Costume design - Love's Labour's Lost

Object: Costume design

Place of origin: London (made)

Date: 1949 (made)

Artist/Maker: Sutcliffe, Berkeley, born 1918 - died 1979 (costume designers)

Materials and Techniques: Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper, mounted on card

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Alex Martin

Museum number: S.1571-2014

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description


Berkeley Sutcliffe (1918-1979) was one of the leading stage designers of the mid-20th century. He successfully combined theatre work with a career at the London department store, Fortnum and Mason, where he was head designer, and for which he devised the clock that became the shop's symbol. Sutcliffe was known for the spectacular and amusing scenery and costumes that he created for revue, musicals and pantomimes, but he also designed the classics for the Old Vic Company, creating sets and costumes for The Way of the World (1948), Love's Labour's Lost (1949) and Julius Caesar (1958).

The production of Love's Labour's Lost, directed by Hugh Hunt, charmed reviewers. R.D. Smith, writing in the New Statesman (29 October 1949), commented that Hunt 'refutes those many scholars and critics who have condescended to this early comedy: he reveals not an outmoded private joke, fit only for donnish crossword diligence or undergraduate-producer exhibitionism, but a witty, satiric, hilarious, well-shaped, warm, exciting, human piece of theatre.' Sutcliffe based his designs on the miniatures of Nicholas Hillyard and Isaac Oliver. In his book Shakespeare in the Theatre (1978) Richard David cited the production as an example of design which 'can positively help the realisation of some of Shakespeare's effects by instantly creating a mood or striking a keynote that Shakespeare himself is at pains to establish'. The cast was led by Michael Redgrave as Berowne, with Diana Churchill as Rosaline and Angela Baddeley as the Princess of France. The courtier, 'honey-tongued Boyet', was played by Walter Hudd.

Descriptive line

Costume design by Berkeley Sutcliffe for Boyet in Shakespeare's play Love's Labour's Lost, Old Vic Company at the New Theatre, 1949

Physical description

Costume design for Boyet. Full length male figure in Elizabethan costume of grey doublet and knee breeches decorated in gold, with a short russet cloak, lined in pink, and wide ruff. He holds a staff of office in his right hand and a handkerchief in his left. Signed.

Dimensions

Height: 50.2 cm design, Width: 36.5 cm design, Height: 50.6 cm mount, Width: 36.6 cm mount

Museum number

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1296439/loves-labours-lost-costume-design-sutcliffe-berkeley/