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by Anastasiya Lyubas, Anna Elena Torres, and Kathryn Hellerstein

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## **WALKING WITH VOGEL: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON DEBORA VOGEL**

by Anastasiya Lyubas, Anna Elena Torres, and Kathryn Hellerstein

**Abstract:** *This special issue invites you to walk with Debora Vogel as she maps the spaces of Jewish life through avant-garde forms. We bring together new perspectives on Vogel through poetry, visual art, translation, and scholarship, all in an attempt to follow the many lines of creative and critical inquiry that emerge from Vogel's work.*

This special issue invites you to walk with Debora Vogel as she maps the spaces of Jewish life through avant-garde forms. We bring together new perspectives on Vogel through poetry, visual art, translation, and scholarship, all in an attempt to follow the many lines of creative and critical inquiry that emerge from Vogel's work.

What would it mean to walk with Vogel and how might that be possible through the written word or through images on a screen? Vogel, as always, offers a compelling model for just such a virtual experience. In 1935, the multilingual writer, poet, and art theorist Debora Vogel wrote an essay taking her readers on a walk through the Jewish Quarter of Lviv (formerly Lwów and Lemberg), circling its “strangely helpless streets, filled with a mixture of exoticism and brutal everydayness.” The essay opens with a social-spatial metaphor:<sup>1</sup>

There have always existed centers and peripheries—elasticity and strength, life which flows in quieter, somewhat flattened waves. This pertains both to Lviv Jewry and to the Jewish quarters all over the world which are always found on the margins, off the main avenue in life. A stroll through the streets in Lviv makes one succumb to an illusion that the center of the city is surrounded by the two half-circles of Jewish streets. However, these streets form the only half-circle in the city from the east to the north. And as the city radiates south- and westward, the Jewish side streets calm to a standstill, crowded and pressed against each other in two larger compact groupings.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately, our sense of space is disrupted: where is the center of the city? How does the ‘Jewish quarter’ relate to its neighbors, and what are its borders? Can one perceive the truth of a space without “succumbing to illusion”? Lviv is evoked in connection to all

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<sup>1</sup> See the interactive map of all *Lwów's* city streets at different historical periods: <http://www.lvivcenter.org/en/streets/streets/>

<sup>2</sup> Debora Vogel, “Lviv Jewry: A Précis for a Monograph about the Jewish Quarter in Lviv (1935/1937).” This article originally appeared in *Almanach i leksykon Żydostwa Polskiego* [Lwów] 1 (1937): 89–98. It also appeared earlier in a Swedish translation from the German manuscript in the Stockholm journal *Judisk Tidskrift*, no. 8 (1935): 318–325. English translation by Anastasiya Lyubas, in *Blooming Spaces: The Collected Poetry, Prose, Critical Writing and Letters of Debora Vogel* (Academic Studies Press: 2020), 101.

the other Jewish Quarters of the world -- a transnational network of margins. By mapping Lviv's markets and side streets, Vogel invites the reader into a layered site of language, recounting the myths and etymologies behind its street names, from "long, apathetic Krakowska (Cracow) street" to "Boyim (Tree) Street, Serbska (Serbian), and Blakharska (Tinsmith) streets," through "the street tumult of Lamana (Zigzag), Lazienna (Bath), Starozakonna (Old Testament), and Geşia (Geese) streets..." She exclaims, passing these obscured avenues: "Who would have guessed that they are so close to the downtown core! The ancient gates with the ornamental decorations, the wonderful baroque of Rynek (Market) Square: the lion, split in half, serves as a cornice, a chimera, and a vine ornament. These are the gates to the long shopping arcades. Upon seeing the streets, we might say along with the Yiddish poet [Reuben] Iceland, 'It smells here of cinnamon and cloves.'"<sup>3</sup>

By citing Iceland, the living sensorium of the city becomes intertextually linked to the space of Yiddish poetry. Perhaps the scent links it as well to Bruno Schulz's *Cinnamon Shops* (1934), the famous book of short stories by her companion whose name long eclipsed hers. Vogel walks on, inviting us into Lviv's old synagogue and her own life's private spaces:

