

SARAH COLEGRAVE
FINE ART

The Peacock - Costume Design for Le Pavillon

Cecil Beaton

Sold



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REF: 210504

Height: 134.62 cm (53")

Width: 104.14 cm (41")

Framed Height: 191.77 cm (75.5")

Framed Width: 157.48 cm (62")

Description

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*. In 1936 Beaton was commissioned to design the costumes for Col de Basil's Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo's performance of *Le Pavillon* to be performed at the Royal Opera House. The ballet was by Boris Kochno, music by Alexander Borodine and choreography by David Lichine. The costumes were made by Barbara Karinska and the main dancers were Irina Baronova, Tatiana Riabouchinska and David Lichine. Beaton designed a blue stage set with costumes in shades of blue overlaid with brilliantly coloured feathers, flowers etc. However, when Kochno saw the half finished blue costumes, he was so enchanted by them that he insisted they were used as they were, without the trimmings. The result was a blue or blue effect on the opening night of the ballet. Beaton was dismayed and, disobeying Kochno, he arranged for Barbara Karinska, the costume maker, to add the colourful overskirts and trims for the subsequent performances and for the United States tour. Beaton's sketches with fabric notes to the costume maker are on the artist's headed writing paper on the reverse: Diagram explaining Peacock dress The tights to be sewn where marked with feathers made of painted buckram on paper. Bodice [?] on pink chiffon. Wings on hip are quite solid and heavy to keep in place the tail made of spikes of real quills on which are attached paper or buckram eyes and fringe. This mounted on net and if necessary could be made to unfold so arms could give spreading tail effect. The feathers on tights must be sewn on in patches only or else they will give a fattening effect. Pad full here to give a pouter pigeon look of pride. Long white kid gloves.