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1982 Kaufman Astoria Studios Custom Investor Portfolio & Archive Stills

Produced in late 1982 and custom-stamped for presentation to investor Stephen Levy, this presentation album served as a high-level institutional prospectus during the public-private push to redevelop Queens' historic film complex into Kaufman Astoria Studios. Assembled to highlight the facility's revival, the portfolio functions as a comprehensive architectural record and primary source visual archive, documenting 62 years of motion picture history.

\$850 #22402

Physical & Bibliographic Description

Format & Binding:

Large folio (13 x 14.5 inches) deluxe padded black vinyl/leatherette presentation binder featuring a gold-stamped studio emblem and gilt titling (*Astoria Studios 1920–1982 / Stephen Levy*) on the upper board, custom-stamped for investor Stephen Levy during George S. Kaufman's landmark 1982 redevelopment push, with an inner spiral-bound assembly housing heavy black mounting leaves.

Contents Structure:

Introductory Documents

- Full-page investor prospectus statement outlining the 1920–1982 studio history and future redevelopment goals.
- Facsimile of the 1978 Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places certificate.
- Eight-page typed chronological filmography and production index spanning 1921 to 1982.
- Printed NYC Landmark designation plaque sheet and illustration.

Photographic Stills

- 34 high-gloss 8×10 inch gelatin silver press and production stills.
- Classic silent and early sound production stills featuring Rudolph Valentino, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, and Paul Robeson.
- 1940s Army Pictorial Center soundstage and interior production views.
- Late-1970s feature film set photography including *The Wiz*, *Hair*, and *All That Jazz*.
- Original press stills from the December 13, 1982 groundbreaking ceremony.

Unrecorded Imagery: Over a dozen photographs—including backlot set constructions, 1920s street-level views, main stage architecture, and early-1980s redevelopment milestone ceremonies—do not appear in digital film databases.

"Unrecorded in OCLC/WorldCat and institutional finding aids. While precursor planning files from the 1970s foundation era are preserved in municipal archives, this custom 1982 investor portfolio—distributed privately to key financial backers during George S. Kaufman's redevelopment drive—appears unrecorded in public institutional holdings."

Studio Historical Context:

East Coast Hollywood Era (1920–1932): Constructed in 1920 for Famous Players–Lasky (later Paramount Pictures) by Adolph Zukor, the Astoria Studios complex in Queens served as the epicenter of East Coast feature film production, leveraging its proximity to Broadway talent.

During this era, over 120 silent and sound features were filmed on site, including major vehicles for Rudolph Valentino (*A Sainted Devil*, 1924), W.C. Fields (*It's the Old Army Game*, 1926), the Marx Brothers (*The Cocoanuts*, 1929; *Animal Crackers*, 1930), and Paul Robeson (*The Emperor Jones*, 1933).

Army Pictorial Center Era (1942–1970): Acquired by the U.S. Army Signal Corps during WWII, the studio operated for nearly three decades as the Army Pictorial Center (APC), generating thousands of military training, indoctrination, and combat documentary films under directors such as Frank Capra and John Huston.

Preservation & Rebirth (1977–1982): Following military deactivation in 1970, the facility was saved from demolition by community leaders, film preservationists, and civic figures. It was designated a New York City Landmark (March 1978) and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (November 1978). Production resumed with Sidney Lumet's *The Wiz* (1977) and Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979).

The 1982 Redevelopment Drive: Developer George S. Kaufman spearheaded a major public-private expansion in the early 1980s to convert the complex into Kaufman Astoria Studios. This redevelopment drive provided the immediate catalyst for assembling this portfolio, which was distributed to key financial backers during the December 13, 1982 groundbreaking.

