

Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

If you want your fellow fans to receive this newsletter or if you just want to add informations write to [mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de](mailto:mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de) . If you want to support the work of the Filmmuseum Berlin-Deutsche Kinemathek of which Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division you can do so by joining the "Friends and Supporters of Filmmuseum Berlin". Just go to <http://www.fffb.de>

Dear friends and fans,

Some may wonder why for such a long time we are concentrating on Marlene and endlessly publishing news on somebody who made his last public appearance decades ago. It is our system of keeping us mentally healthy. Does this answer seem strange to you?

Everyday here at Filmmuseum Berlin we are getting hundreds of junk mail. If you buy a journal (especially a PC journal) you also have a lot of new software which you don't need or a film on DVD which you never wanted to see. Life is getting chaotic and sometimes you may just think that the best way to organize your everyday life is to throw away all the junk you are keeping for the day when you may need it. Only that day will never come.

With Marlene (or any other special collection) we know what we've got, we know what we are talking about, we know what we like about her and what we don't. So this is sort of a resort. But aren't there also some chaotic elements, unanswered questions, controversial statements, mysteries and secrets? Right, and that's the fun part of our work and of the Newsletter – at least for us.

### Centenaries

Henry Koster  
(May 1 1905 - September 21 1988)

Born in Berlin as Hermann Kosterlitz; went to the movie theatres very often as his mother played the piano to accompany silent films; later on he became an assistant to director Kurt Bernhardt who being sick one day asked him to direct. Koster became a close friend to Joe Pasternak who represented Universal in Europe. In 1936 he emigrated to USA to work there with Pasternak. Koster was nominated for the Academy Award for "The Bishop's Wife". His last picture was: "The Singing Nun", 1965. Our greetings go to his son Bob Koster who wrote part of this short biography. Filmmuseum Berlin will celebrate Henry Koster's centenary by displaying some items from the Koster collection.



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Marlene Dietrich, Jack Hawkins and Henry Koster on the set of "No Highway in the sky", Elstree Studiosn England, 1950.

In preparing "No Highway" Koster wrote to Marlene, August 11 1950 (excerpt):  
"Would you please tell me from which side you prefer to be photographed in Close-Ups? This might sound funny to you, but we like to have you look pretty on the screen, and shall ask the Art Director to build the sets so that we can photograph you from your most becoming angle."

Marlene answered in a cable:

"Many Thanks your kind though none of my profiles are good – perhaps left one somewhat better because of hair and hat"

And that answers this question once and for all.

Anna May Wong  
(January 3 1905 - February 2 1961)

We wrote about the retrospective screenings of Anna May Wong's films last year and added that this might be a bit early. Now – as sort of negative balance - we are late in these centenary greetings.

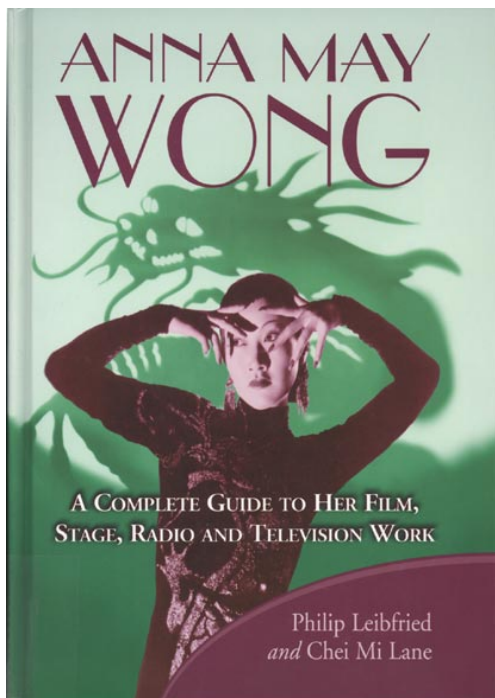
Actually there is no reference to Anna May Wong's relationship to MD or vice versa in the collection except that they acted together in "Shanghai Express". If you read anything in

any book about a love affair between both of them this should be nothing more than fantasy. Here is an interesting portrait by Peter Ballbusch who worked as an uncredited assistant to von Sternberg on "Shanghai Express".



