

Press Information

100 Years of Amos Vogel – Film as Subversion

"Seeing films is a way of thinking."
Amos Vogel

With his provocative understanding of film as a „subversive art,“ the curator, critic and indefatigable educator **Amos Vogel (1921-2012)** violently challenged the common understanding of film, championing a cinematic cosmos rich with disapproved, forgotten, defiant and censored works.

On April 18, 2021, this figurehead of curatorial rebelliousness would have celebrated his centenary. **The Austrian Film Museum pays tribute to the Vienna-born Vogel with a series of events charting a map of Vogel's idea of film as subversion** that will take place from the reopening of our cinema until the end of the year.

All activities and projects for "100 years of Amos Vogel" can be found on our website: <https://www.filmmuseum.at/en/amosvogel>

Amos Vogel (1921–2012)

Amos Vogel was born on April 18, 1921 in Vienna as Amos Vogelbaum. In 1938, he fled via Cuba to the USA, where he lived until his death on April 24, 2012. He was the founder and curator of *Cinema 16* (1947–1963), one of the most significant film societies in the USA focusing on independent cinema. Together with Richard Roud, he founded and programmed the New York Film Festival (1963–1968) with an emphasis on contemporary avant-garde cinema. Vogel is the author of the seminal and provocative book *Film as a Subversive Art* (1974) and was professor of Film Studies at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania for more than two decades. He remained active as a lecturer, critic, and consultant for numerous international film festivals until his old age.

An official invitation for Amos Vogel to visit his hometown of Vienna was not extended until 1993, on the occasion of the symposium *Aufbruch ins Ungewisse* (Departure into the Unknown) organized by SYNEMA as part of the Viennale Film Festival under the direction of Alexander Horwath and Wolfgang Aigner.



AMOS VOGEL PROGRAM 2021 at the Austrian Film Museum

AMOS VOGEL ATLAS

"*Films You Cannot See Elsewhere*" was the motto of Amos Vogel's groundbreaking New York film society *Cinema 16*. He revolutionized film viewing habits by gathering a wide variety of cinematic forms under one roof: avant-garde, agitation and animation, carefully selected feature films, exceptional documentaries, and incredible ephemeral films. All that from a truly independent mind and spirit, immortalized in Vogel's revolutionary book *Film as a Subversive Art*, revered by generations of cinephiles and programmers. The Amos Vogel Atlas charts this territory in parallel to the research done into the part of his private estate held in the Amos Vogel Library at the Film Museum. In this **regular film series**, Vogel's resistant legacy is taken up and expanded, with a special focus on the film collection of the Austrian Film Museum.

AMOS VOGEL COSMOS

In the autumn of 2021, **the Viennale and the Austrian Film Museum are organizing a joint retrospective** in tribute to Amos Vogel (1921-2012). Our aim is not to repeat any of the film programs that Amos Vogel screened in his long career as a curator, nor to screen any of the films he wrote about and helped canonize. We choose to understand Amos Vogel as an explorer of the cinematic present, therefore we aim to celebrate him by continuing his work as a politically conscious curator who introduced the world to countless works of cinema as a subversive art. We shall present polyphony, disharmony, disruption, disorder, and subversion.

Peep Show #2: Amos Vogel – the First Century

In our newly created exhibition area we present the highlights of Amos Vogel's work, from his first writings about film as a Viennese student, to the legendary film club *Cinema 16*, which Vogel founded in New York in 1947, to his book *Film as a Subversive Art*.

AMOS VOGEL LIBRARY

The Amos Vogel Library holds more than 8,000 books, journals and juvenilia from Vogel's private library. The special feature of this collection are Vogel's numerous annotations, which bear witness to his intensive reading. The Film Museum is pleased to make the Amos Vogel Library available to the public, thereby providing new insights into the thinking and working methods of this essential subversive pioneer of international film culture.

PUBLICATIONS

Be Sand, Not Oil. The Life and Work of Amos Vogel

Published by Paul Cronin in 2014, *Be Sand, Not Oil* contains a number of Amos Vogel's writings from 1940 to the 1990s, a previously unpublished interview as well as new essays about his work and his youth in Vienna: texts documenting Amos Vogel's lifelong search for what Werner Herzog, his friend of many decades, described as "adequate imagery."

FilmmuseumSynemaPublikationen Vol. 24, 272 pages, with numerous color and b&w illustrations, in English. ISBN 978-3-901644-59-7

Amos Vogel. A New York Cineaste from Vienna

The booklet *Amos Vogel. A New York Cineaste from Vienna* focuses on Vogel's film columns and provides insight into the breadth of his published work.

Although he never made films himself, cinema owes Amos Vogel a great deal. His achievements include the legendary *Cinema 16*, the founding of the New York Film Festival, and the wonderful book *Film as a Subversive Art*. Amos Vogel is the ultimate cineaste: a feisty intellectual who, as both critic and curator, left his own indelible mark on the history of independent filmmaking.

With texts by Amos Vogel and contributions by Gerard Malanga, Brigitte Mayr and Michael Omasta.

SYNEMA-Publikationen, Vienna 2011, 40 pages, with illustrations, in German. ISBN 978-3-901644-40-5

Film as a Subversive Art

By Amos Vogel

Amos Vogel analyzes aesthetic, sexual, and ideological subversion in cinema, the infiltration and displacement of the conscious and unconscious, the demystification of visual taboos, the destruction of cinematic form, and the rebellion against values and institutions in this extremely unconventional approach to film history written in 1974.