Zhulkevaska Street comes next. It is an expressionless, flat, and banal street—half provincial, half urban. A one-floor residential house with wide gates—dirty and derelict—stands on this street. There lived my great-grandfather sixty years ago. Known as the "silk Jew," Reb Nissan Süß, a Kabbalist, received a secular education.<sup>4</sup> An author of treatises and a publisher, he must have radiated an aura of quiet solemnity. On business days, he wore his satin coat and a round sable hat—perhaps as an expression of the festivity which always kept him company. He is a representative of a whole generation and lifestyle, where a way of living and the pleasures available to a person permeated his limited everyday walks and experiences. It was a kind of life in a satin coat which was not at all disturbed by the fact that the border of the ghetto where the Jewish world ended was very close by.

Vogel's poetry and prose possesses a heightened attentiveness to the world in both its metaphoric and material registers: a satin coat becomes an emblem of the idiom 'a silk Jew,' and she recognizes that her family's way of moving through the ghetto contains its own pleasures and refinements. Vogel's essay reveals the city as an archive: of its inhabitants' languages, legends, and memories.

Today, when one takes a stroll in the former Jewish quarter in Lviv, the city where Vogel lived and worked, you might notice among the rows of houses that there is a house here and there on the street that is missing. There might be a children's playground in its place, or a square which might be completely empty. In some cases,

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<sup>3</sup> Reuben Iceland (1884-1955) was a Yiddish poet originally from Galicia and a member of the Modernist group *Di Yunge* (The Young Ones) in New York. Citation from the poem "Tarnow" in *Fun mayn zumer* [From my summer] (New York-Vienna: Unser Shayer, 1922): 73.

<sup>4</sup> A *zaydener yid* means a person with a noble character. Avrom Nissen Süß (1789-1905) was a printer and publisher in Lemberg.

there is a plaque in the middle of the square. Approach to read the plaque: you will find out that in this place there used to be a shul and that the synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis with a year indicated to recall this tragic event.

Vogel too was restored, in some way, to her hometown of Lviv. The Space of Synagogues project, sponsored by the Center for Urban History of Eastern and Central Europe and opened to the public in 2016, aims to encourage reflections about Jewish heritage and ethical responsibility in urban practices in this multicultural city.<sup>5</sup> It features multiple installations of texts by famous Jewish inhabitants of the city, as well as pictures of the city's central synagogue, which was destroyed by the Nazis. One of the memorial stones includes a quotation by Debora Vogel. The excerpt from the author's poem "Gray Streets" appears in Ukrainian, Yiddish, and in English translation by Anna Elena Torres.<sup>6</sup> Besides being memorialized in the Space of Synagogues project, Vogel became the focus of the "Fragments of Memory" exhibition dedicated to Jewish heritage, and the memory of visual artists and writers in the interwar Lwów, organized by London-based visual artist Asya Gefter and Dublin-based musician Olesya Zdorovetska in 2018.<sup>7</sup>

While these may be important acts of commemoration, ways to walk with Vogel, one can find in Vogel's life and work many other avenues into this space and its adjoining transnational networks and intertextual matrices. We ask in this special issue: besides walking the streets of Lviv, how else can we join Vogel? When excavating her words, reproducing her radical methodologies, and repurposing her artistic practices, where does Vogel take us?

### ***Vogel in New Scholarship, Poetry, and Art***

In *geveb's* Special Issue on Debora Vogel brings together new perspectives on Vogel's work through visual art, poetry, translation, and scholarship. This begins with the act of translation and rewriting. The poets and translators Jordan Lee Schnee, Zachary Sholem Berger, and Maia Grace extend their longstanding engagement with Vogel's work by demonstrating the radical aesthetic potential of her literary choices.<sup>8</sup>

Jordan Lee Schnee takes us on a stroll through Lviv's Jewish city streets in his translation "Lemberg's Jewish Quarter." As Schnee argues, Vogel's essay—"a poetic text"—provides a snapshot of the vibrant Jewish life in the city before the Second World War while at the same time also serving as a demonstration of Vogel's unique aesthetic theory and practice.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/public-en/spatial/space-of-synagogues/>

<sup>6</sup> The line from the poem in Anna Elena Torres's English translation reads, "The streets are like the sea/ they reflect the color of longing/and difficulty of waiting." ("di gasn zenen vi der yam/un shpiglen dem kolir fun der benkschaft/un di shverkeyt fun vartn.") (Groe gasn/Gray Streets)

<sup>7</sup> See <http://asyagefter.com/fragments-of-memory/>

<sup>8</sup> See Debora Vogel. Poems in translations from Yiddish by Jordan Lee Schnee. *Asymptote Journal*. <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/special-feature/dvoyre-vogel-figures-of-the-day/>.