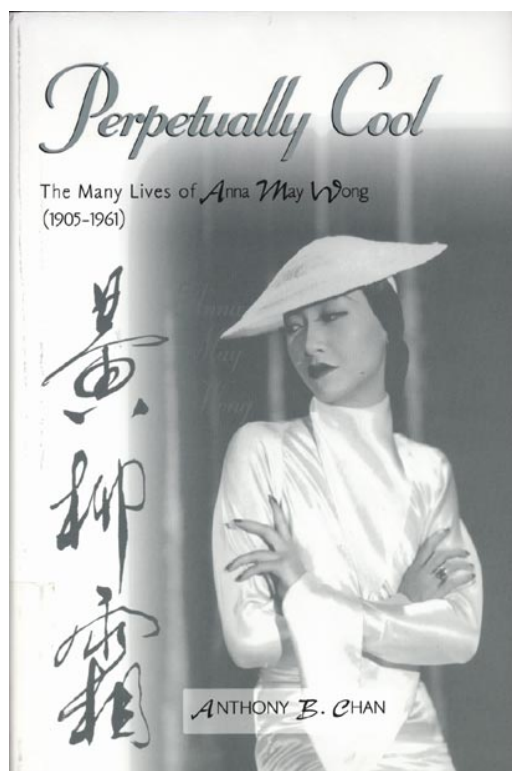
Sketch by Peter Ballbusch taken from the white script of "Shanghai Express"  
Courtesy of Meri von Sternberg

**(New) Books**



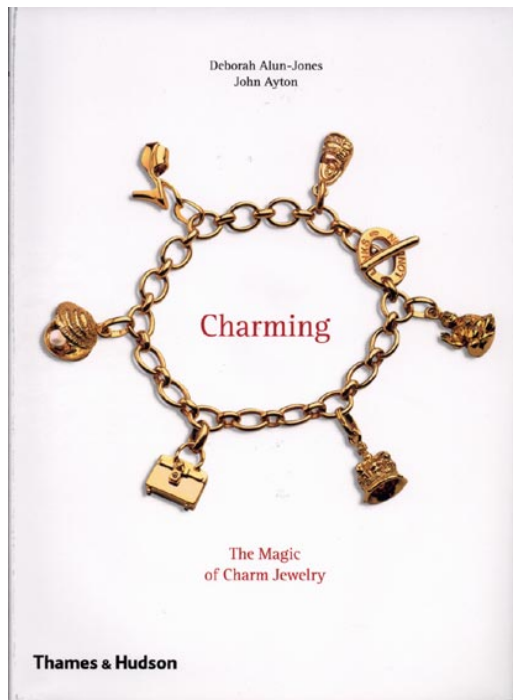
Philip Leibfried and Chei Mi Lane: Anna May Wong. A complete guide to her film, stage radio and television work  
Mc Farland ] Company Publishers, Jefferson, North Carolina and London 2004, 179 pp.

The title of the book tells it all. We can not judge if the stage, radio and tv work is complete but the films seem to be. However there is a strange column to each of the films called "Print status". We like to think that in connection with films a print is the film print which means the film itself. To declare under this heading that a video or DVD is available (and not one word about the film print itself) is rather daring.



Anthony B. Chan: Perpetually Cool. The Many Lives of Anna May Wong  
Filmmakers Series No. 103, The Sacrecrow Press, Inc. Lanham, Maryland and Oxford 2003, 312 pp.

As you can see this book was published in 2003 but sometimes it takes a while till we have access to foreign publications. Anthony B. Chan is interested in Anna May Wong as a representative of Chinese culture in America. So a large part of his study concentrates on the clash between western and asian culture. In the chapter on "Shanghai Express" Chan explains how many different Chinese dialects are spoken which to us ignorant western people all seem to sound the same. To name all the different languages is a nice piece of scholarship but it adds nothing to the understanding of the film as Sternberg was only interested in the effect of "Strangeness". Interesting to know though that Paramount did not renew Wongs contract after "Shanghai Express".



Deborah Alun-Jones, John Ayton: Charming. The Magic of Charm Jewelry  
Thames & Hudson, London 2005, 112 pp.

"This book, with a host of memorable anecdotes and historical facts, together with over 100 full-colour illustrations, is a treasury of keepsakes and talismans, and the perfect celebration of the exquisite charm of charms." There is no need to add anything special to the announcement of Thames and Hudson except: it is a nicely made coffee-table book and includes items which were given to Marlene from Frank Sinatra and Ernest Hemingway.

#### **A letter from Karen Kohler**

Greetings Berliners and Others,  
I write this in English, so all can read it. For those with whom I have not been in touch lately, I'm happy to report that after years of hard work my career has begun to bloom. I have more and more bookings in the U.S. and in Europe (where I had a 2-week run in London's West End in December). I am preparing for a May release of the long-awaited recording of my tribute to Marlene Dietrich, "The Moons of Venus," a live concert that was recorded in January. And a new website will be launched at that time as well.  
I have secured an agent in Berlin (Thomas Jost, who has represented Hildegard Knef, among others) and will organize concerts for June/July.

