Oliver Messel - Juliet

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Sold



REF: 3069

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Description

OLIVER MESSEL(1904-1978)
Juliet with Deer – Costume Design for Romeo and Juliet, 1936
Signed l.r., and inscribed with title u.r.Watercolour heightened with white and gold paint, over traces of pencilFramed in the artist's original mirrored frame
48.5 by 31 cm.; 19 by 12 ¼ in.(frame size 58.5 by 40.5 cm., 23 by 16 in.)
Exhibited:London, Leicester Galleries, Romeo and Joliet by Oliver Messel, July 1936.
Literature:Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, with Designs by Oliver Messel, London 1936, repro. frontispiece.
Born in London, Messel was the grandson of the illustrator Linley Sambourne. After Eton he studied art at the Slade School of Art and by the early 1930s had established himself as one of Britain's principal stage designers. Initially working for the Cochran Revues, he went on to design for many theatrical, operatic, ballet and film productions. His books included Stage Designs and Costumes, 1933; Designs for A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1957 and Delightful Food, 1958. He exhibited at the Leicester Galleries and Redfern Gallery and also designed interiors and gardens of the Dorchester Hotel, Flaxley Abbey, Gloucestershire and elsewhere as well as several houses and grounds in Barbados and Mustique. The Victoria & Albert Museum hold the majority of his design archives.
This costume for Juliet was made for the 1936 Metro Goldwyn Mayer film adaptation of Romeo & Juliet, directed by George Cukor and staring Leslie Howard as Romeo and Norma Shearer as Juliet. Messel was commissioned to design the costumes and sets and was sent to Italy to study fifteenth century buildings and the paintings of Italian Masters such as Botticelli and della Francesca. He went to a huge amount of trouble and research for the production and his extensive archives for the project are held in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. The film was one of the most intricate costuming operations in MGM's history.