See Debora Vogel, "Herring Barrels," translated by Zachary Sholem Berger. *Eleven Eleven Journal*, no. 10 (2011). See Maia Bull, "Who Was Dvoyre Fogel?"

[www.yiddishpoetry.org/Anthology/poets/fogel/about%20ofogel.html](http://www.yiddishpoetry.org/Anthology/poets/fogel/about%20ofogel.html)

Berger and Grace's suites of poetry take up questions of archival absence and language loss, one through an additive, imaginative approach, and the other via an investigation of erasure, emphasizing what is missing.

In "Herring Barrel," Maia Grace's poetic voice is confessional and familial, in stark contrast to the I-less speakers of Vogel's poems. Yet, Grace still imagines a conversation, a way to speak in the present day through and against Vogel's literary legacy. Zackary Sholem Berger's methods of poetic erasure work with facsimile and translation, reproducing absence and illegibility. He both faithfully translates Vogel's work while also cutting it up and rearranging it toward a new poetic creation. His piece "Erasing the Written, Rewriting the Erased" thematizes the experience of researching Vogel: reading her poems through the eye of a microfilm machine, comparing multiple manuscripts, confronting material decay.

These recent poems form a kind of alternative "correspondence" with Vogel. They fill the silence caused when Vogel's literary contributions were eclipsed by a male companion's work: Vogel's letters to Bruno Schultz were lost or destroyed, while his side of their correspondence was preserved. In their different ways, these new poems offer another way of writing back to Vogel. Berger's and Grace's pieces open new feminist lines of genealogy for contemporary US poetry. In juxtaposition to each other, they reveal how Vogel's vocal restraint can invite, rather than foreclose conversation.

Like Berger's poems, the Berlin-based artist Ella Ponizovsky Bergelson's series of "mural-montages" both erase and spectacularize Vogel's texts. Installed on the facades of various buildings in Berlin, Ponizovsky Bergelson seeks out a visual dialogue with Vogel's poetry. The layered "hybrid calligraphy" of Ponizovsky Bergelson's murals deliberately resists immediate legibility or consumption. And the muralist expands Vogel's own European multilingualism by translating the Yiddish poems into Arabic, English, and German. Vogel's cool geometric restraint suddenly riots into acid hues of yellow and purple and blue and two-toned shadows. "Present Figures" forms a two-woman collective (Ella Ponizovsky Bergelson and Debora Vogel), calling out to and withholding legibility from the polyglot collective of passers-by, extending Vogel's hyper-attention to the life of city streets.

The murals riff on how Vogel's poems resist being read on their original printed pages. Upon first opening a copy of *Manekinen: Lider* (1934), one might find the sans serif rectilinear Yiddish letters, slightly blurred on the title page, hard to read, and off-putting in their starkness, as are the perfectly squared-off stanzas of the poems within wide margins on the subsequent pages. In contrast, the brilliant colors and runny paint of Ponizovsky Bergelson's enormous murals eliminate such constraints of the printed page, while also challenging the viewer to decipher and understand Vogel's words.

In this issue, these poetic and artistic dialogues accompany new scholarly investigations into the dialogues already contained in Vogel's own work as poet and pedagogue. Ekaterina Kuznetsova and Anastasiya Lyubas's essay examines the potential intersection of Vogel and her better-known contemporary Itsik Manger. They argue that both writers subvert the European ballad genre and its gender hierarchies by depicting promiscuous female embodiment, theatricality, and the valuation of the "lowbrow" culture of *shund* in their sophisticated poetic practices. By considering the image of the

streetwalker in Manger's and Vogel's work, the authors demonstrate the complex networks of Yiddish poetry, in dialogue with European forms but also reaching toward new forms of transcultural creativity, if even in the margins.

