



"LIGHT & NOIR"

Exiles and Émigrés in Hollywood, 1933-1950

Organized and presented by the Skirball Cultural Center
Co-presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

October 23, 2014 – March 1, 2015

Skirball 
Cultural Center

The exhibition *Light & Noir: Exiles and Émigrés in Hollywood, 1933-1950* highlights the fascinating legacy of émigré actors, directors, writers, and composers in the American film industry. Exploring the origins of their exclusion from Europe as refugees from Nazi persecution, *Light & Noir* will focus on their subsequent contributions to American cinema and culture.

Film directors from German-speaking countries—such luminaries as Henry Koster, Fritz Lang, Otto Preminger, Billy Wilder, and Fred Zinnemann—made their way to California via Berlin, Paris, and London, and shaped the look of Hollywood’s “Golden Age.” Oscar-winning composers such as Erich Korngold and Franz Waxman created its sound, and acclaimed writers—from Salka Viertel to Franz Werfel—its stories. Already established émigrés, such as the director Ernst Lubitsch, the actress Marlene Dietrich, and the agent Paul Kohner, helped the new exiles and émigrés find their path in Hollywood.

Different genres in which European émigrés were especially productive, such as the exile film, the anti-Nazi film, film noir, and comedy, will be highlighted. Well-known films are presented alongside new discoveries using film clips, concept drawings, costumes, posters, photographs, and memorabilia to tell the story of Hollywood’s formative era through the lens of the émigré experience.

Light & Noir demonstrates how the experiences of exodus and exile affected the lives and work of émigrés in many different ways. It is a story of immigration, acculturation, and innovation that intersects with the flourishing of Hollywood as an American cultural phenomenon.

EXHIBITION OUTLINE

Light & Noir is organized into eight sections and begins by examining the catalysts behind Jewish immigration to Hollywood.

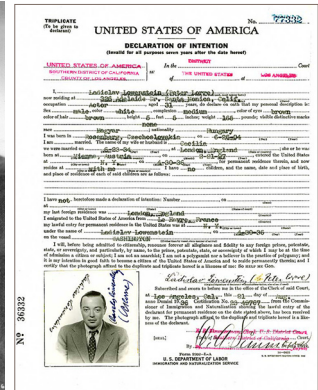
Prologue touches upon earlier waves of German-speaking Jewish immigrants to Hollywood in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Already established in Hollywood, they helped refugees from Nazi Germany to leave their countries and work in the film industry.



[l-r]
Carl Laemmle, founder of Universal Pictures
Paul Kohner, talent agent
Ernst Lubitsch, director

Exodus & Refuge explores who came to Hollywood in the 1930s and how they made it from Europe to the United States. This section also establishes who was already here and supported the refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe.

[I-r]
Hedy Lamarr, ca. 1940s
Billy Wilder, 1946
Declaration of Intention by
Ladislav Lowenstein (Peter Lorre), 1936



Casablanca as Exile Film considers how being a refugee or in transit informed this iconic movie in its story, protagonists and production.

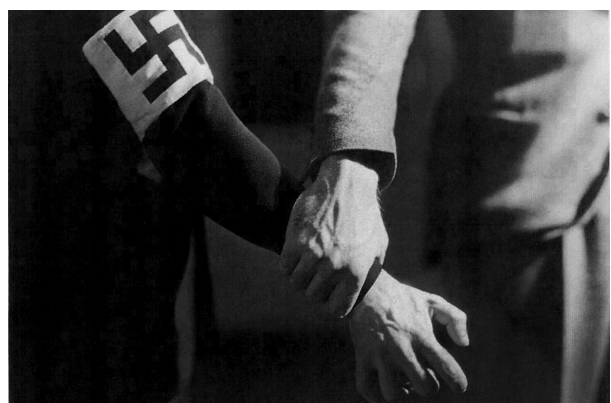


Casablanca, 1942, Warner Bros. Lobby card



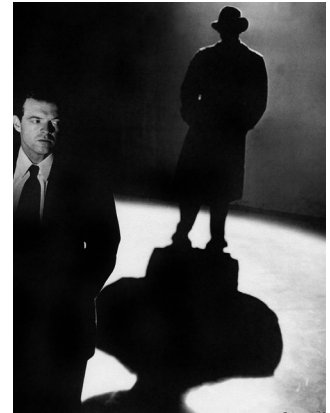
Casablanca, 1942, Warner Bros. Production still

Anti-Nazi Film introduces the notion of politics in filmmaking and the intricate roles that immigrants played in shaping the anti-Nazi film genre.



