

Finding Aid for the Fritz Lang Collection

Collection Processed by:

Sarah Blankfort Clothier (September 10, 2012)
Revised, Emily Wittenberg (October 18, 2018)

Finding Aid Written by:

Sarah Blankfort Clothier (September 10, 2012)
Revised, Emily Wittenberg (October 18, 2018)
Revised, Joel Parham (January 12, 2026)

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Origination/Creator: Lang, Fritz
Title of Collection: Fritz Lang Collection
Date of Collection: 1934–1953
Physical Description: 19 boxes; 7.92 linear feet
Identification: Special Collection #4
Repository: American Film Institute
AFI Archives
2021 N. Western Ave.
Los Angeles, CA

RIGHTS AND RESTRICTIONS

Access Restrictions: Collection is open for research.
Copyright: The copyright interests in this collection remain with the creator. For more information, contact the AFI Archives.
Acquisition Method: Donated by Michael Nesmith in 1990.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORY NOTE

Fritz Lang was a noted filmmaker who immigrated to Hollywood via France during WWII in 1934, in protestation against the Nazi regime, becoming a United States citizen in 1939. Lang was born Friedrich Christian Anton Lang in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1890, to parents Anton and Paula Lang. He briefly attended the Technical University of Vienna where he studied civil engineering before switching to art; he studied painting under teachers in Vienna, Munich, and Paris. In WWI Lang served in the Austrian Army where he was wounded three times and decorated four times while fighting in Russia and Romania.

His German Expressionist films, including METROPOLIS (1927) and M (1931), are considered precursors to the film noir style of filmmaking that was popular in Hollywood from the early 1940s to late 1950s. Upon his move to the United States, Lang was employed at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Studios (MGM), where he rose to prominence by directing FURY (1936). After an illustrative and prolific career in Hollywood, making over twenty feature films, Lang died on August 2, 1976, in Beverly Hills, California at the age of 85. He is interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles, California.

This collection of materials was donated to the American Film Institute by Michael Nesmith (musician, songwriter, actor, and original member of The Monkees). He purportedly purchased Lang's Hollywood home and during renovations this array of papers was found under the floorboards.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Fritz Lang Papers are comprised of personal and business correspondence, financial records, newspaper clippings, film production documents, MGM memorandums, household records, and date books. The collection is arranged in six series:

Series 1: Correspondence

Series 2: Films

Series 3: Financials

Series 4: Household Records

Series 5: Writings and Manuscripts

Series 6: Miscellaneous

Series 1: Correspondence is arranged in several subseries; chronologically, by last name of correspondents (A-H only), and then grouped by subject or correspondent, a reflection of original order. Correspondence arranged chronologically is described with correspondents and subjects found therein. The list of correspondents is not comprehensive, rather a selection of frequent or prominent individuals, organizations and businesses included in the folders. In addition to Lang and his correspondents, also included are items created by Lily Latte, who was romantically involved with Lang (later became his wife), and Teddy Le Beau, Lang's secretary. Correspondence discussing specific films, was left in the correspondence folders and not moved to Series 2; however, were listed as subjects for access. Approximately one-quarter of the correspondence is in German.

Series 2: Films is arranged chronologically by film and alphabetically by format therein, and includes production documents such as notes, shooting schedules, correspondence and memoranda, materials regarding music and lyrics, budgets, press and publicity, etc. Series 3: Financials and Series 4: Household Records are comprised of miscellaneous receipts, diaries/daybooks, lists and banking statements. Series 5: Writings and Manuscripts are composed of materials created by other

individuals and personal friends of Lang. Series 6: Miscellaneous is comprised of press clippings, an interview transcript with Fritz Lang and various lists and notes.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Correspondence

