

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **AMOS VOGEL AND *FILM AS A SUBVERSIVE ART* HONORED WITH SERIES OF SIXTEEN ICONIC FILMS**

**Moving Image series features films by Luis Buñuel, Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Jean-Luc Godard, Werner Herzog, Yoko Ono, Carolee Schneemann, Dziga Vertov, Agnès Varda, Andy Warhol, Frederick Wiseman, and others**

**March 16–31, 2013**

Astoria, NY, March 6, 2013—Amos Vogel (1922–2012) was one of the most influential film programmers of the 20th century, as the founder of the avant-garde film club Cinema 16, co-founder of the New York Film Festival, and author of the seminal 1974 book *Film as a Subversive Art*. From March 16 through 31, 2013, Museum of the Moving Image will present a celebration of Vogel's life's work with a series of sixteen iconic films championed by Vogel in his book. These films elucidate through provocation, joy, and transgression—each one a testimony to the power of cinema and of Vogel's unique vision.

"Film curators everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to Amos Vogel, a man who was forever in love with the power and beauty of cinema in all its forms," says Chief Curator David Schwartz. "Vogel's legacy is that of the intrepid pioneer, who staked out a claim for American film practice that existed outside the strict and traditional boundaries of Hollywood cinema. Thanks in large part to Vogel, an appreciation of new forms and different perspectives was born into the cinema, and continues to be very much with us today."

"A Tribute to Amos Vogel and *Film as a Subversive Art*" opens on March 16 with an appearance by poet and critic Wayne Koestenbaum, with screenings of the Marx Brothers's film *Horse Feathers* and Andy Warhol's *Kiss* and *Blow Job*. Koestenbaum will be signing copies of his new book *The Anatomy of Harpo Marx*, and his earlier work *Andy Warhol*. The series also includes a new 35mm restoration of Dziga Vertov's *The Man With the Movie Camera* by the EYE Film Institute (Netherlands), presented with live music by Donald Sosin. Other films in the series are Jean Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* and Jean Genet's *Un Chant d'Amour* on a double bill; Luis Buñuel's *Viridiana*; Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies*; Joris Ivens's *The Spanish Earth*; Peter Watkins's *The War Game*; Werner Herzog's *Fata Morgana*; Jean-Luc Godard's *2 or 3 Things I Know About*

*Her*, Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur*, and a trio of avant-garde shorts: Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (presented in a new digital restoration), Yoko Ono's *The Fly*, and James Broughton's *The Bed*.

A groundbreaking book when it was published in 1974, *Film as a Subversive Art* is an exhilarating and mind-expanding catalogue of hundreds of films that break aesthetic, sexual, and ideological boundaries. Through his programs at Cinema 16 as well as his writing, Vogel taught generations of cinephiles and filmmakers to take risks and to appreciate a wide range of films from all over the world.

This series has been organized in collaboration with Anthology Film Archives, which is presenting its own Vogel tribute through March 16. For more details visit: [anthologyfilmarchives.org/film\\_screenings/series/40458](http://anthologyfilmarchives.org/film_screenings/series/40458).

Tickets for films in the series are included with paid Museum admission and free for Museum members. For information about membership and to join, visit <http://www.movingimage.us/support/membership>.

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### **SCHEDULE FOR 'A TRIBUTE TO AMOS VOGEL AND *FILM AS A SUBVERSIVE ART*,' MARCH 16–31, 2013**

All screenings take place at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria. Screenings are included with Museum admission and free for Museum members unless otherwise noted. Tickets for Friday evening screenings (when the Museum offers free gallery admission) are \$12 adults / \$9 students and senior citizens.

**With the exception of *Horse Feathers*, all film descriptions are from Amos Vogel's *Film as a Subversive Art*.**

#### ***Horse Feathers***

**Introduced by Wayne Koestenbaum. Followed by a book signing**

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 3:00 P.M.

Dir. Norman Z. McLeod. 1932, 68 mins. Digital projection. With The Marx Brothers. With Groucho as the President of Huxley College, and Harpo as his secret weapon in the football rivalry against Darwin University, *Horse Feathers* is one of the Brothers' funniest and most scathing attacks on authority. Wayne Koestenbaum, a poet, cultural critic, and distinguished professor at the CUNY Graduate Center, will introduce the film. Koestenbaum's new book, *The Anatomy of Harpo Marx*, is a wide-ranging and virtuosic exploration of the astonishing range of Harpo's body—its kinks, sexual multiplicities, somnolence, Jewishness, "cute" pathos, and more.

