

WHEN MARCEL MET MOTLEY

Curated by Sophie Jump with Jane Won

In 1936 a new kind of theatre school opened in Islington. The London Theatre Studio was the first British drama school to incorporate theatre design and also include training directors, stage-managers and lighting designers. The building was adapted for the school by Marcel Breuer, a young Hungarian Bauhaus architect, who had fled Nazi Germany along with many other artists and intellectuals. The designers in charge of the theatre design course were three women who practiced under the name of 'Motley': Elizabeth Montgomery, Sophie Harris and Percy Harris.

The meeting between these important theatre designers and the young architect led to a collaboration which went beyond the London Theatre Studio project. When the Motleys ventured into the field of contemporary fashion and decided to open a shop called *Motley Couture*, they asked Breuer to design the interior of their shop for them.

Both Breuer and Motley continue to have a huge influence on their respective arts. We continue to be fascinated and delighted by Breuer's architecture, and his furniture is still sold seventy years later. Motley influenced theatre design so fundamentally through both their work and their teaching that it is inconceivable to imagine Britain having such a worldwide reputation for design without them.

Drawing on material uncovered whilst researching a book about the London Theatre Studio and the post-war Old Vic School, this exhibition seeks to illuminate the point in time when the paths of designers from such different backgrounds crossed. Being placed within both the V&A and the SBTD Collaborators: UK Design For Performance 2003 - 2007 Exhibition, it offers an opportunity to assess the influences on and influence of both Breuer and Motley.

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