

“Seeing Films Is a Way of Thinking”

Amos Vogel – 100 Years of Subversion

Amos Vogel would have turned 100 on April 18, 2021 – this prompted us to ask a series of questions and to conceptualize a wide range of audiovisual responses. What is the role of remembrance in a Film Museum? What is it that we remember and commemorate? And how do we commemorate?

BIRTHDAY PROGRAM #AMOSVOGEL100

THE AMOS VOGEL ATLAS – FILM PROGRAMS

“The Surreal Experience,” “City Lights,”
“¡Viva Zapatista!,” “Turning Points”

SELFIES & QUOTES

Birthday wishes

CASE STUDIES – READING MATERIAL, COMMENTS AND DISCOVERIES

“A Very Worthwhile Question,”
“A Tremendous Achievement,” “Here Start the Errors”

PEEP SHOW – EXHIBITION

“Amos Vogel’s Way of Thinking”

FILM AS A SUBVERSIVE ART 2021

Viennale/Film Museum Retrospective curated by
Nicole Brenez, Hirasawa Go, Kim Knowles, Birgit Kohler,
Roger Koza, and Nour Ouayda

AMOS VOGEL LECTURES

Subversive Art x Film Museum: Curating Film

University of Vienna/Christoph Huber, Elisabeth Streit,
Tom Waibel, and Katharina Müller

“Seeing Films Is a Way of Thinking”:

Amos Vogel and the Subversion of the Image

Merz Academy Stuttgart/Tom Waibel

Philosophy Acts in Images:

Mr. Vogel’s Subversions

Merz Academy Stuttgart/Tom Waibel

RADIO FEATURES & PODCASTS

“Be Sand, Not Oil” –

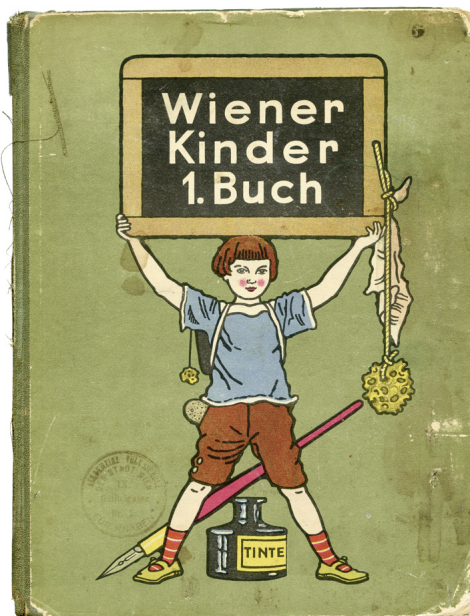
On Amos Vogel’s 100th Birthday Radio feature
on Ö1 (“Diagonal”) by Dominique Gromes

Amos Vogel at “Film-Logbuch”

Chris Haderer on Radio Agora in conversation with
Tom Waibel, Elisabeth Streit, and Christoph Huber

Amos Vogel and Subversive Cinema

The Film Comment Podcast with Richard Peña,
Tom Waibel, and Edo Choi



Juvenalia from the Amos Vogel Library:
Amos Vogelbaum's schoolbook (Vienna, 1927, upper left);
short story by Amos Vogelbaum, illustrated by him and
published by a press of his own invention (upper right);
membership card for the Vienna ice skating club,
1930/31 season (lower right)



remembering.” *This* is why a film museum must remember. Even if it were presumptuous to believe it can contribute to redemption, it does contribute to shortening exile.

Throughout his entire life, the founder of the **Cinema 16** film society and co-founder of the **New York Film Festival** never forgot that the Nazis robbed him of his native language. Exiled, he painstakingly worked his way into his new language and became a virtuoso of translation capable of moving between the most varied forms of expression. The brief essays in his book *Film as a Subversive Art* characterize filmic expression at the intersection of images and thinking. *This* is what a film museum should commemorate, which is why the Austrian Film Museum abides by the idea that *seeing films is a way of thinking*.

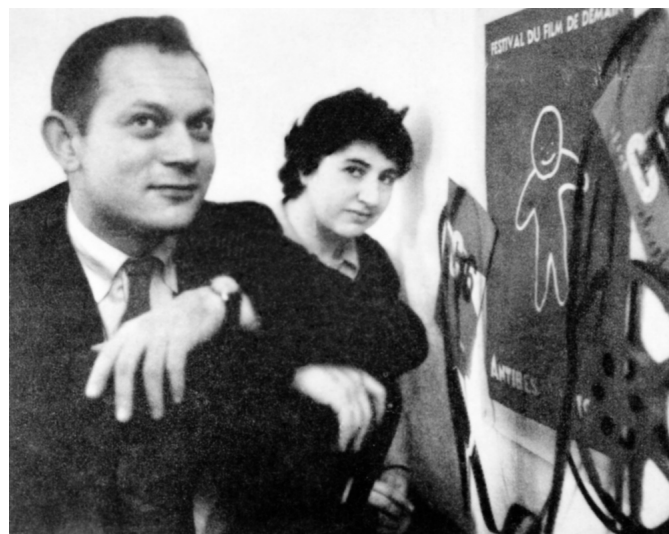
For many years a **professor of film studies** at the University of Pennsylvania, Vogel carried out an intensely filmic work of remembrance, discovering films as well as viewing, reconsidering, describing, criticizing, curating, and presenting them. Remem-

