Finding aid for the Gretl Dichter photographs and personal papers, 1907-1996.

Sarah R. Jones
Descriptive Summary
Title: Gretl Dichter photographs and personal papers
Date (inclusive): 1907-1996 (bulk 1916-1940)
Number: 2004.M.2
Creator/Collector: Dichter, Gretl
Physical Description: 1.5 Linear Feet(4 boxes)
Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles 90049-1688
reference@getty.edu
URL: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/askref
(310) 440-7390
Abstract: This collection of photographs and a few personal items document the life of Gretl Dichter, her family, and her travels prior to emigrating to the United States from Vienna, Austria in 1946.
Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.
Language: Collection material is in German with some English
Biographical/Historical Note
Margarete (Gretl) Dichter was born in Vienna, Austria on April 17, 1907. She and her six siblings grew up there, with their parents, who frequently traveled to European vacation sites and resorts. Gretl worked in her father's department store, where she developed her business acumen and fashion sense. She became very interested in photography, and documented her extensive travels across Europe with her detailed and artistic photographs. When Austria was annexed by Hitler and the Third Reich in 1938, they also confiscated the Dichter properties and holdings, forcing Gretl and her siblings to flee to Chicago where they lived with family from her father's side.
Gretl and her husband, Walter Silton, opened a wholesale toy company in Los Angeles which became very successful. She was also to spend the rest of her life doing what she loved: interior design, art, architecture, and classical music. She was passionate about the outdoors, and frequently hiked, skied, and frequently took photographs of her adventures.
She commissioned Richard Dorman to build a house in Beverly Hills based off of the furniture she was able to bring from her apartment in Vienna, which had been designed by Walter Sobotka, a famous member of the Wiener Werkstatte in Vienna. Gretl spent her last years living in a penthouse that overlooked UCLA and the Bel Air area. She cherished her memories, her photographs, and her artwork. She died March 23, 1966.
Acces
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Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2004m2
Acquisition Information
Processing History
Initial evaluation by Frances Terpak on May 13, 2003. Movement and rehousing by Vladimira Stefura on January 8, 2004. The collection was reprocessed and the finding aid was written by Sarah R. Jones in 2016 under the supervision of Kit Messick.
Scope and Content of Collection
This collection consists of 158 photographs, two original portfolios, one postcard, one driver's license, and one passport. It also includes a three-page, typewritten biography signed by Edith Arlen Wachtel, Walter Arlen, and Howard Myers. The photographs include views of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and several landscape scenes taken by Gretl on
her vacations and travels. There are many images of the Dichter family, and three photographs of the commemorative plaque that was erected in her honor in Brentwood, California.

**Arrangement**

Organized in three series: Within each series, files are arranged alphabetically. Within each physical folder, the items are in chronological order. Series I. Photographs of Locations, 1929-1933; Series II. Photographs of Dichter Family, 1907-1996; Series III. Personal Items and Papers, undated.

**Subjects - Topics**

Portrait photography

**Subjects - Places**

Italy -- Description and travel
Germany -- Description and travel
Switzerland -- Description and travel
Europe -- Description and travel
Austria -- Description and travel
France -- Description and travel

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Black-and-white photographs
Black-and-white photographs -- 20th century
Passports
Photographs, Original
Photographs -- 20th century
Postcards -- 20th century
Black-and-white photographs -- Austria -- 20th century

**Contributors**

Dichter, Gretl

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Series I. **Photographs of Locations, 1929-1933**

**Physical Description:** 0.5 Linear Feet (1 box, containing 95 photographs)

**Scope and Content Note**

This series of photographs are from varying locations across Europe, on many of the trips and vacations that Gretl took with her family prior to her emigration to the United States from Austria in 1946.

**Arrangement**

The photographs in this series are separated into files, arranged alphabetically, based on the subject of the photographs. Items in the files themselves are arranged chronologically.

**box 1, folder 1**

Series I.A. **Austria, 1932**

**Physical Description:** (1 box, 4 photographs)

**Scope and Content Note**

These photographs were taken in various locations in Austria, including (but not limited to): Heiligenblut am Großglockner.

