



Cats of Paris

and Elsewhere

Lila De Nobili

Edited by Claudie Gastine

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ISBN	9788899765941
Publisher	Officina Libraria
Binding	Hardback
Territory	World excluding Italy and France
Size	165 mm x 225 mm
Pages	144 Pages
Illustrations	118 color
Price	£15.95

- A wonderful gift for all cat lovers
- Finely drawn sketches, portraits and fantasies by one of the major theatre and opera stage and costume designers of the 20th century
- Most of the watercolours and pencil drawings of her cats by Lila De Nobili included here are previously unpublished

Paris cats have been celebrated by painters, writers and chansonniers since the 19th century, when Steinlein created the poster for the cabaret 'Le Chat noir'. An important place among these artists is occupied by Lila De Nobili, who moved to the French capital in 1945 and never left the 7th arrondissement, its quintessential neighbourhood. She painted and designed stage sets for the Scala in Milan, the Opéra in Paris, the Covent Garden in London and many other theatres. Sought by the most famous directors, she designed costumes for Maria Callas, Edith Piaf, Audrey Hepburn and Ingrid Bergman. Just after the events of May 1968, she devoted herself exclusively to painting and adopted her first cat, Ulysse, in her apartment in rue de Verneuil. The feline family soon grew and Lila never tired of sketching them, drawing them, or painting them in watercolour. Most of these intimate works, full of insight and subtlety, were gifted to a friend, herself a cat lover, by Lila in her last years and thanks to this collection a book can now be published.

Lila De Nobili (1916-2002) was a painter, stage designer and costume designer. Of Italian and Jewish Hungarian parents, she was born in Castagnola (Canton Ticino, Switzerland). She moved to Paris in 1945 where she began her career as fashion illustrator for Vogue. In 1947 she started her career as stage and costume designer working for the most celebrated directors such as Raymond Rouleau, Luchino Visconti, Franco Zeffirelli, Peter Hall, Giancarlo Menotti. Considered 'the last great protagonist of the painted set', she retired from stage design at the end of the Sixties, to dedicate herself exclusively to painting. **Claudie Gastine** studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Marseille, her birthplace, and moved to Paris in 1960. She met Lila De Nobili at the Comédie Française and from her she learned stage and costume design for theatre and opera. She has worked behind the scenes for the past forty years. **Francesca Simone** is a restorer of paintings, and lives in Milan. The niece of Renzo Mongiardino, she curated his archive and was the editor of the new edition of *Roomscapes* (2017). Close to Lila De Nobili because of old family ties, she preserves many letters and works of art by her.