Moving away from Vogel's poetry, Anna Misiak introduces the reader to the ways in which Vogel reconceived of literature as a vehicle for education, especially in conversation with the leading education reformers of her time. Her article shows how Vogel's theory of plasticity, or shaping and forming, develops and how Vogel applied it to her pedagogical praxis—especially in her work at a Jewish orphanage in Lviv. Misiak focuses on *Jednodniówka* (Day Trip, 1927/1928 and 1928/1929), a periodical which the orphaned children in Vogel's care published and edited with her guidance. Descriptions of daily life at the orphanage, the children's own literary texts, their reports on the books they had read, as well as accounts of regular communal reading events which appear on the pages of this publication illuminate Vogel's central role in children's aesthetic and ethical education. Misiak's analysis reveals Vogel's beliefs about the importance of exposing young adults to complex works of literature and artworks that could serve as vehicles for transforming children's perception of reality and helping them become responsible and educated adults.

Importantly, Misiak also considers Vogel's own critical essays in *Przegląd Społeczny* (Social Review, 1927-1939), a mouthpiece for CENTOS, the Association of Centers for the Care of Jewish Orphans in Poland. Vogel theorizes the educational process in its social and psychological contexts as "shaping the shapeless," "coming into the self," individuation by means of engagement with diverse worldviews, quality aesthetic stimuli, grappling with tradition, and brushing against, and being shaped by and against, the collective.

Finally, we wish to honor an unfinished project by Jewlia Eisenberg z"l for this issue. Eisenberg—who has previously set the letters of Walter Benjamin and others to music—was adapting Vogel's letters to Schulz with her musical collaborator Jeremiah Lockwood.

In showcasing contemporary poetic, artistic, translatory and scholarly engagements with Debora Vogel, this issue seeks to underscore Vogel's own contemporaneity/timeliness—her interest in the urban and mass culture, her engagement with intermedial aesthetics, and her important contributions to the avant-garde and literary modernism. These are ways to walk with and after Vogel.

### ***Vogel's Timeliness: Materiality and Consumerism in Author's Work***

Vogel's exploration of visuality in the metropolis speaks to contemporary mediated life: her focus—in poetry and criticism—on ephemera, advertisements, and other aspects of montage 'map' onto the emerging digital aesthetics of the present day. Vogel's walking requires her to defamiliarize the city, in order to pierce the "false exoticism":

I look for Smocza (Dragon) Street...I imagine that I am walking in a completely foreign city. Perhaps an illusion of foreignness helps to decipher the meanings of these street names. Finally, I find the street, and it is disappointing, as was to be

expected. Its name does not correspond to its banal and crooked houses or toy-like signs. The pictures on the tin surfaces illustrate what wares are available in the shops in a straightforward and primitive way. What does a “dragon” have to do with all this?

We may be disappointed but cheerful after all. The disappointment calls us to order, it helps us overcome the false exoticism which we cast as a veil over life in foreign cities and streets. This life is an ordinary life, a schema known since days of old—life moving between the poles of birth, marriage, and death, and a constant balancing act to prepare for what is to come. This is the life schema which Chagall discovered in his shtetl scenes from Vitebsk.

Vogel’s affect of “disappointed cheerfulness” in consumerism anticipates Marxist critiques such as Sianne Ngai’s *Theory of the Gimmick*. Ngai considers the gimmick to be significant because it “tells us something about how ordinary people process capitalism.”<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Vogel’s poetry confronts images of the gimmick: mannequins, cardboard cut-outs, and ultimately, even those recycled romantic scripts masquerading as authentic feeling. Ngai describes the feelings produced by gimmicks:

It’s first and foremost an aesthetic dissatisfaction, but one that immediately refers to an economic misgiving. And that misgiving is the feeling that there is something ultimately wrong about the way capitalism produces and measures wealth. There’s also this layer of begrudging acknowledgment that even if this thing isn’t convincing to me, it will be or has already been convincing to others. In other words, my experience of the gimmick always includes an awareness that the gimmick is not a gimmick for other people: *Someone* will go for the banana slicer or cryptocurrency future (and indeed, we as a collective body already do). So while predominantly negative or critical, our aesthetic judgment also includes a recognition of how socially powerful the promises of capitalism are—of how they manage to remain appealing and collectively effective in spite of being perpetually broken.

