

# The Lilith Blog

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## The Heretics – What's Not to Like?

What's not to like about a film called "[The Heretics](#)" from No More Nice Girl Productions. A film where the filmmaker, Joan Braderman, over B&W footage from her radical past, explains, "I considered myself an anarcho pagan post-situationist democratic socialist feminist. But as a woman who was I really supposed to be?"

Oh, the good ol' days – in this case 1977, the year a group of women artists drawn to New York created "[Heresies](#)," a feminist publication on art and politics. All-night political arguments in primitive loft spaces in Soho. Each issue put out by a different group of women so everyone learned everything in the days when magazine paste-up really involved paste. The shock of the straight women in the collective excluded from input into issue No. 3 – "Lesbian Art and Artists."

1977 – the year after Lilith magazine's first issue.

"Heresies" published 27 issues, from 1977 to 1993. And "The Heretics," a 91-minute movie, goes out with an all-women crew to catch up with some of these fine women. The film premiered last weekend at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan. It will be screened at MoMA one last time, tomorrow (Thursday, Oct. 15) at 7 p.m. [before hitting various film festivals](#).

Lots of the women are white haired now, and as tough and talented as ever.

In some ways, "The Heretics" is a walk down memory lane, to a time when everything was new, when consciousness raising groups truly raised our consciousness, and we really thought we could change things.

Well, maybe we have. The fact that "feminism" is no longer a magic word, the fact that a whole generation of women weren't even born when Lilith and Heresies were conceived. The Heretics talk about the putdown by the men who controlled the art world 30 years ago and whose highest compliment to a woman artist was, "You paint like a man." Groan. Heresies, the magazine, was examining the politics of art and the art world but substitute "Jewish" for "art" and we were all awakening around the same issues.

Joan Braderman, one smart woman, uses humor to keep the film from becoming a nostalgic or cobwebby rant from our impassioned Younger Selves. And lots of the women interviewed see their younger selves with humor. One of the Heretics recalls, not with pain but with understanding, how when she said the magazine needed a budget and a business plan she was shouted down. (Lilith, on the other hand, slaved over our budget and business plan. Who knew? We didn't and neither did the [male] foundation director pushing us through these hoops. He did point out that our proposed budget, arrived at out of total mental agony, predicting wildly successful returns, was wildly amiss. Alas.)

The Heresies collective never had a generation of interns to carry on. (Who knows whether Lilith interns will run with Jewish feminist issues as they see fit.)

At the end of the film, a 20something finds a trove of old Heresies issues, and she’s filled with joy. Hey, even non-Hollywood films yearn for happy endings.

–Amy Stone

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## 3 Responses to “The Heretics – What’s Not to Like?”

1. *Larry* Says:

[October 20th, 2009 at 7:04 am](#)

Thanks for the retrospective, informative and reassuring. I lived through that era but didn’t think of nor notice much of all of that. “Hey”, I’m male.

2. *amy stone* Says:

[October 25th, 2009 at 3:39 pm](#)

“Hey” — never too late.

Amy

3. *The Heretics – What’s Not to Like? | JewPI* Says:

[October 26th, 2009 at 9:52 am](#)

[...] where the filmmaker, Joan Braderman, over B&W footage from her radical past, explains, “I  
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