

SPECIAL REPORT: JEWISH MUSEUM EXHIBITION ON UK JEWS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A SNAPSHOT OF JEWISH LONDON

Next month Camden's Jewish Museum hosts a photography exhibition entitled *No Place Like Home*. The result of a year-long project by top photo-journalist Judah Passow, it captures the realities of Jewish lives and communities in 21st-century Britain. Here, in an exclusive preview of Passow's vivid work, the photographer tells **Kari Rosenberg** about the multifaceted nature of modern Jewish life in London

From the streets of Golders Green to the beigel bakeries of Brick Lane, *No Place Like Home* is the culmination of a year-long photography project – an intense and defining study of Jewish lives and communities in 21st-century Britain.

Judah Passow travelled through England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales last year to photograph his subjects. His 98-piece collection becomes part of the Jewish Museum's permanent photographic gallery next month. The images range from the heart-warming to the provocative and the humorous to the passive. "This project is a visual conversation with the Jewish community – an opportunity to examine and reflect on what it means to be British and Jewish in the 21st century" says Passow. It's a question his subjects pose to to attempt to capture, but he offers no definitive personal answer. "I don't think that, as a photographer, or as someone who is Jewish who lives in Britain, I can provide an answer. But my photographs hopefully shed their own light."

A four-time World Press Photo award winner – whose work has appeared in numerous national newspapers – Passow has keenly captured a varied snapshot of Jewish life in London – from the conventional to the exploratory. "The photograph of the young girl blowing the shofar addresses the core of the project, which is how Judaism in the 21st century is undergoing a new definition in Britain. Part of that is exemplified by members of our community saying it's not necessary to do things in an Orthodox way. Being Jewish today can mean anything. You can give expression to your Judaism in ways that are in keeping with the social developments of this century."

"In traditional Judaism, the shofar is blown by a man who has minimally reached barmitzvah and is blown in the synagogue to announce the new year. This photograph is from a congregation in London which is re-interpreting these more traditional tenants of Judaism and trying to bring them into step with the developments in our society. They are holding the service at a pond in Kensington. They are giving the whole story of Rosh Hashanah, and especially the *tashlich* service, a new interpretation. The central issue here is: what does this say about us as a people and a community?"

An Israeli Jew, did his background drive him to address this question? "Yes. It is our capacity as a people for re-examining ourselves and questioning how we give expression to our Jewishness that is the secret to our longevity. It's our ability to re-define ourselves that is the reason for our survival – our ability to be intellectually flexible. This theme runs through the exhibition. The common thread is the diversity of expression in people's minds. There are as many ways of expressing Jewishness as there are Jews. People have their own explanations about what Judaism means. That's what you see in the photographs."

• *No Place Like Home* is at the Jewish Museum in Camden from 1 February to 5 June. Call 020 7284 7384



A conversation between two visitors to Klezmer Fest in Regents Park.

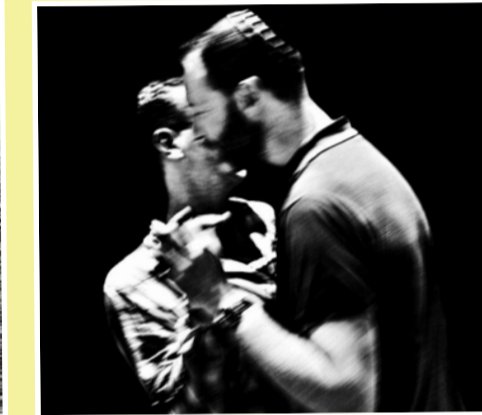
Below: the inauguration ceremony for former Lord Mayor of London, Michael Bear; artist Judah Passow in his north London home; a familiar night-time scene in Brick Lane in London's East End.



A batmitzvah rehearsal at North Western Reform Synagogue



A social scene outside Kosher Kingdom in Golders Green



Left to right: A rabbi inspects an etrog for any imperfections; a young girl blows into a shofar during a *tashlich* service; a gay couple dance at an end of a Simchat Torah service at a Liberal synagogue.

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