

VIVIEN GREENE'S THE TOLL HOUSE

The Toll House by Vivien Greene, wife of Graham Greene, will be on public display for the first time West Dean College, near Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0RX, as part of the Annual House Opening on 30 April and 1 May 2016, 10.00am to 5.00pm (last entry 4.30pm). Visitors can take a break from their tour and get refreshments in our vintage tea tent and buy West Dean souvenirs and Sue Timney items. You can make a day of it and explore West Dean Gardens (included in the ticket price), a rare oasis of beauty and tranquility in the heart of the South Downs, with a 300ft long Edwardian pergola, Victorian glasshouses, Walled Kitchen and Sunken Garden and orchards. It is also possible to book accommodation in West Dean House.

Student conservators at West Dean College have begun conserving The Toll House created by Vivien Greene (1904 to 2003), a leading authority on dolls' houses, and wife of English novelist, Graham Greene. The dolls house, part of The Edward James Collection and described as 'A Surreal interior, inspired by Monkton House and a meeting with Edward James', will be on public display for the first time at the annual West Dean House Opening next month. Students across the college's disciplines will be working on the different elements of the interior and the conservation project will be displayed for visitors to see how the work will be carried out.

"The project is being completely student-led," says Bronwen Glover, Books conservation student who prepared the condition report. "We visited the Edward James' archives, packed up The Toll House to move it to the books department, developed the conservation report and liaised across all the conservation departments. It has been a very useful collaborative experience working as part of a multi-discipline conservation team."

The Lilliputian house was made and furnished by Vivien Greene following a chance meeting with Edward James at West Dean in 1972. Vivien, a keen dolls' house restorer, was staying at the house to complete an inventory of the Nurnberg Dolls House, also part of The Edward James Collection, when James returned unexpectedly from Mexico to Monkton House. When Vivien heard of the sale of the house in 1986, following James' death in 1984, she was 'determined to make a remembrance' of her visit.

"I have seldom been more entertained, delighted and amused. The man... has a personal impact quite indescribable (a bon-fire, a double-bass, a very large bear?) and one I shall never forget and which I shall always be grateful to have experienced," said Vivien in a letter written from Grove House, Oxford.

"Vivien Greene was proud that 'nothing had been bought especially for this little jeu d'esprit' and the interior was decorated with materials she had around the house," says Lara Meredith, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Books Conservation programme. "It is unusual for the students to work on modern household materials, such as double-sided foam, wallpaper and miniature paper pictures and it will be a quite unique exercise."

Monkton House, built in 1902, was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869 - 1944) and sensationally reinterpreted in the surrealist style by Edward James in the late 1930s. The Toll House contains miniature copies of objects, all made by Vivien including a surrealist painting reminiscent of Magritte's *La Reproduction Interdite*, a 'lips sofa' and a facsimile of James' bed, which was modelled on Nelson's funeral car.

One of the few colleges in the world which offers graduate and postgraduate study in a range of conservation disciplines, West Dean also offers programmes in Creative Arts. Qualifications include Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma, MA and MFA validated by the University of Sussex. West Dean offers several scholarships and bursaries to talented students who would not otherwise be able to study at the college.

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