#### ***Kiss with Blow Job***

**Introduced by Wayne Koestenbaum, author of *Andy Warhol***

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 6:00 P.M.

***Kiss***. Dir. Andy Warhol. 1963, 55 mins, 16mm. With Rufus Collins, Johnny Dodd, Fred Harko. Audiences generally titter, then fall into private reveries whenever this film is shown. For here we witness a basic human act in all its subtlety, fervor, and boredom, as for 60 minutes hetero—and homo—sexual partners exchange passionate, superficial, deep, short, extraordinary kisses. An immobile, impassive camera records the events in real time; the result is simultaneously arousing and numbing.

Followed by: ***Blow Job***. Dir. Andy Warhol. 1963, 33 mins. 16mm. With DeVeren Bookwalter, Willard Maas. Daring in subject matter and technique, this early Warhol film records a 33-minute close-up of a handsome young man's face, as an invisible "other" (out of camera range) performs fellatio on him. Nothing is seen except the face and a brick wall beyond; as we study it, mesmerized, we feel the pain of passion, the on-off tease of lust, the quickening tempo, the orgasm, the sad, somehow empty afterglow.

***Man with a Movie Camera***

**With live piano accompaniment by Donald Sosin**

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 3:00 P.M.

Dir. Dziga Vertov. 1929, 68 mins. **New 35mm restoration from the EYE Film Institute.** In retrospect, the avant-garde poet Dziga Vertov emerges as one of the most important influences in Soviet Cinema. Vertov moved rapidly from the production of propagandistic newsreels to a full radical aesthetic—the Kino Eye—which found its culmination in his masterpiece *The Man with the Movie Camera*.

***The Blood of a Poet and Un Chant d'Amour***

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 6:00 P.M.

***The Blood of a Poet***. Dir. Jean Cocteau. 1932, 55 mins. 16mm. With Lee Miller, Enrique Rivero, Pauline Carton. Often mistaken for a surrealist work, this is a carefully constructed, entirely conscious artifact, mingling symbol and metaphor to project the anguish, apotheosis, and corruption of the struggling artist. This entails the passing through the mirror into another world, the fantastic combinations of unrelated events in space and time, and its brilliant central metaphor: the dynamiting of a huge factory chimney at the beginning of the work, interrupted in the middle by the film's action and completed only at the end by its total collapse; an intimation that the film represents the equivalent of a one-second dream.

Preceded by: ***Un Chant d'Amour***. Dir. Jean Genet. 1950, 26 mins. 16mm. With André Reybaz, Java, Coco Le Martiniquais, Lucien Sénémaud. Genet's only film—hounded by the censors, unavailable, secret—is an early and remarkably moving attempt to portray homosexual passions. Already a classic, it succeeds as perhaps no other film to intimate the explosive power of frustrated sex; male prisoners in solitary confinement "embracing" walls, ramming them in erotic despair with erect penis, swaying convulsively to auto-erotic lust, kissing their own bodies and tattoos in sexual frenzy.

***Viridiana***

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 3:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 6:00 P.M.

Dir. Luis Buñuel. 1961, 90 mins. 35mm. With Silvia Pinal, Fernando Rey, Francisco Rabal. This black and sardonic “comedy” recounts the undoing of a priggish “Good Samaritan” nun who attempts to live out (and instill in others) values of decency and purity. She is duly elevated to a state of ambiguous liberation—as a participant in a *ménage à trois*—after her brutal rape by a lecherous beggar. The film is suffused with subtle, forbidden images, often only hinted at to increase our participation in the act of desecration.

***Fuses, with The Bed and Fly***

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 6:00 P.M.

***Fuses***. Dir. Carolee Schneemann. 1967, 22 mins. **New digital restoration.** Drawing on documentary footage of her and her lover’s love-making, it builds a strongly poetic texture of feeling and experience by subjecting the film strip to the most violent experimentation (soaking it in acids and dyes; baking, painting, and scratching it) and dissolving narrative continuity into a continuum of non-sequential, polymorphous, and strongly “pornographic” imagery. Nevertheless, as Gene Youngblood observes in his *Expanded Cinema*: “This is a home, not a whorehouse” and the filmmaker’s sensitivity and authenticity never let us forget it.

