

Erased

Loo Hui Phang

Hugues Micol, Illustrator

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Erased is the fascinating graphic biography of Maximus Wyld, a multiracial actor from the early days of Hollywood whose name was later removed from film credits and forgotten.

Maximus Ohanzee Wildhorse, known as Maximus Wyld, was an actor of Black, Chinese, and Native American heritage. He took “ethnic” roles in famous films and earned a solid reputation, signing a contract with Louis Mayer that guaranteed he’d never play a servant again. But Wyld was injured serving in World War II, and when a long-promised role as Othello didn’t materialize, he went to Kyrgystan to star in a Genghis Khan biopic instead. Rumors that he had communist ties hurt his career, and he served two years in jail. After his release, he disappeared; most of his movie appearances were excised from film history.

The book addresses a broad range of social issues through an early Hollywood lens, including the treatments of women and marginalized people and the threat of McCarthyism. While its scope is broad, its subject’s story is centering—both personalized and entertaining. Through his tale, facts and intellectual observations are imparted. The behind-the-scenes personalities of Wyld’s friends and acquaintances, including Lana Turner, Paul Robeson, and Clark Gable, are also of interest.

With its moody black-and-white panels in which the stars’ likenesses are distinct, *Erased* is a dazzling graphic biography that brings an ambitious, wronged talent into the spotlight.

PETER DABBENE (July / August 2024)

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