Confessions of a Nazi Spy, 1939, Warner Bros. Publicity image

Film Noir explores how this genre has been shaped to a great extent by Jewish émigrés. Dealing with the darker sides of humanity, these films reflect a background in German Expressionist filmmaking, mixed with new experiences and stories encountered in the United States.



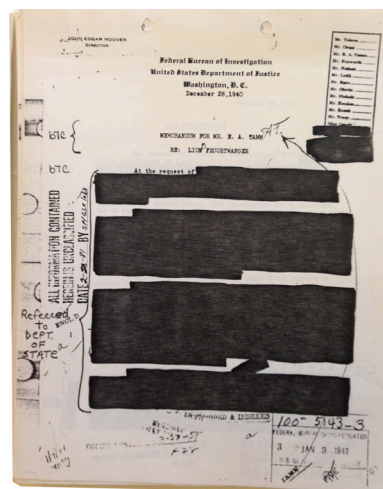
[L-r]
Mildred Pierce, 1945, Warner Bros. Production still
Act of Violence, 1949, MGM. Production still

Comedy looks at how exiles and émigrés dealt with diverse themes such as conflicted identity and masquerade, moments of absurdity and misunderstanding.



[L-r]
Ninotchka, 1939. MGM. Poster
Henry Koster and Deanna Durbin on the set of It Started with Eve, 1942. Universal Pictures. Set photograph

Freedom in Question focuses on how McCarthyism curtailed the careers of many émigrés working in the film industry and tested the notion of creative and political freedoms in the United States.



[L-r]
FBI file of Lion Feuchtwanger, 1940
Paul Henreid becoming an American citizen, 1945

Salons and Communities invite the visitor to relax in a recreation of a salon setting from the 1940s and learn about the vibrant networks and activities of German-speaking exiles and émigrés.



Group portrait of Erich Zeisl, Luzi Korngold, Erich W. Korngold, Elly Reichert, Gertrud Zeisl, ca. 1950-52

EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

Light & Noir will display Hollywood ephemera and personal memorabilia alongside a variety of dynamic audio-visual elements to help immerse the visitor in the world of filmmaking of that era through the émigré experience. Large projections featuring clips from famous movies will be shown on gallery walls and dramatic lighting effects will suggest the feel of film noir. Throughout the exhibition, there will be displays of large and colorful graphics from the Golden Age of cinema. Props from *Casablanca* as well as a 1940s-era salon filled with historic furniture, photographs and real-time salon activities will further activate the émigré's experience in both film and real life.