Ngai’s theorization of the gimmick resonates with Vogel’s own thematization of “aesthetic dissatisfaction” and “economic misgiving.” As Vogel walks her readers through the city, she cultivates a consciousness of her own desire for the material and attends to the malaise of living within the structures of commerce. Like Ngai, Vogel acknowledges the pleasure within ephemeral capitalist exchanges; both theorists write in a register attuned to the mundane, haptic qualities of consumer life.

Vogel’s thematization of materiality was not merely an aesthetic posture, but represented her compassionate attunement to human need for “the stuff of life.” Despite her own suffering during World War II, Vogel provided care and mutual aid for others, just as she had organized literary social life before the war.<sup>10</sup> She fed, clothed, and

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with Ngai, *The Nation*  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/sianne-ngai-theory-of-gimmick-interview/>

<sup>10</sup> See AE Torres, “Circular Landscapes: Montage and Myth in Dvovre Fogel’s Yiddish Poetry,” *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies & Gender Issues*, Number 35, Fall 5780/2019: 40-73.

housed Jewish writers and artists arriving from the western border, as the renowned Polish poet Aleksander Wat movingly recalls:

Thankfully they didn't seize me, because I would have died, of course. I escaped from Warsaw in a summer jacket, but in Lviv a Jewish writer named Dvoyre Fogel, a very intelligent woman and refined critic, gave me a fur coat belonging to her husband, completely worn out but with a warm lining. I traveled across all of Russia in that coat, and it saved me.<sup>11</sup>

His account reminds us that materiality is not merely a question of aesthetics, but a necessity for survival. In Vogel's poetic litany of the raw materials that support life, then, we must note the life-saving coat.

Vogel's work of the 1930s resonates with immediacy in 2021: she speaks of war, unemployment, revolution, and mass movements, mingled with the minutiae of everyday events -- shopping for a hat or visiting a delicatessen -- which are often kept in literature's background. Her poetic gaze abolishes the hierarchy between 'significant' and 'insignificant' events, using the visual tricks of Cubism to present all realms and surfaces simultaneously. Take this verse from Vogel's series "Day Figures," which appeared in the collection *Manekinen* (*Mannequins*).

Sometimes a round tin pot is  
melancholy like a boring person.

In many houses servant girls scrub large floors  
and soldiers in blue march on the streets  
and on soldiers' stiff uniforms  
on soldiers' blue uniforms  
there are four shiny round buttons<sup>12</sup>.

This verse collapses interior domestic space, where "servant girls scrub large floors," and the martial world outside. The soldiers themselves are *domesticated*, rendered like dress-up dolls with their shiny buttoned uniforms. Captured in simultaneous space, the poetic speaker sees through walls and commingles animacy and inanimacy ("a round tin pot is / melancholy as a boring person"). Vogel's Simultanism is a radical approach to representing the world: it humbles the aesthetics of heroism, deflates the grand narrative of war, and attends to the domestic world.

The banality and boredom of repeatable events and gestures; seasonal change: spring, summer, fall coming and going cyclically, choreographed, and according to the plan; the feeling of being stuck in enclosed spaces, the same movements and gestures of leaving one's house, going to a single destination and returning to the same house, the shape of your itinerary forming a rectangle with slight or no variations, and people on the streets and everything else that happens on the streets in a city a flat decoration, a cutout, a two-dimensional scene... Living within the constraints of quarantine, Vogel's

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Kaszuba-Dębska, "Debora Vogel" (above, note 9).

<sup>12</sup> See Lyubas, *Blooming Spaces*, 178.

genius for representing both the unbearably mundane and the unbearably historic becomes newly piercing.

Vogel's time rhymes with our own. She experienced an era of propaganda, diplomatic hypocrisy, and perpetual anticipation of war; our days see the rise of artificial intelligence, border militarization, and drone warfare. Vogel's writing thematizes the conditions of being a witness to war, consuming news and material life, and trying to speak without repeating the banal scripts of love and despair.

