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**THE ESSENTIAL  
CECIL BEATON**

Photographs 1920-1970  
Texts by Phillippe Garner  
and David Alan Mellor  
320 pages, 265 illustrations  
in color and duotone  
ISBN 978-3-8296-0610-3  
English edition  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**THE ESSENTIAL CECIL BEATON**

**The oeuvre of the legendary society photographer**

Between upper class and underground:

An illustrated aesthetic chronicle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

“Beauty is the most important word in the dictionary”, legendary British fashion and society photographer Cecil Beaton (1904-1980) is supposed to have said. A “fanatical aesthete” himself, he wrote photographic history with his meticulously detailed and lavishly staged portraits. The opulence of the monograph *The Essential Cecil Beaton* reflects the broad spectrum of social circles (from British royalty to Hollywood to New York’s and London’s underground scene) among which Beaton moved – and worked – with natural ease. The result is an illustrated aesthetic chronicle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Born in the same year as Salvador Dali, Cecil Beaton, just like the artist, embodies the prototype of the flamboyant character in the 1920s and 1930s international art avant-garde. Beaton, who liked to present himself as the last dandy of the British Empire, sold his first photographs to *Vogue* in 1924; as a result the high society began to take an interest in the photographer who was as sophisticated as he was subtle and also worked as a set designer in film and theater with tireless enthusiasm. Soon a growing number of aristocrats and celebrities flocked to him to have their photo taken. By the early 1930s he was so popular that people in the United States were crazy for his photographs, too.

*The Essential Cecil Beaton* features 265 outstanding pictures, from the early snaps he took in well-to-do homes as a school student to the portraits he made in late 1970s swinging London, providing an insight into the inexhaustible creative talent of this versatile artist. Whether he turned his lens on fashion or people, staged Queen Elizabeth II or Andy Warhol or courted the favor of Greta Garbo (whom he adored), Beaton always operated on a level of reality that was as passionate as it was artistic in its conception and for him was more real than reality itself. The book is a lavishly illustrated autobiography that, thanks to the highly insightful essays by Phillippe Garner and David Alan Mellor, doubles up as a much-noted artist’s monograph. In addition, the publication presents a summit of beauty and sheer elegance on the high plateau of international zeitgeist.

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A must-have for aficionados of fashion, photography, and contemporary history keen to learn about an extraordinary man who set benchmarks with his magnificent photographic oeuvre.