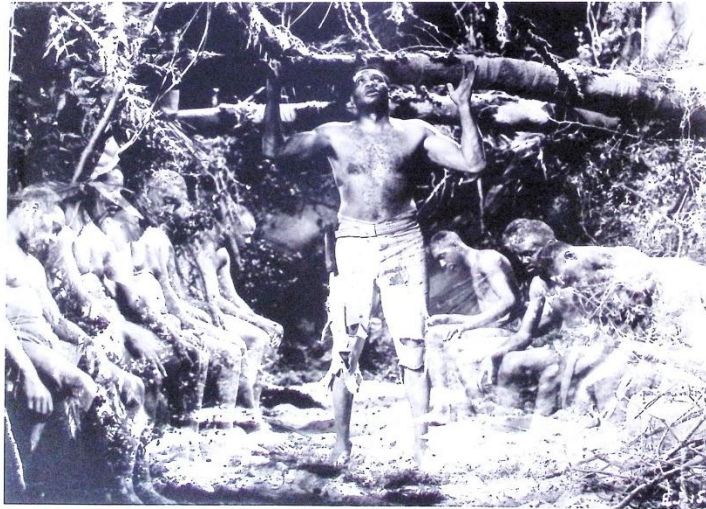
Institutional Value & Significance

- **Primary Source Film History:** Documents of the physical infrastructure and output of the most significant film production facility outside of Southern California.
- **Urban & Architectural Preservation:** Captures a pivotal moment in New York City's cultural heritage preservation, bridging silent-era Hollywood history with modern municipal redevelopment.

Images and Documents:



Original Famous Players–Lasky (now Kaufman Astoria) studio façade, Astoria, Queens, c. 1920. Built to leverage proximity to Broadway, the site later housed the U.S. Army Pictorial Center (1942–1971) and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



PAUL ROBESON IN "THE EMPEROR JONES" - 1933



W. C. FIELDS IN "IT'S THE OLD ARMY GAME", - 1926



INA CLAIRE AND FREDRIC MARCH IN "THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BROADWAY" - 1930



THE MARX BROTHERS IN A SCENE FROM THE FILM "ANIMAL CRACKERS" - 1930

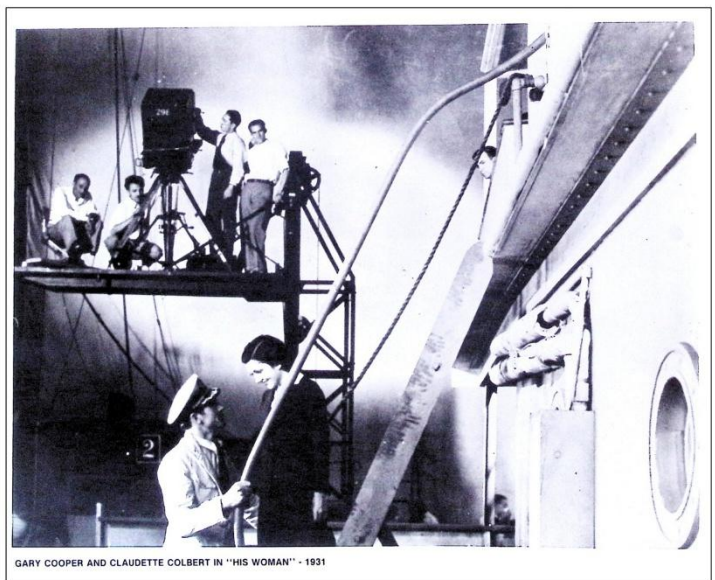
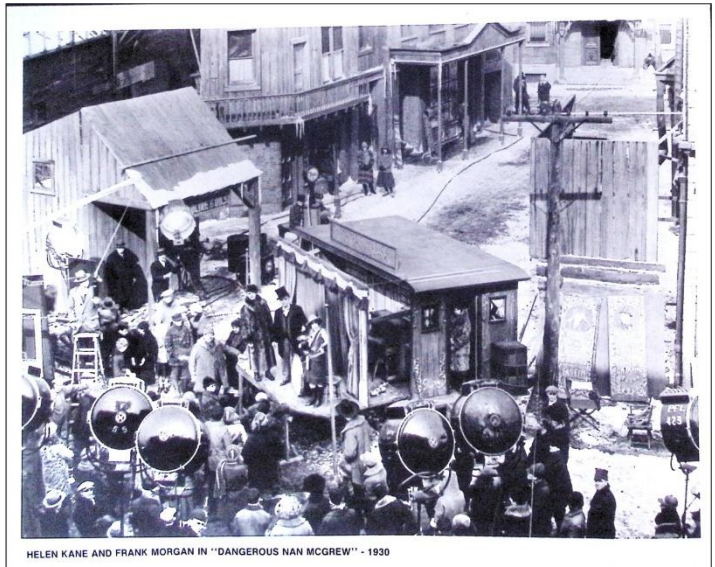
Clockwise from Top Left:

- **Top Left:** Paul Robeson in Dudley Murphy's pre-code drama *The Emperor Jones* (1933), filmed on site at Astoria Studios.
- **Top Right:** W.C. Fields in the pharmacy set from Paramount's *It's the Old Army Game* (1926). [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Bottom Right:** The Marx Brothers performing a comedy routine in *Animal Crackers* (1930), shot at Astoria during their early Paramount period.
- **Bottom Left:** Ina Claire and Fredric March in George Cukor's pre-code comedy *The Royal Family of Broadway* (1930), filmed at Astoria Studios.



