

JOHN SANDOE (BOOKS) LTD



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THE LIBRARY OF MARGUERITE LITTMAN

In a departure for John Sandoe's, we are proud to offer for sale a selection of books from the library of the late Marguerite Lamkin Littman, a loyal customer here for several decades until her death in 2020.

Born in 1930 in Monroe, Louisiana, Marguerite Lamkin became a voice coach, specializing in the elongated vowels of the American south. Famous for her work with Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor (who she worked with for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*), her friends included Christopher Isherwood, Don Bachardy, David Hockney, Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote – whose character Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* is said to have been based on her. After Hollywood she moved to New York, working as an advice columnist for *Glamour* magazine and helping Richard Avedon on his book, *Nothing Personal*, a collaboration with his schoolfriend James Baldwin.

In 1965, after two brief earlier marriages, Marguerite married Mark Littman, a British barrister, and moved to London. There she maintained a vigorous social life from their home in Chester Square. She was a remarkable woman, her keen intelligence matched by her energy, curiosity and wit. As Capote said, "She knew everyone". Her lunches at Chester Square were legendary – long and delicious, with marvellous company – Gore Vidal, Jessye Norman, Nicky Haslam, Josephine Loewenstein, Elizabeth Taylor, Sir Elton John, Bianca Jagger, musicians, writers, painters... She remarked of herself with characteristic charm: "Ab can't help it if everyone Ab know is famous".

Between 1976 and 1985, she modelled for Andy Warhol's minimalist Polaroid portraits, and in 1986 she started the AIDS Crisis Trust. Among her indefatigable initiatives was *Hockney's Alphabet*, published in the UK in 1991 by Faber & Faber. It consisted of 27 lithographs by David Hockney (one for each letter of the alphabet, and an ampersand) with an introduction by Stephen Spender. The text for each letter of the alphabet was contributed by a pantheon of literary names – Doris Lessing, Arthur Miller, Susan Sonntag, Iris Murdoch, Martin Amis, Gore Vidal *et al.* The 'special editions' are signed by Hockney and Spender; the 'de luxe' edition was also signed by most of the contributors. Proceeds went to the AIDS Crisis Trust. In 1999, the AIDS Crisis Trust was merged with the Elton John Aids Foundation, for which Marguerite served as a director.

Although discerning art collectors, Marguerite and Mark Littman were not book collectors as such. Their books occupied three walls in two good-sized rooms and various passages, but they were all acquired for reading or because of their relationships with authors; the range of the books is testament to the Littmans' broad culture and wide interests. Many of the books came from John Sandoe's - Mrs Littman's voice at the other end of the telephone was unmistakable and remains unforgettable: "This is Margueriteet..." The last book she ordered from us was Elton John's autobiography, *Me*.

We were given the opportunity to make a selection from her books, and what we have to offer reflects both the Littmans' remarkable circle of friends and also their wide reading. It includes books by Richard Avedon, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, Lesley Blanch, Stephen Spender, Don Bachardy and many others. A number are inscribed or signed by the authors; many are first editions. It has been a huge pleasure to catalogue these wonderful books and we hope you find much to enjoy.