Box 1

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1934
Boyer, Charles; Lily Latte, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, MGM memorandums, David O. Selznick, and Hugh Walpole; re: banking, book orders, employment at MGM in story department, miscellaneous, Screenwriters Guild contract, and travel plans
- f. 2–3 Correspondence, 1935 [2]
Barthelme, Richard; Harry Lachman, Lily Latte, Teddy Le Beau, Eddie Mannix, MGM memorandums, Jean Negulesco, Erich Pommer, Merrill Pye, Basil Rathbone, Gregory Ratoff, David O. Selznick, and Irving Thalberg; re: book orders, charity donations, employment at MGM in story department, and miscellaneous
- f. 4–7 Correspondence, 1936 [4]
Barthelme, Richard; Henry Blanke, John Bleifer, Charles Boyer, Joseph Breen, Walter Brennan, Ruth Chatterton, Edward Chodoroy, Humphrey Cobb, Lester Cohen, Scoop Conlon, Bartlett Cormack, Delmer Daves, J. Paul De River, Marlene Dietrich, Doris Dudley, Rudi Fehr, Henry Fonda, Kay Francis, Cedric Gibbons, Rudolph Ising, Sam Katz, Lily Latte, Teddy Le Beau, Prince Hubertus Loewenstein, Peter Lorre, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Joe Pasternak, Otto Preminger, Gregory Ratoff, Walter J. Ruben, David O. Selznick, Sylvia Sidney, Sir Hugh Seymour Walpole, Walter Wanger, Walter Francis White [NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], David Wold, and Felix Young; re: employment at MGM, THE FURY [MOB RULE / THE MOB], miscellaneous, one picture contract at Walter Wanger Productions, and YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

Box 2

- f. 1–6 Correspondence, 1937 [6]
Abel, Walter; James Agee, Brian Ahearn, George Bailhe, Myer P. Beck, Ferdinand Bruckner, Ruth Chatterton, Mady Christians, Humphrey Cobb, Scoop Conlon, Harry E. Edington, Mary Ellis, Howard Estabrook, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., William Gargan, Cedric Gibbons, Willis Goldbeck, Stanton Griffis, Leland Hayward, Hollywood Anti-Nazi League for the Defense of American Democracy, Miriam Hopkins, Sidney

Howard, Peter Irving, Sidney Janis, Venezuela Jones, Alice V. Keliber, Hy Kraft, Norman Krasna, William LeBaron, Irving Lerner, Willy Ley, Ernest Lubitsch, Daniel Mandell, Jarmila Marton, Guthrie McClintic, George O'Neil, Clifford Odets, Joe Pasternak, Otto Preminger, George Raft, Louise Rainer, Basil Rathbone, Ouida Rathbone, Curt Riess, Edward G. Robinson, Sylvia Sidney, Kurt Siodmak, David Ogden Stewart, Ernst Toller, Virginia Van Upp, Irma von Cube, Hugh Walpole, Walter Wanger, Brett Warren, Herman Weinberg, Lothar Wolff, and Adolph Zukor; re: employment at Paramount, Ernest Hemingway war effort thank you, Frontier Film Group, miscellaneous, screening of films at the Museum of Modern Art, solicitations, tiger cub donation, YOU AND ME production, and YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE [6 of 7]

Box 3

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1937
Abel, Walter; James Agee, Brian Aheme, George Bailhe, Myer P. Beck, Ferdinand Bruckner, Ruth Chatterton, Mady Christians, Humphrey Cobb, Scoop Conlon, Harry E. Edington, Mary Ellis, Howard Estabrook, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., William Gargan, Cedric Gibbons, Willis Goldbeck, Stanton Griffis, Leland Hayward, Hollywood Anti-Nazi League for the Defense of American Democracy, Miriam Hopkins, Sidney Howard, Peter Irving, Sidney Janis, Venezuela Jones, Alice V. Keliber, Hy Kraft, Norman Krasna, William LeBaron, Irving Lerner, Willy Ley, Ernest Lubitsch, Daniel Mandell, Jarmila Marton, Guthrie McClintic, George O'Neil, Clifford Odets, Joe Pasternak, Otto Preminger, George Raft, Louise Rainer, Basil Rathbone, Ouida Rathbone, Curt Riess, Edward G. Robinson, Sylvia Sidney, Kurt Siodmak, David Ogden Stewart, Ernst Toller, Virginia Van Upp, Irma von Cube, Hugh Walpole, Walter Wanger, Brett Warren, Herman Weinberg, Lothar Wolff, and Adolph Zukor; re: employment at Paramount, Ernest Hemingway war effort thank you, Frontier Film Group, miscellaneous, screening of films at the Museum of Modern Art, solicitations, tiger cub donation, YOU AND ME production, and YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE [1 of 7]
- f. 2 Correspondence, 1938
Re: miscellaneous
- f. 3 Correspondence, 1939
Curt Riess, re: miscellaneous
- f. 4–5 Correspondence, 1940 [2]
Hodge, F.W.; A. Kalb, George Kaufman, Herbert Kline, Paul Laszlo, Irving Lerner, Cozy and Inja McSparron, Kurt Pinthus, Germaine North Ringling, Walter Steinbach, Berthold Viertel, and John Wexley; re: miscellaneous [2]
- f. 6–8 Correspondence, 1941 [3]

