

Biography Margarete Eisner - Kurfürstendamm 102

Margarete Eisner, née Aron, was born in Berlin on 2 August 1866. She was the youngest of five sisters and a brother: Ida, Ottilie, Estella, Valerie, Margarete and Siegmund. The Aron family was known for having one of the first telephones in Berlin and naturally the five girls made eager use of it to chat amongst themselves and with their many friends. Much later, despite being married, they continued this habit.

Margarete married Hugo Eisner who owned a textile business with his two brothers, Viktor and Hermann - 'Eisner und Ehrmann' - in the Mitte area. Margarete and Hugo lived on Tiergartenstraße. They had three children: Fritz, Lotte and Steffi.

Fritz married Paula Schmoller and had two sons, Herbert and Stephan. During the 1930s, the family gradually emigrated, first Herbert went to Buxton in England, then Stephan went to Paris, then Fritz went to England and finally in March 1939, having packed up the entire flat, Paula emigrated to England where the family were joined by Stephan. In 1927, Lotte Eisner became a writer and journalist for the daily trade *Film-Kurier*. In 1933, a few weeks after the Nazis came to power, she was forced to flee to Paris where in 1936 she met Henri Langlois and together they founded the Cinémathèque française. In 1940, following the occupation of France by the German Wehrmacht, she was deported to Gurs camp but managed to escape and hide in Figeac under a false identity - Louise Escoffier. In 1944, she returned to Paris. In 1952 her seminal book on German film, *The Haunted Screen* was published and she became a French citizen. In her later life she was awarded the Légion d'Honneur. Steffi Eisner married Eugène Van Der Meersch in Paris and they had four children.

In 1924, Hugo Eisner died and Margarete moved to another flat in Berlin, where she lived for several years. In 1938, she visited her daughter Steffi in Paris to see her grandchildren but returned to Berlin the following year. Once war had been declared, she was forced to live in a 'Jewish House' with a number of other people. She was allocated a room on the fourth floor at Kurfürstendamm 102, where she lived with, amongst others, Harry and Henriette Hammerschlag, a couple who were friends of her family and who were deported to Theresienstadt on 28 October 1942. Margarete remained in Berlin, even managing to write to her son Fritz in London, until August 1942 when she was transported from Moabit in Berlin to Theresienstadt (Terezin) camp in Czech. She died the following year in January 1943.

Text by Julia Eisner