



## Oliver Messel: In the Theatre of Design

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A vibrant study of one of the iconic figures of twentieth-century design, whose Romantic, whimsical, and wholly original style influenced a generation of architects and decorators. Oliver Messel was one of England's foremost interior designers of the twentieth century, whose work also spanned the worlds of the stage design, film, and architecture. Born into a creative family of wealthy bankers, his career began in 1925 designing for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. He eventually became an internationally celebrated designer, branching out into drama, film, opera, interior design, textiles, and architecture. Romanticism and eccentricity were hallmarks of Messel's style. His sets were famed for their exquisite delicacy, impossible detail, subtlety of color, and inventive use of materials. From the 1930s to the postwar period, Messel explored the fields of interior design and architecture, eventually designing numerous houses built on the islands of Mustique and Barbados for the jet set of the 1960s and '70s, among them Antony Armstrong-Jones (Earl of Snowdon) and Princess Margaret. *Oliver Messel* is filled with previously unpublished images that chronicle a unique, eccentric, and, until now, largely overlooked oeuvre that reached across several mediums and continues to influence insiders from the worlds of interior design, architecture, and fashion.

Edited by Thomas Messel with an introduction by Lord Snowdon, an epilogue by Anthony Powell and texts by Stephen Calloway, Keith Lodwick, Jeremy Musson, and Sarah Woodcock

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