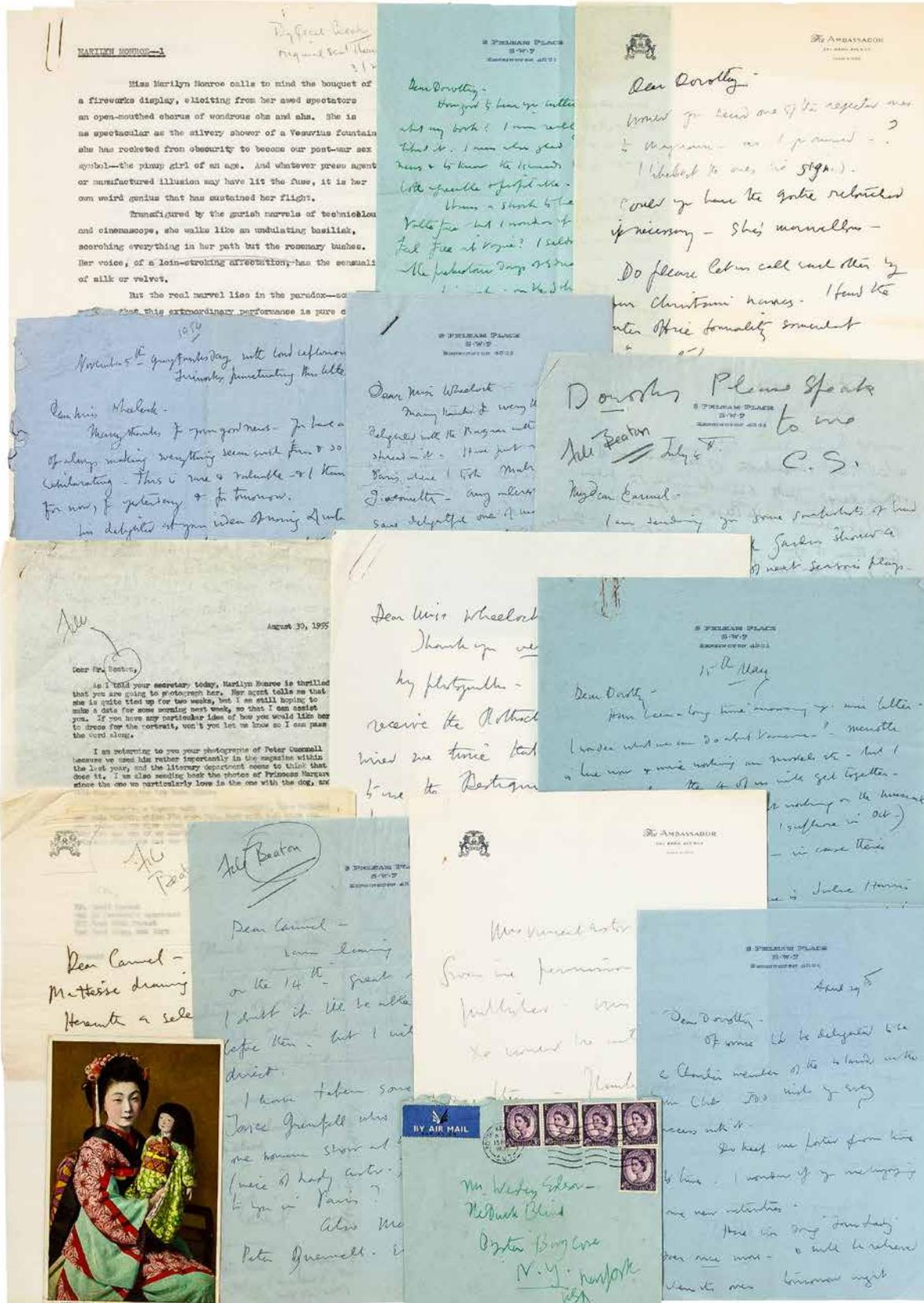


## Cecil Beaton, Dorothy Wheelock, Carmel Snow

[Archive]: Correspondence and Typed Manuscript

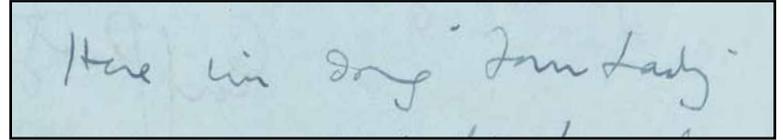
London, New York: 1956-1958

\$6500



A small archive of 14 letters and one manuscript from Cecil Beaton in the mid-1950s. All items near fine with some creasing and slight edgewear.

A collection of letters from renowned photographer, costume designer, and writer, Cecil Beaton many of which are to members of the editorial staff of *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1950s. The majority are to associate editor, Dorothy Wheelock, and Editor-in-Chief, Carmel Snow and are signed either "C.B." or "Cecil." Much of the content has to do with various spreads in the magazine as well as projects he's working on in various mediums from stage to writing. "I'm going to be in Paris August working on the unusual film of 'Gigi' (then Hollywood I suppose in Oct.) ... Meanwhile here is Julie Harris in a costume I designed for a very witty English film 'The Truth about Women' ... It is episodic & very fast & should be a new jolt in English films." A later letter from 1958 reads, "Here I'm doing 'Fair Lady' over once more & will be relieved when it's over tomorrow night." Other letters include gossip such as a letter where he claims Marlon Brando is putting on weight. Another letter includes a postscript nearly as long as the letter itself in which he complains that "Hermoine [Gingold] has been so difficult it seems she will never really sign on any dotted line. I wonder if Dick [Richard Avedon] never let me see one of the pictures of myself – unless I looked as awful as I felt?" He discusses photographs he's taken, some of which he asks about *Harper's Bazaar's* interest. In one letter he writes, "I have also a wonderful one, all white skin, of Mrs. [?] & her new baby (naked) – but she may have difficulty in getting her husband's permission for reproduction."