Clockwise from Top Left:

- **Top Left:** High-angle interior view of the main production stage at Astoria Studios, 1920, showing dense overhead lighting rigs, suspended cables, and modular backlot set pieces. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Top Right:** Gloria Swanson in a cloche hat and draped scarf for Sam Wood's Paramount drama *Zaza* (1923), shot on site at Astoria. Swanson starred as a French music hall singer in this major box-office success of the early flapper era.
- **Bottom Right:** W.C. Fields as sideshow con artist Professor Eustace McGargle alongside Carol Dempster in D.W. Griffith's *Sally of the Sawdust* (1925). Shot on site at Astoria Studios for United Artists, the production captured the transition of vaudeville stars into early narrative feature cinema.
- **Bottom Left:** Rudolph Valentino performing a tango with Helena D'Algy in a publicity still for Joseph Henabery's *A Sainted Devil* (1924), filmed on site at Astoria. Now considered a lost film with no surviving complete print, the production was celebrated for its elaborate Spanish-inspired costuming.



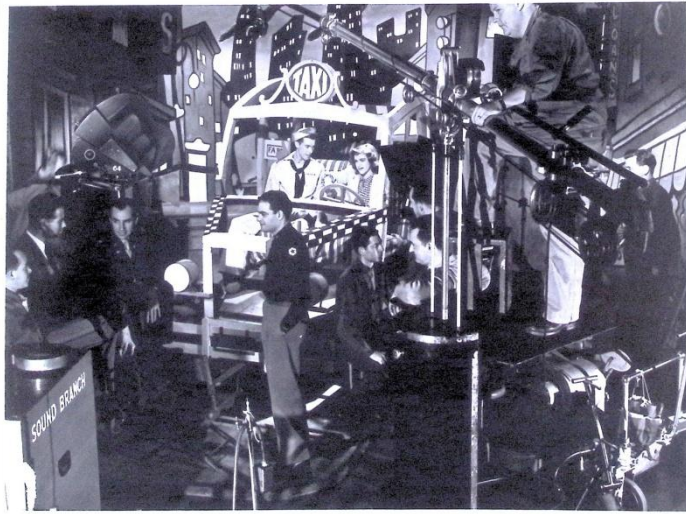
Clockwise from Top Left:

- **Top Left:** High-angle view of the outdoor backlot set constructed at Astoria Studios for Paramount's *The Battle of Paris* (1929), starring Gertrude Lawrence. The temporary Parisian street replica contrasts sharply with the surrounding Queens residential neighborhood in the background.
- **Top Right:** Helen Kane and Frank Morgan on the outdoor Western backlot set during filming of Paramount's *Dangerous Nan McGrew* (1930). The scene showcases early talkie production logistics, including massive moveable spotlight rigs in the foreground.
- **Bottom Right:** Gary Cooper and Claudette Colbert on set for Edward Sloman's Pre-Code drama *His Woman* (1931). The behind-the-scenes photograph documents an elevated soundstage platform supporting a bulky early 1930s camera rig and crew. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Bottom Left:** Claudette Colbert playing backgammon on set in a floral dress for Dorothy Arzner's Pre-Code drama *Honor Among Lovers* (1931), filmed at Astoria Studios. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].



Clockwise from Top Left:

- **Top Left:** Rudolph Valentino and Natacha Rambova dining with the *Monsieur Beaucaire* cast and crew in the studio commissary, Astoria, Queens, 1924. Directed by Sidney Olcott, the production was filmed on site in the space that later became The Astor Room.
- **Top Right:** Norman Trevor and Clara Bow on set for Herbert Brenon's Paramount silent drama *Dancing Mothers* (1926), filmed on site at Astoria. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Bottom Right:** Street scene featuring a vintage 1930s automobile from the social drama *...One Third of a Nation* (1939), filmed at Astoria Studios. The production featured a young Sidney Lumet in an early acting role prior to his directorial career. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Bottom Left:** Claudette Colbert and Maurice Chevalier leaning on a ship railing in a publicity still for Hobart Henley's Pre-Code musical comedy *The Big Pond* (1930). Filmed on site at Astoria Studios, the early sound release earned Chevalier an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor.



