

There would be no life without recollection, and memory is the first thing people destroy when they destroy themselves. Erich von Stroheim is a genius of memory and a genius in recognizing and using cinema as memory. He is everything for and through the camera.

Helmut Färber, »Erich von Stroheim et Maurepas,« 1994

After talks spanning many years between Director Michael Loebenstein and American film historian Richard Koszarski, in early 2022 the Film Museum acquired Koszarski's important Erich von Stroheim collection. For Stroheim research, it complements the large, partial collections in Los Angeles (Margaret Herrick Library) and Paris (Cinémathèque française).

The **RICHARD KOSZARSKI – ERICH VON STROHEIM COLLECTION** will be processed and made accessible in the coming years. Our goal is to present the collection to the public as an online, digitally accessible study collection by late 2024. We also plan to start a sponsoring project to help catalogue the collection and purchase (newly restored) films by Stroheim.



Austrian Film Museum, Augustinerstraße 1, 1010 Wien, [www.filmmuseum.at](http://www.filmmuseum.at)

## WER IST DIESER MANN?

### Die »Richard Koszarski – Erich von Stroheim Collection«

Die Sammlung, die das Österreichische Filmmuseum im Jahr 2022 von dem amerikanischen Autor und Filmhistoriker Richard Koszarski erworben hat, ist von besonderem Interesse für unsere Institution, für die Stadt Wien, in der Erich von Stroheim 1885 geboren wurde, und für alle Forscher\*innen, die sich für den Stummfilm allgemein und diesen großen Filmemacher im Besonderen interessieren.

Richard Koszarski beschäftigte sich seit den späten 1960er Jahren mit dem österreichisch-amerikanischen Regisseur, Schauspieler und (Drehbuch)Autor. Er begann mit der Zusammenstellung einer vollständigen Bibliografie von und über Stroheim und führte dann zwischen 1971 und 1973 Interviews mit Persönlichkeiten aus der Welt des Kinos, die mit Stroheim gearbeitet hatten, wie James Wong Howe, Fay Wray, Hal Mohr, William Margulies, Anita Loos und Paul Ivano. Krönender Abschluss dieser Forschungen war die Publikation *The Man You Loved to Hate* im Jahr 1983 bei der renommierten Oxford University Press. Im Jahr 2001 erschien *VON. The Life & Films of Erich von Stroheim*, eine erweiterte Fassung seines ersten Buches.

#### FOTOSERIE

- 1 Eines der ersten Fotos von Erich Oswald Stroheim, 1885/1886
- 2 Der junge Stroheim in Uniform, um 1900
- 3 In Hollywood, umgeben von Filmstreifen, 1920/1921
- 4 Als Regisseur, 1920/1921
- 5 Am Set von *Merry-Go-Round*, 1922
- 6 – 7 Ein Meister der Pose, 1920er Jahre
- 8 Signiertes Porträt als Universal-Star, 1919–1923
- 9 Vor seiner privaten Radioanlage in Universal City, ca. 1923
- 10 (Doppelter) Schnitt bei *The Wedding March*, 1926/1928
- 11 Mit Erich von Stroheim Jr., ca. 1917
- 12 Vater und Sohn, ca. 1923
- 13 Offensichtlich wurde der Champagner nicht mit dem Säbel geöffnet ...
- 14 Exklusives Porträtfoto für die Fox Film Corporation, ca. 1933
- 15 Nach dem Feuerunfall seiner Frau, Valerie Germonprez, an ihrem Krankenbett, 1933
- 16 Ein Salut beim Verlassen einer American Airlines Maschine, 1950er Jahre
- 17 Am Set von *Alraune*, 1952
- 18 Neben Denise Vernac (rechts), 1950er Jahre
- 19 Der gewohnt enigmatische Blick, Mitte der 1920er Jahre

## WHO IS THIS MAN?

### The »Richard Koszarski – Erich von Stroheim Collection«

The collection that the Austrian Film Museum acquired from American author and film historian Richard Koszarski in 2022 is especially valuable for film history, for our institution, for the city of Vienna where Stroheim was born in 1885, and for all researchers interested in silent film in general and this important filmmaker in particular.