**box 1, folder 2**

Series I.B. **France (French Riviera), 1933**

**Physical Description:** (1 box, 16 photographs)

**Scope and Content Note**

These photographs were taken in various locations in the France, mainly in the French Riviera. Locations include (but are not limited to): Antibes, Avignon, Cannes, Monaco, Monte Carlo, Saint-Honorat, and Vichy.
box 1, folder 3  
**Series I.C. Germany, undated**  
Physical Description: (1 box, 2 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
These photographs were taken in Rothenburg, Germany.

box 1, folder 4  
**Series I.D. Italy and Dalmatia, 1929-1933**  
Physical Description: (1 box, 28 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
These photographs were taken in various locations in Italy and the Dalmatian Coast. Locations include (but are not limited to): Florence, Genoa, Venice, Milan, and Pisa.

box 1, folder 5  
**Series I.E. Italy and Dolomites, 1930-1932**  
Physical Description: (1 box, 20 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
These photographs were taken in various locations in Italy, mainly in the Dolomites. Locations include (but are not limited to): Belvedere, Corinta d’Ampezzo, and Pordoi Pass.

box 1, folder 6  
**Series I.F. "Snow Scenes," 1931-1933**  
Physical Description: (1 box, 8 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
These photographs were taken in various locations across Europe, but are all winterscapes and snowscapes. Some include location names, while others are undated and unlabeled. Locations include (but are not limited to): Rottenstein, Germany and Arlberg, Austria.

box 1, folder 7  
**Series I.G. Switzerland, 1933**  
Physical Description: (1 box, 17 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
These photographs were taken in various locations in the Switzerland. Locations include (but are not limited to): Bern, Geneva, Lucerne, and Montreux.

**Series II. Photographs of Dichter Family, 1907-1996**

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear Feet(1 box, 62 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
Photographs of Gretl Dichter and close family members from varying time frames and locations. Included in the photos are Gretl herself, her husband Walter Silton, as well as her sisters Rosl and Edith Silton. Group photographs of the family include her father and other close cousins and relatives.

Arrangement  
Photographs are separated into files and arranged alphabetically, based on the subject portrayed in the photograph. Items in the files themselves are arranged chronologically.

box 2, folder 5-7  
**Family Photographs, 1907-1941**

Physical Description: (1 box, 28 photographs)  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains photographs of Gretl and her immediate family, as well as extended family, including but not limited to first and second cousins, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.
Series II. Photographs of Dichter Family, 1907-1996

**Gretl and Walter Silton, 1930-1933**

Physical Description: (1 box, 12 photographs)

Scope and Content Note
Photographs of Gretl and Walter Silton in various locations. The pictures depict them skiing, posing for photographs, as well as some candid shots. The photos appear to be from their travels in Europe, although many are undated and unlabeled.

**Miscellaneous, 1996, undated**

Physical Description: (1 box, 9 photographs)

Scope and Content Note
Undated photographs of Gretl’s living room in her Bel Air home, as well as photographs taken in 1996 of the commemorative plaque erected in her honor in Brentwood, California.

**Self Portraits, 1920-1933**

Physical Description: (1 box, 13 photographs)

Scope and Content Note
Photographs of just Gretl herself, ranging from a portrait of Gretl as an infant in 1907 to later images from her vacations in the 1930s.

Series III Personal Items and Papers, 1932, 1938, undated

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear Feet (2 boxes, 6 items)

Scope and Content Note
Contains miscellaneous papers from Gretl Dichter’s life and legacy. A German driver’s license and passport, four photocopies of family pictures, a postcard acquired on a trip to Wisconsin (undated), two original portfolios that originally housed some of the photographic material, as well as a genealogical collage and a three-page typewritten biography about Gretl that was written and signed by Edith Arlen Wachtel, Walter Arlen, and Howard Myers.

Arrangement
Items are located in three separate files, and have no dates.

**Personal papers, 1932, 1938, undated**

**Portfolios, undated**

Scope and Content Note
Original housing for Dichter’s photographs, separated due to fragility.

**Genealogical collage, undated**

Scope and Content Note
Undated collage made from reproductions of photos and documents believed to have been created by Edith Wachtel Arlen and Walter Arlen.