FILMING OF A SCENE FROM THE MUSICAL, "ON THE TOWN", WITH NANCY WALKER.
ARMY PICTORIAL CENTER - 1945.



"THE VOICES OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION", ARMED FORCES RADIO PROGRAM
TRANSMITTED FROM THE ARMY PICTORIAL CENTER (ASTORIA STUDIOS) - 1949



TELEVISION FIELD UNIT #3, MOBILE TELEVISION SYSTEM OF THE U.S.
ARMY SIGNAL CORPS - 1956



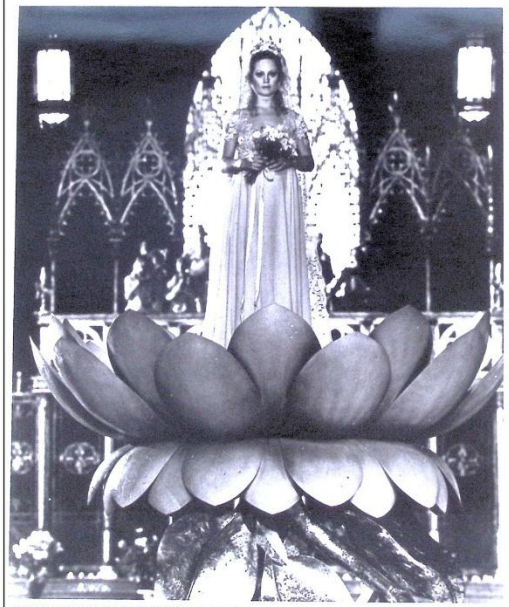
FILMING OF GENERAL MAXWELL TAYLOR FOR THE U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS. - 1956

Clockwise from Top Left:

- **Top Left:** Nancy Walker on set with military camera crane operators during filming of a musical sequence for *On the Town* at the Army Pictorial Center, 1945. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Top Right:** Control room audio engineer cueing an Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS) transmission at the Army Pictorial Center (Astoria Studios), 1949.
- **Bottom Right:** U.S. Army Signal Corps film set recording Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell D. Taylor at his desk, 1956. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].
- **Bottom Left:** Mobile Television Field Unit #3 deployed by the U.S. Army Signal Corps at Astoria in 1956, showing modified military utility vehicles equipped with signal masts and directional relay dishes. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].



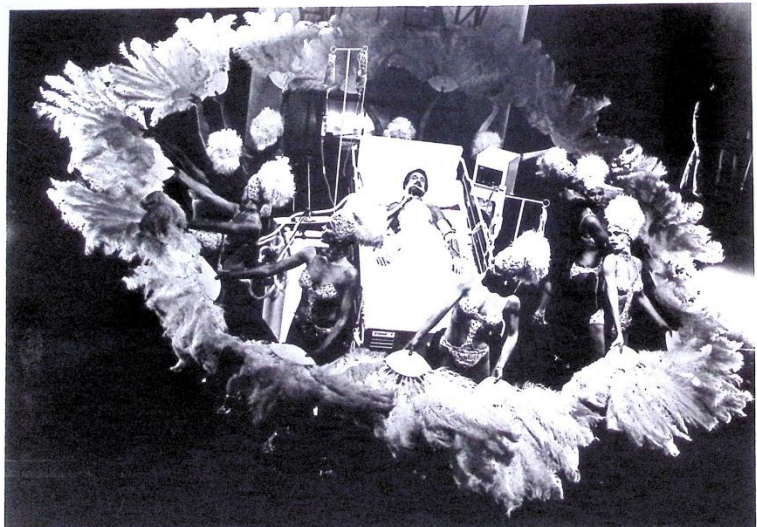
"THE WIZ", STARRING DIANA ROSS, MICHAEL JACKSON AND RICHARD PRYOR - 1978



BEVERLY D'ANGELO IN A SCENE FROM "HAIR" - 1979



NEW ERA BEGINS - GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY - DECEMBER 13, 1982.