bering always consisted of and was accompanied by creative processes because memories only remain alive when they are visualized, researched, and questioned. That's *how* a film museum should remember in different mediums and a variety of formats because memory is a skill that can be developed, supported, practiced, and articulated.

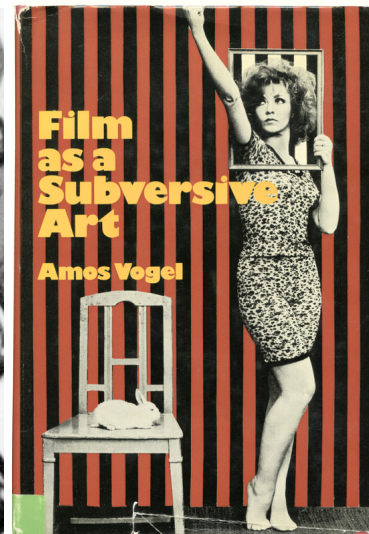
This is why we declared 2021 to be the year of Amos Vogel and in memory of the major protagonist of curatorial contradictions, again challenged



© THE ESTATE OF AMOS VOGEL (TOP);
© PETER MARTIN / THE ESTATE OF AMOS VOGEL (LOWER LEFT)



Amos Vogel in December 1940 (New York, left); Alfred Hitchcock and Amos Vogel visiting
Cinema 16 (New York, 1956, right). Amos and Marcia Vogel at Cinema 16 (New York, 1955, lower left),
Film as a Subversive Art by Amos Vogel, Random House, 1974 (lower right)



conventional views of what film and cinema are under the motto of “**100 Years of Subversion**.” We advocated an audiovisual cosmos full of frowned upon, forgotten, unruly, and censored images, films, videos, audio clips, texts, essays, and thoughts and opened an exhibition in our “**peep show**” **lobby gallery** that visually translated the motto of the centenary: “Seeing films is a way of thinking.”

We also used our **university lectures** to connect to Amos Vogel’s many years spent teaching and reignite debates about ongoing subversion. **Steven Vogel**, one of Amos and Marcia Vogel’s sons, was a guest for one of the many – and, for academic contexts, extremely lively – discussions, offering another perspective on the joy and challenges of growing up as the son of a father who was always ready to critically challenge conventional self-conceptions.

We created a **web page for birthday wishes** and invited the public to express their passion for subversion. The **Amos Vogel Atlas** film programs have also provided an ongoing map of the curator’s multifaceted life’s work. In collaboration with the Viennale, the **Film as a Subversive Art 2021 retrospective** invited international curators to look at the subversive potential of contemporary filmmaking. Throughout the year, regular blog entries presented finds from the **Amos Vogel Library** and annotated objects from the collection of his juvenilia.

A **series of case studies** dedicated to studying overlooked aspects in the life and work of this pioneer of rebellious film viewing rounded out our activities and provided occasions for many interviews and talks.

filmmuseum.at/en/amosvogel



SELFIES & QUOTES. BIRTHDAY WISHES

As a lively way of remembering Amos Vogel, we created a site for birthday wishes where more than 100 congratulations have been collected over the course of the year. A selection of quotes:

“Everything must always be questioned”

Steven Vogel (top)

“I had the honor of working closely with Amos for several years as his projectionist, his assistant and his teaching associate. During this time Amos was immersed in an unceasing search for new or unknown films that offered uncommon visions of human experience, using these films in his teaching to challenge our complacent sense of existence and ourselves. We spent countless hours screening hundreds of new discoveries for inclusion in classroom and exploratory cinema exhibitions, an experience that revolutionized my perspectives on art and human expression. This was Amos’ life work, to open others to the life-transforming experiences of cinema.”

Michael Griffin (Associate Professor)

“Vogel’s approach to film programming (...) appears more innovative, inspired, and provocatively ‘interdisciplinary’ than ever. His work represents an unparalleled embodiment of the intoxicatingly endless, too-rarely-activated possibilities, not only of the cinema, but of film curatorship itself.”

Jed Rapfogel (Anthology Film Archives)



Birthday wish selfie by Fabia Wirtz (film student)