editors:

About Elizabeth Waterman

Los Angeles-based Elizabeth Waterman is an American fine art photographer. A through line in her

distinctive body of work is the depiction of the ongoing metamorphosis of artists and performers of many genres. Her singular images explore female sexuality, sex work, obsessions, and portraits of artists. Waterman's style has been called both transcendent and transformative. It is also elegantly composed, and infused with directness and authenticity. She holds a BA in Fine Art from the University of Southern California, and has had work shown in several international exhibitions including the Albumen Gallery, London, Espace Beaurepaire, Paris and Jue Lan Club/Limelight Church, New York City. Currently, Waterman is exhibiting images from her book, MONEYGAME, published by XYZ (Lisbon, Portugal) in 2021.

About Boogie-Wall

Boogie-Wall is a contemporary art gallery based in London. The gallery works with artists at the frontier of experimental art underlining dramatic history, culture and society.

Boogie-Wall's focus is committed to promoting, exhibiting international women artists working across all media and explorative practices that not only challenge cornerstone constructs concerning life, gender and identity, but addresses that of social justice on the global stage.

The gallery is devoted to nurturing innovation throughout its exhibition program and to support its artists to bring a wider exchange and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the fore front of innovation.

Boogie-wall.com

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