



The Heretics

Documentary Film Explores Lives and Personalities Behind Influential Women's Movement Magazine

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Sigmund Freud had his say, and then there was *Heresies*.

Gracing the 25th annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival is *The Heretics*, a documentary chronicling the women behind a short-lived, albeit influential, magazine during a very significant time: the Second Wave of the Women's Movement.

Directed and narrated by Joan Braderman, and produced by Santa Barbara native Crescent Diamond, *The Heretics* is an effort to re-energize the women of today by voicing the opinions of *Heresies'* original "mother collective," an assemblage of the magazine's founders who believe the fight for equal rights to be far from over.

Braderman starts the film by relaying her thoughts on being a woman — thoughts that would go on to compel her to join *Heresies* — thinking about "what as a person I needed to achieve with, what as a woman, I could actually get away with."

Such was par for the female course during the time leading up to *Heresies*. During the 1960s and 1970s, feminism was, for many, a dirty word. Women, in general, were gravely misunderstood, pigeon-holed for better or for worse. Speaking during that time, a newscaster epitomized the misunderstanding, saying "Freud, an expert on women ... if there ever was one ..."

In an effort to make things clearer, a small group of women — a group that would go on to surpass 1,000 — founded *Heresies*, the effects of which would reverberate during its 27-issue span from 1977 to 1992. Named after the credo that "new truths begin as heresies," the magazine was more than a labor of love (although the staff do admit to having cut and pasted the publication themselves). It was, according to Braderman, a "shared and profound commitment to rewriting the histories of women." Thus, the heretics were born.

In an effort to correct the feeling that "there was something wrong, all the time, with being a girl," Ida Applebroog joined the magazine. Of her decision to join the *Heresies* team, Susanna Torre — now an architect — says it was merely "a way of turning 'feminism' into a verb rather than a noun." Echoes artist Mary Miss, "Doing what you're not supposed to do was an affirmation that you weren't crazy." Similarly, now-performance artist Marty Pottenger viewed the collaboration as a chance worth taking.

“We were willing to risk ostracism ... we were willing to be that brave,” Pottenger said.

Braderman saw — and continues to see — a correlation between the struggle for women’s rights and the fight for civil rights. “Equality and freedom are in my blood,” she said.

The film, contrasting images of the Women’s Movement with the magazine’s founders as they are today, successfully strives to convey that, as much progress has been made, there is still a lot of work to be done, including equal pay for equal work and guaranteed reproductive privacy.

“There are lots of messages of what and how women are supposed to be,” Diamond said, adding that it is “up to them to figure that out.”

The Heretics screens Sunday, February 7 at 1 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street. It shows again on Tuesday, February 9 at 10 a.m. at the Victoria Hall Theater, 33 West Victoria Street.