By recovering for an English readership a portion of Vogel's wide-ranging contributions, we seek to recognize a significant genealogical line of Jewish women's writing. Vogel's work challenges us to reconsider the central tropes of the East European avant-garde. A literary history of modernism that includes Vogel must center stillness, not dynamism or mobility, as a hallmark of the interwar avant-garde.

As Lyubas notes, Vogel consistently "juxtaposes phenomena that usually go unnoticed: spring blossoms which are part of the cycle of nature and occurrences which are typically foregrounded within consciousness and reported by the media as important world events, such as soldiers marching to the front, the unemployed roaming the streets or workers on a strike: 'the unemployed pass by blooming acacias, and the acacias bloom while revolutions are in the making.'"<sup>13</sup> The contributions collected in this volume invite you to walk with Vogel, joining her radical attention to the 'unnoticed' material of life.

### ***Vogel's Contemporaneity***

Debora Vogel has recently garnered interest in her hometown of Lviv, as we discussed in the beginning of this introduction. Likewise, Vogel's work is now experiencing a worldwide renaissance of sorts. There has been a spate of recent translations of her writing and new scholarship of Vogel's life and work in multiple languages and in many countries—in the US, in Europe, and even in Japan. This issue builds on the interest in Vogel's work in the US since the mid-2000s.

Debora Vogel did not always garner such interest in her work. She was an extremely well-educated and erudite Eastern European Jewish woman and intellectual with a PhD who struggled with gender discrimination, financial difficulties, misogynist criticism, and limited readership for her work in Yiddish. Yet she continued to uphold her commitment to high art and paved her own way as a professional writer in the 1930s.

The editors of this Special Issue look to build on the scholarship already available in the US and beyond. Our hope is that by inviting you on a stroll with Vogel as she maps the spaces of Jewish life through avant-garde forms—as well as those who speak in the present day through and against Vogel's work through poetry, visual art, translation, and scholarship—we open the possibility of an ongoing dialogue with Vogel's theory and practice in the years to come.

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<sup>13</sup> Lyubas, *Blooming Spaces*, 2020, xiv-xv. See also the English translation of "Montage as a Literary Genre" (1937) in the same volume: 32-33.

### ***Further Reading***

The current special issue builds on Debora Vogel's builds of renewed interest in her work beginning in the mid-2000s. We share here a short bibliography of recent scholarship and translations.

#### **Kathryn Hellerstein**

*A Question of Tradition: Women Poets in Yiddish, 1586-1987* (United States: Stanford University Press, 2014).

In her 2014 monograph, *A Question of Tradition: Women Poets in Yiddish, 1586-1987*, Kathryn Hellerstein, a scholar of Yiddish literature, reintroduced Debora Vogel's work into scholarly discourse through discussion of Vogel's poetry in its synthesis of Jewish and European influences and the insights the poetry yields into issues of embodiment, gender, and affectivity.

#### **Anastasiya Lyubas**

Debora Vogel. *Blooming Spaces: The Collected Poetry, Prose, Critical Writing, and Letters of Debora Vogel*. Edited, translated and with an introduction by Anastasiya Lyubas (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020).

See Debora Vogel. "Fragments" translated by Anastasiya Lyubas. *Consequence Magazine*. <https://www.consequencemagazine.org/fiction/fragments/>.

"A Note on Debora Vogel's 'Fragments'."

<https://www.consequencemagazine.org/feature-of-the-month/a-note-on-debora-vogels-fragments/>

Lyubas's translations of Vogel's works also appeared in *Lunch Ticket*, *InTranslation* at *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Pakn Treger* and *The Stockholm Review of Literature*.

Anastasiya Lyubas, "Debora Vogel (1900-1942), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*, DOI: 10.4324/9781135000356-REM2096-1, October 22, 2019.

*Debora Vogel. Bili slova: Eseyi, lysty, retsenzii ta polemiky*. [Debora Vogel. *White Words: Essays, Letters, Reviews and Polemics by Debora Vogel*]. Edited and translated by Anastasiya Lyubas. (Kyiv, Ukraine: Dukh i Litera, 2019).