Preceded by: ***The Bed***. Dir. James Broughton. 1968, 20 mins. 16mm. With Florence Allen, Gavin Arthur, Imogen Cunningham. The entire cast of this delightful, wise manifesto of counter-cultural sensibility performs in the nude. An ornate bed, magically located in a meadow, provides, as always, the stage for man’s most significant moments; birth, sex, death. While even avant-garde nudity seems often to betray an absence of joyful or uncomplicated sex, *The Bed* displays a smiling, polymorphously perverse eroticism. ***Fly***. Dir. Yoko Ono. 1970, 25 mins. 16mm. With Virginia Lust. A hypnotic juxtaposition of predatory insect and beautiful body, with neither party performing according to rules, thereby disrupting the reality game. For 25 minutes we see a very pretty girl, deeply asleep, over whose nude body creeps a diligent fly that never takes off but explores her fully, including pubic hair and sex. The film is almost entirely in close-up, with nipples appearing as mountain tops, the fly as climber, the girl’s body as the fly’s universe.

***Titicut Follies***

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 3:00 P.M.

Dir. Frederick Wiseman. 1967, 84 mins. 16 mm. Prisons and mental institutions, where recalcitrant or ill-fitting citizens are put out of sight, are the dirty secrets of civilized society. As they are owned and controlled by precisely those who wish to keep them secret, and are also confined to specific, enclosed spaces, filmmakers are easily kept out. Wiseman’s achievement in creating this unique film document is therefore all the more impressive: it is a major work of subversive cinema and a searing indictment—without editorializing narration—of the “system.”

***The Spanish Earth with The War Game***

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 3:00 P.M.

***The Spanish Earth***. Dir. Joris Ivens. 1937, 52 mins. 16mm. With Manuel Azaña, José Díaz, Dolores Ibárruri. Ivens records the agony of the Spanish civil war in one of his strongest films. Its images of destruction—accompanied by Hemingway’s narration—shocked a world not yet used to the horrors of a Second World War or Vietnam.

Preceded by: ***The War Game***. Dir. Peter Watkins. 1965, 48 mins. 35mm print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive. With Michael Aspel, Peter Graham. A terrifying “fabricated” documentary records the horrors of a future atomic war in the most painstaking, sickening detail. Photographed in London, it shows the flash burns and firestorms, the impossibility of defense, the destruction of all life. Produced by the BBC, the film was promptly banned and became world-famous and rarely seen.

### ***Fata Morgana***

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 6:00 P.M.

Dir. Werner Herzog. 1971, 79 mins. 35mm. With Lotte Eisner. *Fata Morgana* is a sardonic, melancholic comment on man in the universe, its subtle and hallucinatory images accompanied by texts from sacred sixteenth-century creation myths of Guatemalan Indians and the 1970 German avant-garde. It moves on a poetic, visual level, has no conventional plot, but cunningly employs the trappings of surface reality (sandscapes, barbed wire, industrial debris, natives that do not fit their environs) to prove depths beyond surrealism and metaphysics.

### ***2 or 3 Things I Know About Her***

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 3:00 P.M.

Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. 1967, 87 mins. 35mm. With Joseph Gehrard, Marina Vlady, Anny Duperey. Paris today: High-rise buildings, anonymous living, and casual prostitution as symbols of capitalist decline; the benevolent dictatorship of the consumer society enforces performance and the “selling” of self so that one may live well. Godard’s whispered philosophical comments on the film’s action introduce further elements of sophisticated ambiguity.

### ***Le Bonheur***

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 6:00 P.M.

Dir. Agnès Varda. 1965, 79 mins. 35mm. With Jean-Claude Drouot, Claire Drouot. A happy family, an eternal summer, sexual love, family picnics, all the colors and sensuality of the Impressionists; and then the wife commits suicide, a mistress takes her place, and another summer of happiness commences. A secret, subversive work of great originality.

## **MUSEUM INFO**

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Closed Monday and Tuesday except for select holiday openings and special programs. Holiday openings include March 25 (Mon), March 26 (Tue), April 1 (Mon), and April 2 (Tue), from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, screenings are included with Museum admission.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults (18+); \$9.00 for senior citizens and for students (13+) with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)  
Membership: 718 777 6877, [members@movingimage.us](mailto:members@movingimage.us)

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit [movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us).

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