"ALL THAT JAZZ", STARRING ROY SCHEIDER, DIRECTED BY BOB FOSSE - 1979

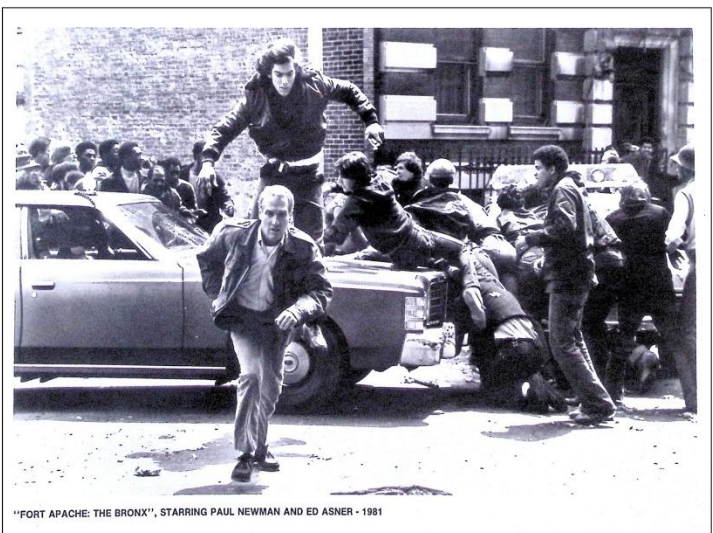
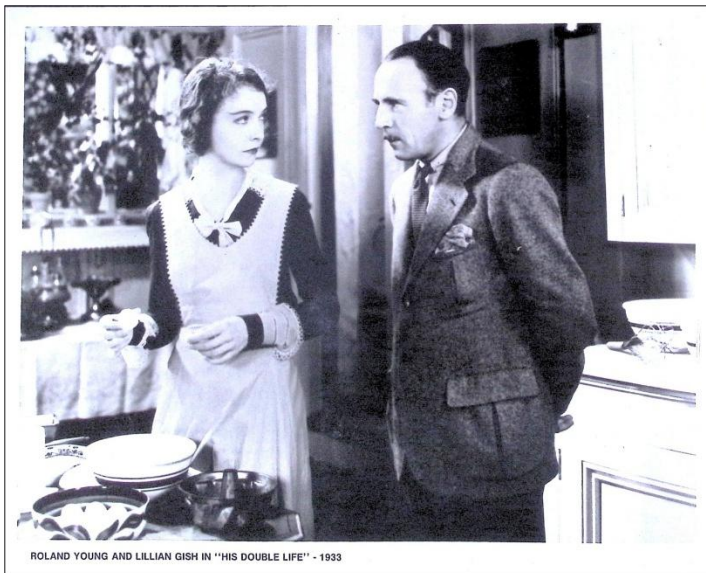
Clockwise from Top Left:

+++ **Top Left:** Wide shot of the elaborate Munchkinland playground set constructed at Astoria Studios for Sidney Lumet's *The Wiz* (1978), starring Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, and Richard Pryor.

+++ **Top Right:** Beverly D'Angelo standing inside an opening lotus-flower prop in a wedding fantasy sequence from Miloš Forman's musical film *Hair* (1979), shot on site at Astoria.

+++ **Bottom Right:** Surreal hospital bed hallucination sequence from Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979), featuring Roy Scheider as Joe Gideon surrounded by a chorus line of showgirls with feather fans.

+++ **Bottom Left:** Groundbreaking ceremony on December 13, 1982, featuring developer George S. Kaufman and local officials marking the landmark expansion drive that created Kaufman Astoria Studios. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].



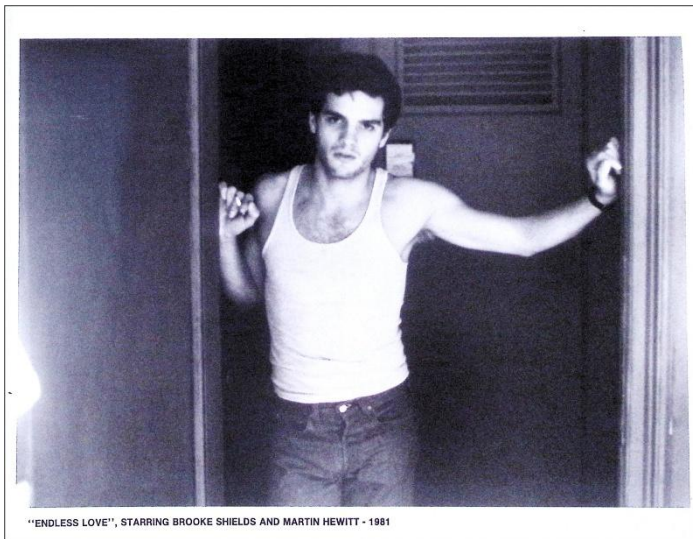
Clockwise from Top Left:

+++ **Top Left:** Lillian Gish and Roland Young on set for Arthur Hopkins's comedy *His Double Life* (1933), filmed at Astoria Studios. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].