Also included is a three page typed manuscript entitled "Marilyn Monroe." A note in pencil on the first manuscript leaf states: "By Cecil Beaton / original sent [?] 3/2/56." Beaton accomplished his famous photo shoot of Monroe at New York's Ambassador Hotel on February 22, 1956. These thoughts and sentiments on Monroe, first entered in Beaton's personal diary, appear to have been submitted a little more than a week following the shoot either to Dorothy Wheelock or Carmel Snow at *Harper's Bazaar*. The shorter version of the essay appeared in Beaton's *Portraits and Profiles*, edited by Hugo Vickers (published 2014) and presumably was printed also in Beaton's *The Restless Years. Diaries: 1955-1963* (1976). The typescript is more than a third longer than the 2014 published version, and contains as well several changes in the wording used in the printed text as well as handwritten corrections.

Dorothy Wheelock was a New York writer and editor who became friends with Beaton through their working relationship when she was with *Harper's Bazaar*. According to her obituary, "From 1940 to 1957, she was associate editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, planning features, instigating and attending photographic sittings, and writing articles." She left *Harper's* to work on a magazine, *Islands in the Sun Club*, "a membership magazine for people interested in isles in the West Indies and other islands in the world." In some of the letters featured here Beaton discusses the club and says he would be happy to become a member. Carmel Snow was the Editor-in-Chief of *Harper's Bazaar* until 1958 and famously discovered fashion editor, Diana Vreeland, mentioned in these letters as well as other talented writers and photographers.

A modest but interesting archive of letters from an influential photographer and designer to two important women in the fashion world. A selection of images follows. [\[BTC#425844\]](#)

MARILYN MONROE--1

By Cecil Beaton  
original sent them  
3/2/56

Miss Marilyn Monroe calls to mind the bouquet of  
a fireworks display, eliciting from her awed spectators  
an open-mouthed chorus of wondrous ohs and ahs. She is

MARILYN MONROE--1

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Miss Marilyn Monroe calls to mind the bouquet of  
a fireworks display, eliciting from her awed spectators  
an open-mouthed chorus of wondrous ohs and ahs. She is  
as spectacular as the silvery shower of a Vesuvius fountain;  
she has rocketed from obscurity to become our post-war sex  
symbol--the pinup girl of an age. And whatever press agency  
or manufactured illusion may have lit the fuse, it is her  
own weird genius that has sustained her flight.

Transfigured by the garish marvels of technicolor  
and cinemascope, she walks like an undulating basilisk,  
scorching everything in her path but the rosemary bushes.  
Her voice, of a loam-stroking affectation, has the sensuality  
of silk or velvet.

But the real marvel lies in the paradox--somehow  
we know that this extraordinary performance is pure charade,  
a little girl's caricature of Mae West. The puzzling truth  
is that Miss Monroe is a make-believe siren, unsophisticated  
as a Rhine maiden, innocent as a sleepwalker. She is an  
urchin pretending to be grown up, having the time of her  
life in mother's moth-eaten finery, tottering about in  
high-heeled shoes and sipping ginger ale as though it were  
a champagne cocktail. There is an unworldly, a winsome  
naïveté about the child's eyes that, quick as a flash,  
will screw up into a pair of sexy, smouldering slits and  
give you a synthetic "come-hither" look. Just as obligingly,  
the delicate, flexible mouth, half-parted in springtime

grimace,

the surrounding  
king in their  
bal facade is  
latter-day  
essence of partridge-  
eighteenth-century  
elicitously wide  
small, putty-like  
h delight, or  
in is apt to  
tures, like blips  
inspired,  
option of a  
an ever-  
ay miss re-  
m with machine-gun

then disarmed,  
rst seen like  
etful incertitude  
ndoned sprits,  
roval. She is  
downstairs after

ment has now gotten  
eals with delight,  
lower stem in her  
were a cigarette.  
ited, infectiously  
eral appearance.  
so sufficiently  
on to the way she  
, have a makeshift,  
very contemporary;  
n a single soda,  
ovies for necking  
(homania?).  
the age--a dreaming  
derland, Trilly  
orn the post-war  
has no knowledge  
he is only fifteen

8 PELHAM PLACE  
S.W.7  
KENSINGTON 4351

April 29<sup>th</sup>

Dear Dorothy -

Of course I'd be delighted to be  
a Charter member of the Islands in the  
Sun Club. I do wish of every  
success with it.

Do keep me posted from time

to time. I wonder if you are enjoying

Some new activities -

Here in dog "Tom Lady"

over once more - I will be relieved

when it's over tomorrow night.



The AMBASSADOR

341 PARK AVENUE

PLAZA S-1000

Mrs. Vanderbilt has now  
given me permission for these to be  
published - Mrs. Snow said  
she would be interested to  
see them - Thank you

EB.

Mrs. Astor does not want any pictures of her sitting to  
be published.

h.



John Beaton

Worthy Whallop

8 PELHAM PLACE  
S.W.7  
KENSINGTON 4351

Dear Carmel -

I am leaving for America by air  
on the 14<sup>th</sup> - great rush before then  
I doubt if I'll be able to get Christie  
before then - but I will contact him  
direct.

I have taken some pictures of  
Joyce Grenfell who opens in N.Y. to do a  
one woman show at the Bijou in October  
(niece of Lady Astor.) May I send these  
to you in Paris?

Also Mary MacCarthy -  
Peter Guernell - etc. - affectionately  
Carmel