Cecil Beaton - Watercolour Portrait of Princess Radziwill

Cecil Beaton

Sold



REF: 2684

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Description

SIR CECIL BEATON, CBE
(1904-1980)

Princess Radziwill

Bears date u.l.: Dec 3 1913
Watercolour and pencil
Framed

26.5 by 18.5 cm., 10 ½ by 7 ¼ in.
(mount size 47.5 by 38 cm., 18 ½ by 15 in.)

Provenance:
The artist's studio sale;
Private collection.

Beaton has based this watercolour on a 1913 photograph of Princess Radziwill by Lallie Charles. Princess Radziwill, nee Dorothy Deacon, (1892-1960) came from a wealthy American family. She married Prince Albert Radziwill (1885-1936) in 1910. Her sister Gladys became the second wife of the 9th Duke of Marlborough. Lallie Charles (1869-1919) was an Irish born society portrait photographer. She first opened her studio near Regent's Park in 1896. Cecil Beaton sat for her as a child and was a great admirer of her work. In described her technique of posing her sitters "in a soft conservatory-looking light, making all hair deliriously fashionable to be photo-lowered" (Beaton, The Book of Beauty, 1930)

Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton was a fashion and portrait photographer, diarist, interior designer and stage and costume designer for the stage and screen. He was born in Hampstead and educated at Harrow and St John's College, Cambridge although he left without a degree in 1925. He worked as a photographer for fashion magazines and became an extremely popular and well-connected society portraitist who also recorded the gathering of his friends among the Bright Young Things of the 20s and 30s. After the war Beaton started designing stage sets and costumes for London and Broadway. His most lauded achievement for the stage being the costume for Lerner and Loewe's 1956 production of My Fair Lady.

I am grateful to Martin Williams for his kind assistance in cataloguing this work.