+++ **Top Right:** Myrna Loy and Alan King in a scene from Sidney Lumet's satirical corporate comedy *Just Tell Me What You Want* (1980).

+++ **Bottom Right:** Paul Newman running through a chaotic street confrontation scene during filming of Daniel Petrie's crime drama *Fort Apache, The Bronx* (1981).

+++ **Bottom Left:** Albert Finney as Detective Dewey Wilson alongside Diane Venora as criminal psychologist Rebecca Neff in Michael Wadleigh's thriller *Wolfen* (1981).



Left to Right:

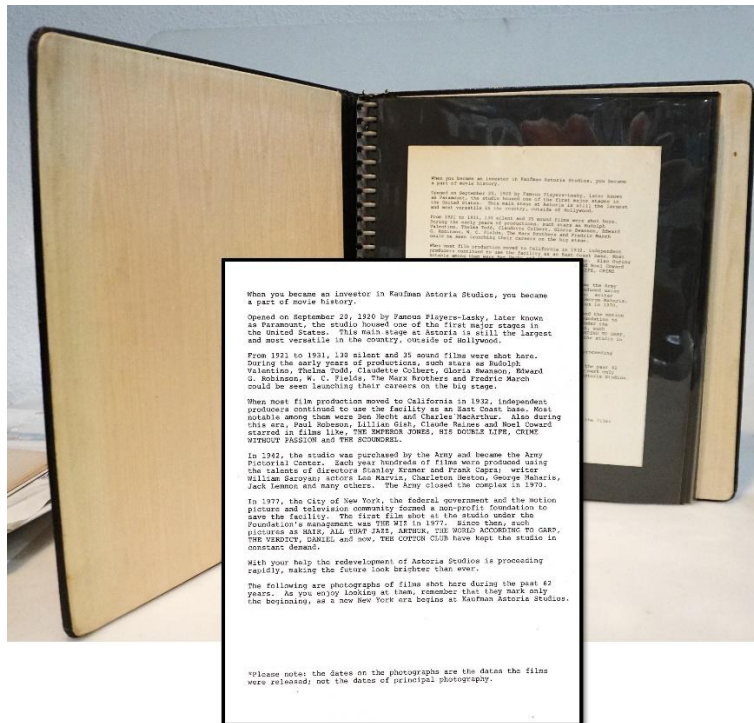
+++ **Left:** Publicity shot featuring Martin Hewitt standing in a doorway for Franco Zeffirelli's romantic drama *Endless Love* (1981).

+++ **Right:** Production photo showing Sigourney Weaver and William Hurt on set for Peter Yates' neo-noir thriller *Eyewitness* (1981).



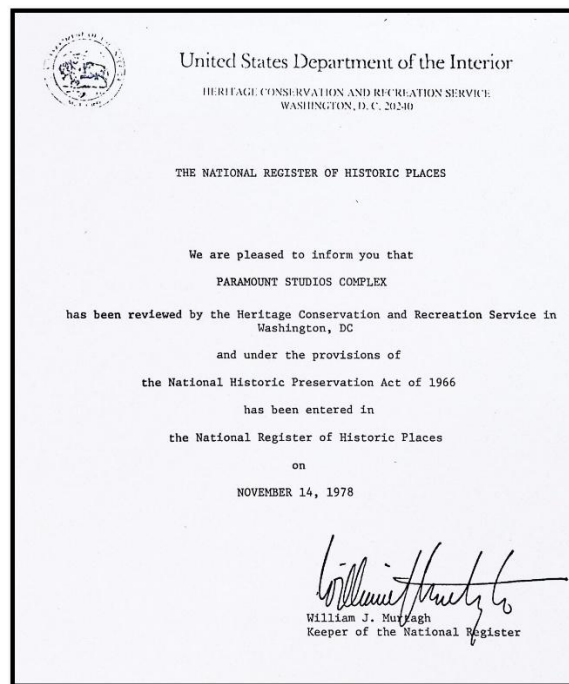
Architectural color rendering presenting the proposed street-level entrance and expanded façade for Kaufman Astoria Studios, dated 1983. The illustration features the prominent studio emblem branding, decorative iron entry gates, tree-lined sidewalks, and pedestrians alongside a classic Rolls-Royce parked at the main gate. [Unrecorded Image / No Database Match].