De Ryver, Paul; Paul Kohner, Irving Lerner, Frank Lloyd, Herbert Luft, Kenneth Macgowan, Barton MacLane, Klaus Mann, Dudley Nichols, Ralph and Ilse Nunberg, Jean Renoir, Curt Riess, Germaine North Ringling, Hans Sahl, Leo Weaver, and Herman G. Weinberg; re: evacuations in Europe, MAN HUNT, miscellaneous, Lang's German films, and WESTERN UNION

Box 4

- f. 1 Correspondence, 1942
Lerner, Irving; Allen McNeil, Philip Merivale, Leo Mittler, Curt Riess, R. Rocker, Sarah Rolitts, Russian War Relief, Buddy Schulberg, Frank Silver, Hede Vasen, and Walter Wanger; re: miscellaneous and speaking engagements
- f. 2 Correspondence, 1943
Jack Warner, re: miscellaneous
- f. 3 Correspondence, undated
Re: miscellaneous
- f. 4 Correspondence, Correspondents A, 1940–1942, undated
- f. 5 Correspondence, Correspondents B, 1940–1943, undated
- f. 6 Correspondence, Correspondents C, 1940–1943, undated
- f. 7 Correspondence, Correspondents D, 1939–1943

Box 5

- f. 1 Correspondence, Correspondents E, 1940–1942, undated
- f. 2 Correspondence, Correspondents F, 1932, 1940–1942, undated
- f. 3 Correspondence, Correspondents G. 1939–1942, undated
- f. 4 Correspondence, Correspondents H, 1940–1943
- f. 5 Correspondence, Ley, Willy, 1941–1943, undated
- f. 6 Correspondence, re: Egon Erwin Kisch fund, 1939–1940, undated
- f. 7 Correspondence, re: European legal affairs and Malve Lang [stepmother], 1937–

1942, undated

f. 8 Correspondence, re: publicity, 1940–1941

f. 9 Correspondence, Rogers, Henry, 1940–1942

Series 2: Films

f. 10 THE JOURNEY [unrealized], Lists, re: tentative characters, 1934

f. 11 FURY (1936), Lists, re: casting, undated

f. 12 FURY (1936), Photographs, undated

f. 13 FURY (1936), Publicity Materials, undated

f. 14 FURY (1936), Schedules, re: shooting schedules, 1936

f. 15 YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE (1937), Call Sheets, 1936

f. 16 YOU AND ME (1938), Audience Comment Cards, 1938

Box 6

f. 1 YOU AND ME (1938), Correspondence and Memoranda, 1937–1938, undated

f. 2 YOU AND ME (1938), Correspondence and Memoranda, re: censorship, notes and revisions, 1937–1938