In 2019, Anastasiya Lyubas published Ukrainian translations of Vogel's critical works and letters, *White Words*. In 2020, Anastasiya Lyubas, a visiting research fellow at the University of Toronto, published *Blooming Spaces*, the first comprehensive volume of Debora Vogel's poetry, prose, letters, and reviews in

English— which represents in equal measure Vogel’s rich work in Yiddish and in Polish.

### **Karolina Szymaniak**

Karolina Szymaniak. *Być agentem wiecznej idei. Przemiany poglądów estetycznych Debory Vogel* [To be an agent of an eternal idea: Modifications of Debora Vogel’s aesthetic views] (Krakow: Universitas, 2006).

*Montages. Debora Vogel and the New Legend of the City*. Ed. Karolina Szymaniak, Pawel Polit, Andrij Bojarov (Lodz: Museum of Art, 2017).

*Debora Vogel, Akacje kwitną. Montaż*, ed., trans., and with an afterword by Karolina Szymaniak (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Austeria, 2006).

Interest in Debora Vogel’s work across the Atlantic—in Europe and beyond—traces back to the early 2000s, with Karolina Szymaniak’s pioneering 2006 monograph *Być agentem wiecznej idei. Przemiany poglądów estetycznych Debory Vogel* [To Be An Agent of Eternal Idea. Modifications of Debora Vogel’s Aesthetic Views] which re-inscribed Debora Vogel into the scholarly discourse in Poland. Szymaniak reconstructed the author’s biography and the context of her work and introduced select translations of Vogel’s Yiddish-language poetry and essays into Polish. Her study examines the question of difference and the Jewish Other in Vogel’s work, attending to the author’s linguistic choices and avant-garde aesthetics.

Accompanying this monograph, Szymaniak also edited a 2006 volume of Vogel’s prose *Akacje kwitną (Acacias Bloom)*, a reprint of Vogel’s original 1936 Polish edition of the text with additional translations into Polish (by Szymaniak) from Vogel’s later Yiddish works.

Szymaniak’s work as a professor at Wroclaw University, a public intellectual, and recently also a co-curator—with Pawel Polit and Andrij Bojarov—of the exhibition *Montages: Debora Vogel and the New Legend of the City* in the Museum of Modern Art in Lodz in 2017-2018 has helped promote Vogel’s work in the Polish and, broadly speaking, Eastern European context. The Polish and English language catalogue of the *Montages* exhibition features essays on Debora Vogel by Polish art critic Pawel Polit, Ukrainian visual artist Andrij Bojarov, Japanese scholar and translator of Vogel Ariko Kato, Karolina Szymaniak, and many others.

### **Joanna Lisek**

Joanna Lisek, *Kol isze – głos kobiet w poezji jidysz* (od XVI w. do 1939 r.) [Kol ishe: The Voice of Women in Yiddish Poetry (from the 16th Century to 1939)] (Sejny: Pogranicze, 2018)

*Moja dzika koza. Antologia poetek jidysz* [My Wild She-Goat. An Anthology of Yiddish Women Poets], ed. Karolina Szymaniak, Joanna Lisek, and Bella Szwarcman-Czarnota (Kraków-Budapeszt-Syrakuzy: Wydawnictwo Austeria, 2018)

In 2018, Joanna Lisek, a professor of Jewish Studies at Wrocław, published her ground-breaking monograph *Kol isze – głos kobiet w poezji jidysz* (od XVI w. do 1939 r.) [Kol ishe: The Voice of Women in Yiddish Poetry (from the 16th Century to 1939)] and co-edited an anthology of Yiddish women's poetry *Moja dzika koza. Antologia poetek jidysz* [My Wild She-Goat. An Anthology of Yiddish Women Poets] with Karolina Szymaniak and Bella Szwarcman-Czarnota. In both books, Debora Vogel's voice figures prominently.

In addition to the *Montages* exhibition, the Museum of Art in Łódź held a scholarly conference dedicated to the interrelationship between art and philosophy in the Polish avant-garde. Conference organizers published a volume of peer-reviewed contributions in collaboration with the University of Łódź's *Folia Philosophica*.<sup>14</sup> Other recent publications of note include the *Maly Format* issue on Debora Vogel with essays by the author and contributions by Eliza Kačka and Ida Jahnke, Andrzej Frączyński and Jagoda Jankowska.