Historical Prospectus Statement



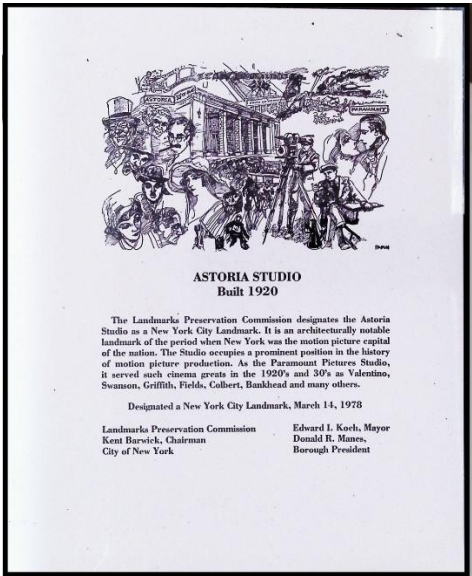
Open presentation binder displaying the original typed investor statement outlining the 62-year history of the studio complex from 1920 to 1982. The statement contextualizes the studio's evolution from Famous Players–Lasky through the Army Pictorial Center era to the 1982 Kaufman redevelopment drive.

National Register of Historic Places Certificate



Official certificate from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, dated November 14, 1978, officially listing the Paramount Studios Complex on the National Register of Historic Places. Signed by Keeper of the National Register William J. Murtagh.

New York City Landmark Designation Sheet



Commemorative designation sheet featuring an illustration of the studio entrance and cinema icons by artist Papin, marking the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s official designation of Astoria Studio as a New York City Landmark on March 14, 1978.

Chronological Filmography & Production Index Order Placement: Contents Structure

PARAMOUNT SILENT PRODUCTIONS MADE AT ASTORIA STUDIOS

		Director	Starring
1921	Sentimental Tommy	Robertson	Gareth Hughes
	Paying the Piper	Fitzmaurice	Rod La Rocque
	The Kentuckians	Maigne	Monte Blue
	The Education of Elizabeth	Dillon	Billie Burke
	The Gilded Lily	Leonard	Mae Murray
	City of Silent Men	Forman	T. Meighan
	The Price of Possession	H. Ford	Ethel Clayton
	The Idol of the North	Neill	D. Dalton
	Experience	Fitzmaurice	R. Barthelmess
	Footlights	Robertson	Elsie Ferguson
	The Conquest of Canaan	Neill	T. Meighan
	Cappy Ricks	Forman	T. Meighan
1922	Forever	Fitzmaurice	Bald, Ferguson
	Missing Millions	Henabery	Alice Brady
	Anna Ascends	Fleming	Alice Brady
	The Outcast	Withey	E. Ferguson
	Back Home and Broke	Green	T. Meighan
1923	Java Head	Melford	Leatrice Joy
	Dark Secrets	Fleming	D. Dalton
	The Leopardess	Kolker	Alice Brady
	Glimpses of the Moon	Dwan	Bernie Daniels
	The Ne'er Do Well	Green	T. Meighan
	You Can't Fool Your Wife	Melford	L. Joy
	Fog Bound	Willat	D. Dalton
	The Snow Bride	Kolker	Alice Brady
	The Exciters	Campbell	B. Daniels
	Lawful Larceny	Dwan	Hope Hampton
	The Heart Raider	Ruggles	Agnes Ayres
	Moral Sinner	R. Ince	D. Dalton
	Homeward Bound	R. Ince	T. Meighan
	ZaZa	Dwan	Gloria Swanson
	His Children's Children	Wood	George Fawcett
1924	West of the Water Tower	Sturgeon	Hunter, McAvoy
	Big Brother	Dwan	Tom Moore
	The Humming Bird	Olcott	Gloria Swanson
	Pied Piper Malone	Green	T. Meighan
	A Society Scandal	Dwan	Gloria Swanson

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Excerpts from the Following Features:

1932	The Big Broadcast
1933	International House
1937	The Big Broadcast of 1938

Short Films

1932-33	Universal Radio Shorts, with Morton Downey, Walter Winchell, Texas Guinan; produced by Rowland-Brice Productions.
1933-36	Educational Comedies, directed by Al Christie; with Moran and Mack ("As the Crows Fly"), Bob Hope ("Going Spanish"), Milton Berle ("Poppin' the Cork"), Helen Morgan ("Manhattan Lullaby"), Lillian Roth ("Million Dollar Melody"), Bert Lahr ("Off the Horses"), The Ritz Brothers, ("Hotel Anchovy"), etc.

