Set design - The School for Scandal

Object: Set design

Place of origin: Great Britain (possibly, designed)

Date: 1949 (made)

Artist/Maker: Beaton, Cecil (Sir), born 1904 - died 1980 (set designer)

Materials and Techniques: Watercolour design on cream paper

Credit Line: Given by the executors of Eileen Hose

Museum number: S.2111-2014

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description


Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton, CBE (14 January 1904 – 18 January 1980) was an English fashion, portrait and war photographer, diarist, painter, interior designer and an Academy Award-winning stage and costume designer for films and the theatre.

The Old Vic Company production of The School for Scandal, by Richard Sheridan originally opened at the New Theatre, London in 1949. The production starred Laurence Olivier as Sir Peter Teazle and Vivien Leigh as Lady Teazle and Beaton was commissioned to design both the sets and the costumes and Miss Leigh's dresses were made by Thérèse. It was revived at for a production at the Comédie-Française, Paris in 1962.

The set and costumes were well received. Harold Conway praised the 'sumptuous costumes and brilliant backcloth settings by Cecil Beaton, which proved stimulating and provocative by turns.' Similarly the reviewer in the Daily Telegraph declared, 'I have not often seen a production in which my eye was more consistently pleased.' T.C.Wolsey, writing the 'Arts and Entertainment' column in 1949, was less enthusiastic about the production. Whilst he felt that 'Mr. Cecil Beaton's drop curtains and backcloths [were] wholly successful. His dresses were less so' and suggested that the costumes 'sometimes add to that faint whiff of Quality Street which crops up here and there throughout the evening.'

Descriptive line

Set design created by Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), probably created for The School for Scandal, at the New Theatre, London, in 1949

Physical description

Set design created by Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), probably created for &lt;i&gt;The School for Scandal&lt;/i&gt;, at the New Theatre, London, in 1949. The design has been created using watercolour on cream paper. It shows the exterior of a Georgian building which extends into the distance. A stylised image of a statue is visible in the foreground.

Dimensions

Height: 35.4 cm, Width: 50.4 cm

Museum number

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1301559/the-school-for-scandal-set-design-beaton-cecil-sir/