Richard Koszarski began studying the Austrian American director, actor, and (script)writer in the late 1960s. He started by compiling a complete bibliography by and about Stroheim and, between 1971 and 1973, conducted a series of interviews with personalities who knew Stroheim or had worked with him, such as James Wong Howe, Fay Wray, Hal Mohr, William Margulies, Anita Loos, and Paul Ivano. The crowning achievement of his research was the publication of the book *The Man You Loved to Hate* in 1983 (Oxford University Press). In 2021 came the even more comprehensive *VON: The Life & Films of Erich von Stroheim*.

#### PHOTO GALLERY

- 1 One of the first photos of Erich Oswald Stroheim, 1885/1886
- 2 Young Stroheim in uniform, c. 1900
- 3 In Hollywood, surrounded by film strips, 1920/1921
- 4 As a director, 1920/1921
- 5 On the set of *Merry-Go-Round*, 1922
- 6 – 7 A master of pose, 1920s
- 8 Signed portrait as a Universal star, 1919–1923
- 9 In front of his private radio set in Universal City, c. 1923
- 10 Double cut on *The Wedding March*, 1926/1928
- 11 With Erich von Stroheim Jr., c. 1917
- 12 Father and son, c. 1923
- 13 The champagne was obviously not opened with a saber ...
- 14 Exclusive portrait photo for Fox Film Corporation, c. 1933
- 15 After his wife, Valerie Germonprez, had an accident involving fire, at her bedside, 1933
- 16 A salute as he exits an American Airlines plane, 1950s
- 17 On the set of *Alraune (Unnatural)*, 1952
- 18 Next to Denise Vernac (right), 1950s
- 19 The usual enigmatic look, mid-1920s

#### ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GERMAN QUOTES AND TEXTS

»I have always told them the truth as I saw it ...

They liked it or they did not like it ...

But it was the truth anyway ... as I saw it ...«

#### ERICH VON STROHEIM

He did not seem to exist beyond his pose. His image always remained a mask, his skin worn on the marketplace for artistic and commercial purposes. Studying him implies trying to get to the bottom of him. Erich Oswald Hans Carl Marie von Stroheim, Graf von Nordenwell, was in fact Erich Oswald Stroheim and he created his biography himself as a model for what he personified onscreen. It feels like both the anticipation of an auteur and at the same time his deconstruction. In Stroheim's case, the death of the author as diagnosed by Roland Barthes is also part of the system since the point was to create a fictional persona. The main question is closer to Michel Foucault's essay *What is an Author?* In the particular case of Stroheim, the question is: Who is the author?

Who is this man? What kind of secretive being is he? No lieutenant out of Schnitzler. No officer. No »von.« Definitely not someone »from above« who retaliated against his regular colleagues. To the contrary: someone from below who could not advance upwards; a small Austrian who could not become big in his homeland and got his revenge by immortalizing it! [...] Stroheim's life's work is such a dream, dreamed by somebody who was not admitted to reality; yes, who could not once experience how other people wake up from their dreams.

**Anton Kuh, »Der Traum eines österreichischen Reservisten«**

[*The Dream of an Austrian Reservist*], 1929

He is known simply as »Von,« and every kid in Hollywood today knows who »Von« is. Erich von Stroheim was too cumbersome. They tore the »Von« from his name and that's what they fondly called him from then on – just as if they wanted to flaunt the three royal letters on the parvenus' fairground. At the same time, they pronounce the »Von« like »one.« And if you ask, still a Hollywood greenhorn: why do you call Stroheim »one«? – then you hear the answer: because each company can only shoot one film with him and afterwards they're broke.

**Billy Wilder, »Stroheim, der Mann, den man gerne hasst«**

[*Stroheim, the Man You Love to Hate*], 1929

If Balzac and Maupassant could add a »de« without hurting their reputations, then why not Erich Oswald Stroheim, son of the salesman (and felt hat maker) Benno Stroheim from Gleiwitz and Johanna, née Bondy, from Prague, whose birth and circumcision are recorded in the official register of Vienna's Jewish community on September 29, 1885? [...] André Malraux's distinction between »actors« who slip into many roles and »stars« upon whom many scripts converge,« makes a »star« out of the Stroheim of his own films who later became an »actor,« although never in such a way that anyone watching any of his roles could forget: here comes Stroheim.

**François Bondy, *Zwischen zwei Legenden [Between Two Legends]*, 1967**