I have also secured a booking in Hannover (Germany) in June, which points to the possibility of a mini-tour.

#### **Questions and answers**

Jason: "Did MD and Amelia Earhart ever meet? Do you know of any photographs of them together?"

For those who don't know anything about Amelia Earhart here is a short lead ([Source: www.ameliaearhart.com](http://www.ameliaearhart.com)):

The young Earhart climbed trees, "belly-slammed" her sled to start it downhill and hunted rats with a .22 rifle. She also kept a scrapbook of newspaper clippings about successful women in predominantly male-oriented fields, including film direction and production, law, advertising, management, and mechanical engineering.

On May 20 1932 Amelia started a solo flight across the Atlantic. Strong north winds, icy conditions and mechanical problems plagued the flight and forced her to land in a pasture near Londonderry, Ireland. "After scaring most of the cows in the neighbourhood," she said, "I pulled up in a farmer's back yard." As word of her flight spread, the media surrounded her, both overseas and in the United States. President Herbert Hoover presented Earhart with a gold medal from the National Geographic Society. Congress awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross—the first ever given to a woman. At the ceremony, Vice President Charles Curtis praised her courage, saying she displayed "heroic courage and skill as a navigator at the risk of her life." Earhart felt the flight proved that men and women were equal in "jobs requiring intelligence, coordination, speed, coolness and willpower."



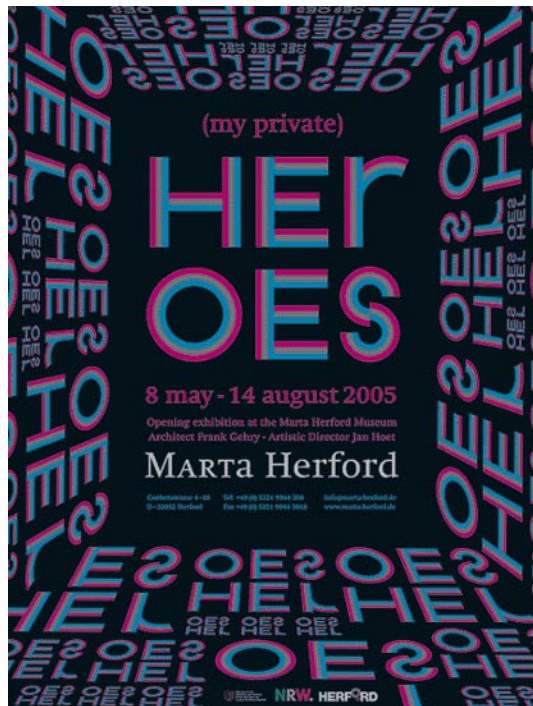
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Amelia Earhart on the Paramount set of "Song of Songs" in 1933

Sacha: I have four books stamped in red on the inside cover with: "Donation from the personal library of MARLENE DIETRICH". I found them a few years ago in a secondhand bookstore in Paris. Would you be able to tell me if this is an "authentic" stamp?  
After Marlene died the family had to clear the apartment immediately. Most of Marlene Dietrichs belongings were shipped to New York and eventually became the Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin which now is part of Filmmuseum Berlin. A minor part of the library was donated to the American Library in Paris. For reasons not known to us the American Library decided to sell part of this donation. Books with the Donation stamp surface from time to time at ebay and other stores. They are authentic and prove that the US Embassy was (and probably still is) so strapped for cash they are selling celebrity souvenirs.

### New Exhibition

"(my private) HEROES" is the title of the very first exhibition of a new Museum: MARTa Herford in Herford (Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany). This Museum is designed by architect Frank Gehry and headed by Art Director Jan Hoet. Opening is on May 7. The exhibition HEROES which also shows some objects of Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is open from May 8 to August 14 2005. For more information go to [www.marta-herford.de](http://www.marta-herford.de)



### Bad news, Sad news:

A German lawyer is sending claims to various lyric sites on the web with an invoice of 1.600 Euros for violating copyright. These claims are perfectly legal in Germany which means that Werner either has to pay a fine of several thousand Euro or to close his site. That's why [www.soundslkemarlene.de](http://www.soundslkemarlene.de) is now offline.

End of Newsletter 71 part one

### Second part:

A report on Marlene's U.S.O tour of 1944