Sunset Boulevard, 1950, Paramount. Poster



EXHIBITION CONTENTS

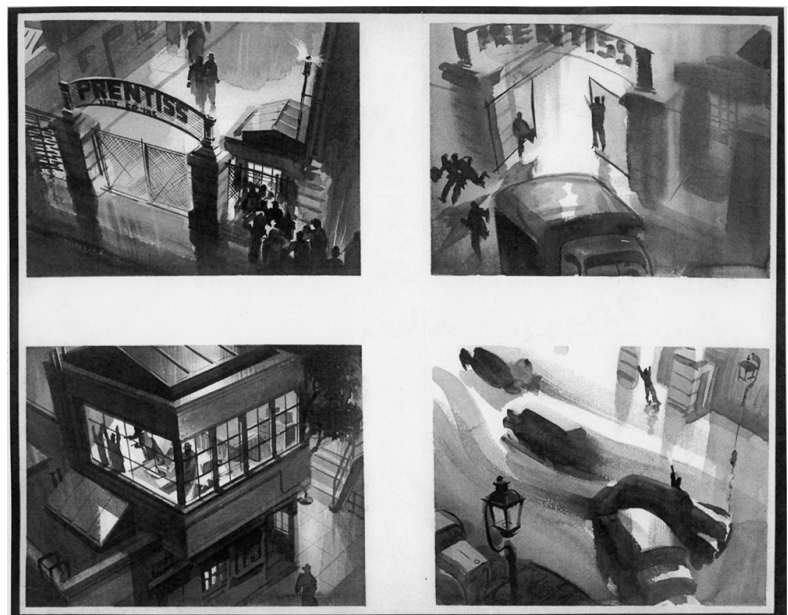
The exhibition checklist, currently under development, will include an array of objects from the collections of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Warner Bros., NBCUniversal, Paramount, Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM), Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at USC, Villa Aurora, and memorabilia and artifacts from the private collections of émigré descendants.



Objects will include film stills and publicity photographs related to 18 films featured in the exhibition, posters, costume and concept drawings, scripts, musical scores, lobby cards and film props for *Casablanca*, costumes such as a dress worn by Marlene Dietrich in *A Foreign Affair*, a director's chair used by Henry Koster, and an Oscar won by Billy Wilder.

In addition to film-related material, there will be historic film footage, immigration and naturalization papers, personal correspondence, and rare memorabilia and family photographs of the exiles and émigrés never displayed together before.

Four projections of film clips will bring the complexities of being in exile into the visitor's mind through the cinematic language of the moving image.



Above: Dress worn by Marlene Dietrich in *A Foreign Affair*, 1948, Paramount
Below: *The Killers*, 1946, Universal Pictures. Set drawings by Martin Obzina

EXHIBITION TOUR SCHEDULE

The exhibition is available to travel after its presentation at the Skirball in summer 2015.

SPACE REQUIRED

The exhibition requires approximately 5000 sq. ft.

EXHIBITION TEAM

Dr. Robert Kirschner, Museum Director

Kirschner oversees the selection, development, design, and maintenance of the Skirball's permanent collections and changing exhibitions. He also managed the original design, construction, and fabrication of the interactive installation Noah's Ark. He has played a central role in the Skirball's growth having guided the development of its core exhibition. Kirschner received an AB in history from Stanford University in 1972, an MA in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College in 1977, and was ordained a rabbi by Hebrew Union College in 1979. Following his ordination, he went on to earn a PhD in near eastern studies from the University of California at Berkeley in 1988.

Dr. Doris Berger, Curator

Berger is responsible for developing temporary exhibitions at the Skirball, including the most recent *Gary Baseman: The Door is Always Open* and *A smile, they said*. Prior to this, she was the director of the Kunstverein Wolfsburg, Germany, where she curated contemporary art and media exhibitions. She received her MA in romance studies from the University of Vienna, Austria, her PhD in art history at the Braunschweig University of Art, Germany, and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Getty Research Institute in 2011. Her book, *Projected Art History*, is forthcoming in 2014.

Linde B. Lehtinen, Assistant Curator

Lehtinen is responsible for developing temporary exhibitions and maintaining the permanent collection. Lehtinen has worked in both education and curatorial departments at The Art Institute of Chicago and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Most recently she worked for the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute. She received her BA in art history from the University of Chicago and is completing her PhD in art history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on the work of American commercial photographer Paul Outerbridge.

For sponsorship opportunities, booking information and tour availability, please contact:

Michele Urton | Exhibition Manager, Skirball Museum | 310 440 4604 | murton@skirball.org



With its museum collections, exhibitions, school outreach activities, and public programs, the Skirball Cultural Center is an essential part of the Los Angeles cultural fabric. Skirball trustees, staff, and volunteers look forward to presenting *Light & Noir: Exiles and Émigrés in Hollywood, 1933-1950* and the related public programs to Southern California and appreciate all considerations of support.