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Goings on About Town

MOVIES

Nana, Mom and Me



Courtesy IndieCollect

Amalie R. Rothschild's pioneering personal documentary "Nana, Mom and Me," from 1974

(screening on Dec. 18 and Dec. 29 at MOMA and streaming on Kanopy), turns a family memoir into an exploration of social history. She begins with a plain premise—preserving anecdotes from her maternal grandmother, Addye Goldsmith Rosenfeld, then in her mid-eighties. She folds the genesis of the film into its substance, declaring onscreen the ethical imperative to swap her sheltered place behind the camera for an exposed one alongside her subjects. Planning to have a child, Rothschild questions her mother (also named Amalie R. Rothschild), an artist, about her struggle to balance creative work and family life. Interweaving home movies, family photos, and audio recordings—and bringing her father and her sister into the action—the filmmaker discovers her grandmother's fealty to oppressive conventions and her mother's lifelong effort to challenge them. What emerges, as if in real time, is a new age of feminist self-awareness, with new artistic practices to match.