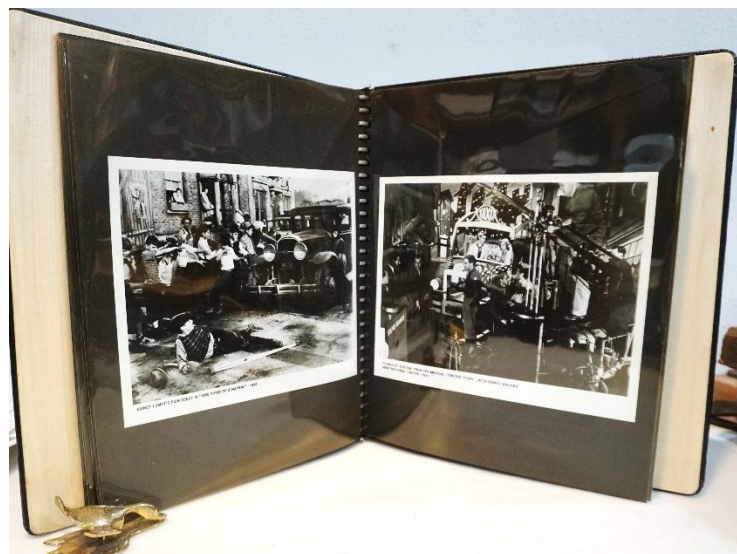
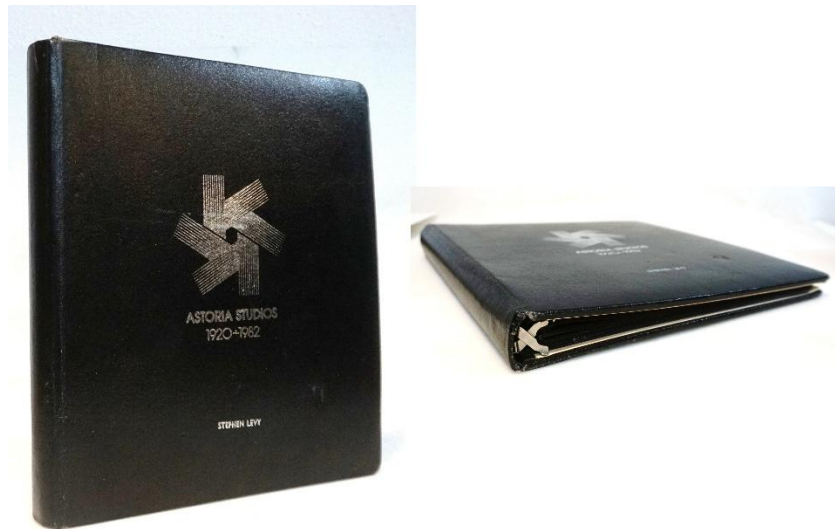
Miscellaneous Activities, Late 1930's

--Used by Audio Productions for filming of industrial films, clients included Curtiss-Wright, Ford, Western Electric, Johnson & Johnson, etc.	
--Recording facilities used by Hearst Metrotone News (John B. Kennedy) and Universal Newsreel (Graham MacNamee).	
--Headquarters of Technicolor Corporation in the east, William Steiner, director of photography.	
--Filming of ERPI Instructional Sound Films for classroom use.	
--"Soundies," brief musical numbers intended for juke box playback, filmed here by MINOCO Productions.	
1942-1972	Studio served as Signal Corps Pictorial Center, later called Army Pictorial Center (APC). The most active phase of the studio's history, with heavy motion picture, radio and television production.

STUDIO OPERATED BY CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK 1972-1976

1975	Thieves John Berry Marlo Thomas
	WNET/13 Auction (Live Television Broadcast)
	The Erie Wars (WNET Television Drama)
1976	WNET/13 Auction (Live Television Broadcast)
	The Next Man R. Sarafian Sean Connery

Sample pages from the eight-page typed chronological index detailing silent features, sound productions, short films, educational subjects, and military training titles produced on site at Astoria Studios between 1921 and 1982.



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