f. 3 YOU AND ME (1938), Financials, re: artists, 1938

f. 4 YOU AND ME (1938), Financials, re: budgets, 1938

f. 5 YOU AND ME (1938), Lists, re: cast and credits, 1938, undated

f. 6 YOU AND ME (1938), Lists, re: New York addresses, 1937–1939, undated

f. 7 YOU AND ME (1938), Miscellaneous, undated

f. 8 YOU AND ME (1938), Miscellaneous, re: songs and lyrics, 1937–1938, undated

f. 9 YOU AND ME (1938), Notes, re: cutting and editing, 1938, undated

- f. 10 YOU AND ME (1938), Notes, re: miscellaneous, undated
- f. 11 YOU AND ME (1938), Notes, re: script, 1937–1938
- f. 12 YOU AND ME (1938), Scene Breakdowns, undated
- f. 13 YOU AND ME (1938), Schedules, re: musical recording sessions, 1938
- f. 14 YOU AND ME (1938), Schedules, re: shooting schedules, 1937–1938
- f. 15 YOU AND ME (1938), Sheet Music, 1938

Series 3: Financials

- f. 16–17 Banking Statements, 1952–1953 [2]
- f. 18 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1950

Box 7

- f. 1–4 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1951 [4]
- f. 5 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1952 [1 of 3]

Box 8

- f. 1–2 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1952 [2 of 3]
- f. 3–4 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1953 [2 of 4]

Box 9

- f. 1–2 Banking Statements, Bank of America, 1953 [2 of 4]
- f. 3 Banking Statements, National City Bank New York, 1950
- f. 4 Banking Statements, National City Bank New York, 1951
- f. 5 Banking Statements, National City Bank New York, 1952
- f. 6 Banking Statements, National City Bank New York, 1953

Box 10

f. 1–5 Check Registers, Bank of America, 1950–1953 [5]

Series 4: Household Records

f. 6 Diaries/Daybooks, 1936

f. 7 Diaries/Daybooks, 1951

Box 11

f. 1 Diaries/Daybooks, 1952

f. 2 Diaries/Daybooks, 1953

f. 3 Lists and Receipts, re: possessions and Bekins Van & Storage Co., 1943–1944, undated

Box 12

f. 1 Receipts, 1950

f. 2–3 Receipts, 1951 [2 of 6]

Box 13

f. 1–4 Receipts, 1951 [4 of 6]

Box 14

f. 1–3 Receipts, 1952 [3 of 6]

Box 15

f. 1–3 Receipts, 1952 [3 of 6]

f. 4 Receipts, 1953 [1 of 7]

Box 16

f. 1–4 Receipts, 1953 [4 of 7]

Box 17

f. 1–2 Receipts, 1953 [2 of 7]

f. 3 Receipts, re: market bills, 1950–1951

f. 4 Receipts, re: miscellaneous, 1935–1937, 1950

f. 5 Receipts, re: storage, 1950

f. 6 Receipts, re: yellow sheets, 1950

Box 18

Series 5: Writings and Manuscripts

f. 1 *Arnold Schonberg* [published excerpt], Adorno, T.W. [Theodor], ca. 1953

f. 2 *Collection*, Shaw, Irwin, undated

f. 3 *Minima Moralia: fifty aphorisms to Max Horkheimer's fiftieth birthday*, Adorno, T.W.,
Los Angeles – New York, 1945, February 14

f. 4 *Minima Moralia [third part]*, Adorno, T.W., Los Angeles, 1946/1947, Winter

f. 5 *Miscellaneous*, Klein, Julius, 1939

f. 6 *Thomas More*, Horkheimer, Max, 1948

f. 7 *Walter Benjamin: zum Gedächtnis*, Adorno, T.W. [Theodor Wiesengrund] and Max
Horkheimer, 1942

f. 8 *Zeitlose Mode [Timeless Fashion, draft]*, Adorno, T.W. [Theodor], undated

Series 6: Miscellaneous

f. 9 *Legal*, 1924, 1935–1937, undated

Fritz Lang Collection

f. 10 Lists, re: books, diets, possessions, etc, 1935, 1940, 1943, undated

f. 11 Miscellaneous, 1935, 1937, 1945, undated

f. 12 Notes, 1936, undated

Box 19

f. 1 Press Clippings, 1934, 1936–1937, 1940–1942, undated

f. 2 Transcripts, "Interview of Director Fritz Lang," Evening Herald & Express Radio, Vandiveer, Jimmie, 1936, June 16