See <http://malyformat.com/tag/debora-vogel/>

## **Anna Elena Torres**

Anna Elena Torres, "Circular Landscapes: Montage and Myth in Dvoyre Fogel's Yiddish Poetry," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Studies* 35 (October 1, 2019): 40–74.

Debora Vogel. "Circular Landscapes" translated by Anna Elena Torres. *Pakn Treger: The 2015 Translation Issue* (Spring 2015/5775), <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/yiddish-translation/circular-landscapes-poem-dvoyre-fogel>.

Debora Vogel, "Legend of Gold Ships," "Legend of Banks," "Legend of Silver," translated by Anna Elena Torres. *Dibbur*, no. 5 (Spring, 2018).

Anna Elena Torres published translations of Vogel's poems from the author's 1934 *Manekinen* (Mannequins) collection in 2015 and in 2018 and discussed the

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<sup>14</sup> See <https://czasopisma.uni.lodz.pl/philosophica/article/view/9326>

author's Modernist poetry and its principles of simultaneity, critiques of commodification, and the mythologization of industry and commerce in her scholarly article about the author. Torres organized a symposium dedicated to Debora Vogel's work which took place at the University of Chicago in April 2019. This symposium sparked the idea of publishing this Special Issue.

See more on the symposium: <https://ingeveb.org/blog/circular-landscapes-a-symposium-on-debora-vogel-a-students-perspective>

### **Anna Maja Misiak**

Debora Vogel, *Die Geometrie des Verzichts. Gedichte, Montagen, Essays, Briefe* [The geometry of renunciation. Poems, montages, essays, correspondence], trans. from Yiddish and Polish, ed. and with an introduction by Anna Maja Misiak (Wuppertal: Arco Verlag, 2016).

Debora Vogel's work has also been translated and researched in Germany. In 2016, Anna Maja Misiak published *Die Geometrie des Verzichts* (The Geometry of Renunciation), a comprehensive collection of Debora Vogel's poetry, prose, letters, polemics, and reviews translated into German.

### **Annette Werberger**

“Nur eine Muse? Die jiddische Schriftstellerin Debora Vogel und Bruno Schulz.” In *Ins Wort gesetzt, ins Bild gesetzt. Gender in Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur*. Edited by Ingrid Hotz-Davies, Schamma Schahadat. (Bielefeld 2007), 257–286.

### **Sylwia Werner**

“Between Philosophy and Art: the Avant-Garde Work of Debora Vogel,” *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* 49, no. 1 (2019): 20-41.

Werberger and Werner researched aspects of Vogel's work related to gender and the writer's relationship with a philosophical tradition.

### **Ariko Kato**

加藤有子. アカシアは花咲くーモンタージュ (東欧の想像力) (Tokyo: Shoraisha, 2018).

A scholar of Polish studies based in Nagoya University in Japan, Kato published an award-winning translation of Vogel's *Acacias Bloom* from Polish into Japanese in 2018.

### **Yurko Prokhasko**

*In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies* (October 2021)

*Debora Vogel. Figury dniv. Manekeny.* [Debora Vogel. Day Figures. Mannequins].

Translated by Yurko Prokhasko (Kyiv, Ukraine: Dukh i Litera, 2015).

*Debora Vogel. Akatsiyi kvitnyt. Montazhi.* [Debora Vogel. Acacias Bloom. Montages].

Translated by Yurko Prokhasko (Kyiv, Ukraine: Dukh i Litera, 2018).

These are translations of Vogel's poetry and prose into Ukrainian.

### **Beila Titelman and Sara Mannheimer**

*Dvoyre Fogel. Lyrik: Tomma gator och gula lyktor.* Translated by Beila Titelman and Sara Manheimer (Ellestroms Dikter, 2020).

This volume includes translations of Vogel's Yiddish poetry into Swedish.

### **Karen Underhill**

*Bruno Schulz and Galician Jewish Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022).

Underhill's forthcoming monograph on Bruno Schulz will include reflections on his relationship with Vogel.