

## Sheila Graham (1927-2009)

### Brief biography



Always a strong supporter of her father's work, Sheila herself became a designer of distinction.

The only child of Barnsley artist, Kenneth Leslie Graham (1900-1979), Sheila was born in Barnsley and stayed until Kenneth took up his post at Coty Perfumes in London.

Her childhood passion was the ballet, and Dame Ninette de Valois gave her permission to sketch the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company at their rehearsal rooms and at Covent Garden. The ballet sketches and portrait of Margot Fonteyn in this exhibition form only a fraction of her ballet archive.

Sheila was a student at St. Martins School of Art and from there became a wardrobe assistant with the Old Vic Theatre company.

She started her costume design career working on productions at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. She designed for many of their Shakespeare productions between 1946-1949.

Pinewood Studios beckoned and she was the costume co-ordinator for "Fools Rush In" and for the next few years her work was as a designer for both theatre and film.

She was engaged in 1950 by Walt Disney productions as the costume designer for "Treasure Island" starring Robert Newton and then for "Captain Horatio Hornblower R.N." starring Gregory Peck and Virginia Mayo.

Her next film was one about the fashion industry called "It Started in Paradise" in 1952. Her last film was "Appointment in London" with Dirk Bogarde.

In 1953 Sheila married Hector John McLusky. Hector was the first person to create an image of James Bond as he had been engaged by the Daily Express and Ian Fleming, to produce "Casino Royale" in cartoon form. Hector adapted 13 Bond novels between 1958 and 1966.

With the advent of two sons, Sheila withdrew from costume design and formed a travelling theatre company called "The Elizabethans". The company travelled around churches and country houses performing Elizabethan dramas. She also worked as a furniture and picture restorer.

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