

In My Own Right

Documentary Film
12:00

Directed by Paul Zinder
Produced by Abigail Gardner

There is a synagogue on a dead-end street in a small provincial town in the UK called Cheltenham. The synagogue has been active since 1839 and is home to a small Orthodox Jewish community. Its members have been working with researchers and filmmakers from the University of Gloucestershire for over a decade and Paul Zinder (Director) and Abigail Gardner (Producer) spent two years filming a short documentary about the two women who have taken on leadership roles in this community, the first women to do so. Without these women, the synagogue would likely close.

Bolstered by theoretical work on women, ageing and popular culture (Katz, 2000; Gardner, 2018, Jennings, 2015), the film centers on the shift of power from men to women as they take over the reins of synagogue management due to two key ageing demographics; older men dying first, and younger people leaving. It charts the relationship between the two women, the new 'chairman' and an interfaith and community volunteer at different life-stages as they negotiate the various challenges posed by being women leaders in such a community.

Filmed within the tradition of both expository and observational documentary, *In My Own Right* is testament to the survival and vibrancy of a marginal Jewish community in a small English town. It is far from the large urban Jewish centres of the UK but, as the film shows, is involved in community support along with inter-faith activities that keep its presence at the centre of this particular provincial life.

FESTIVALS & SELECTED SCREENINGS

Miami Independent Film Festival – 2019
Near Nazareth Film Festival (Afula, Israel) 2019
Urban Jewish Heritage Conference (Early Cut screened - Krakow, Poland) 2018

AWARD

Finalist: Peter C. Rollins Award for Best Documentary – National Popular Culture Association Conference (Washington, D.C.), 2019