



# EDWARD POVEY

WATERHOUSE & DODD • NEW YORK

Seven paintings by  
Edward Povey

Essay by  
Professor Roman Konik

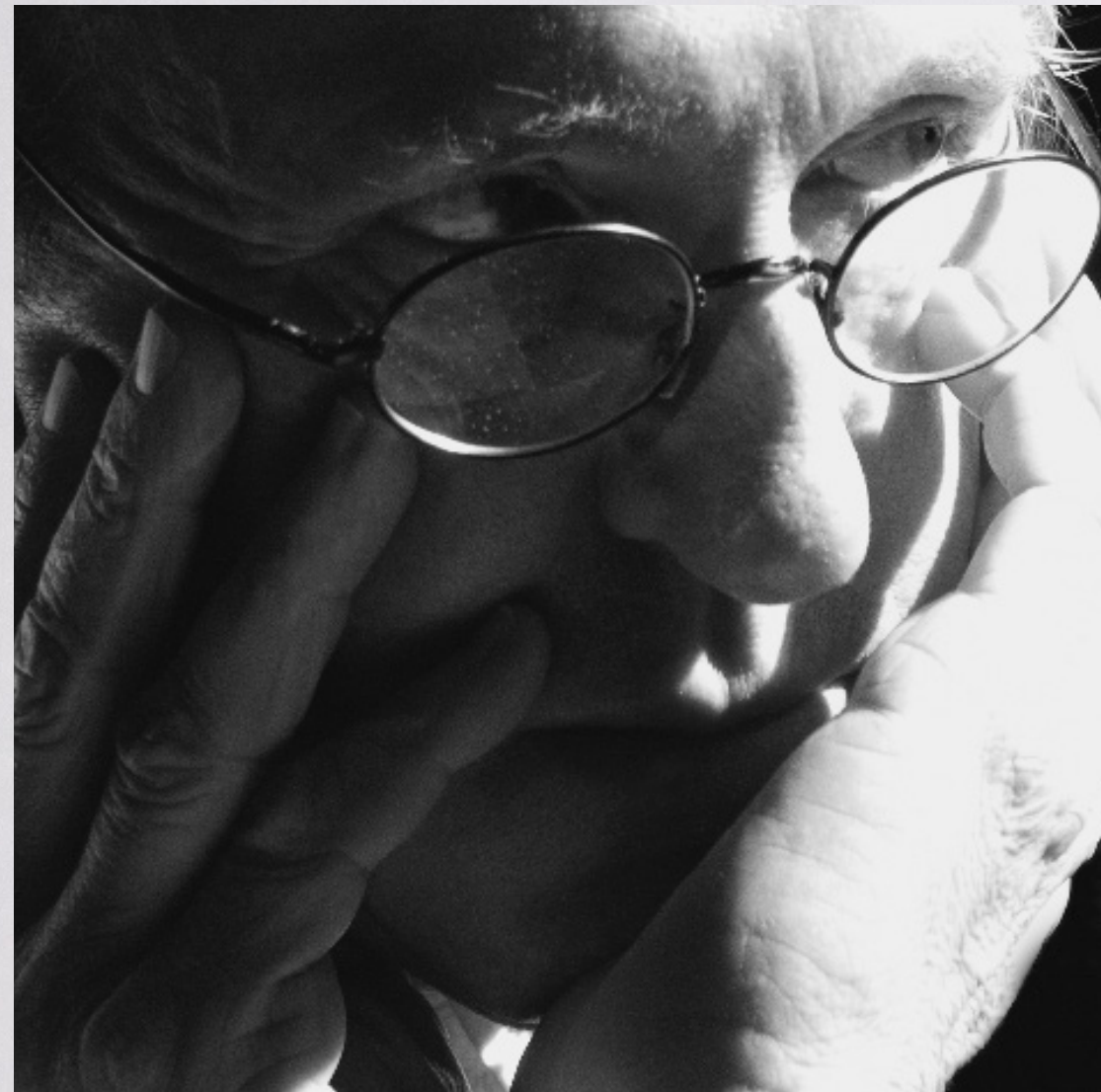
*"The greatest truth for an artist is that his  
audience is not a purse but a human being.*

*A being who washes her baby,  
who feels fear in the folds of the night,  
and who dances when no one is watching.*

*After that, his paintings cease to be  
merchandise and begin to be the human  
experience, painted in tears and candlelight."*

*Edward Povey 2023*

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## A Diorama of Somnambulistic Mortality

The paintings of Edward Povey

Professor Roman Konik, Head of the Department of Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Wrocław in Poland.

### Preamble

*When I returned from emigration to continue my studies in Poland, I knew that I had to find a way to earn money in addition to my studies. And so I found a job as an illustrator in one of the publishing houses in Wrocław, which specialized in children's literature.*

*The work was irregular, so there were times when I did only two or three illustrations a month, but there were also times when I had to illustrate a lot of books in a few days. There is one moment from this work I remember to this day, when the president of the*

*publishing house called the whole team together and said that several books had just entered the canon of school readings and should be put into print in four days, so that they could be on the shelves at the start of the new school year. That's when I broke my record of working without sleep, drawing continuously for 72 hours.*

*As it turned out later, the illustrations of the last 12 hours became so peculiar that they were finally withdrawn from print. Just a few years after the*



*Blessure* (detail)



*Blessure* (detail)

Opposite: *Blessure* (detail) Previous page: *Amplexum* (detail)

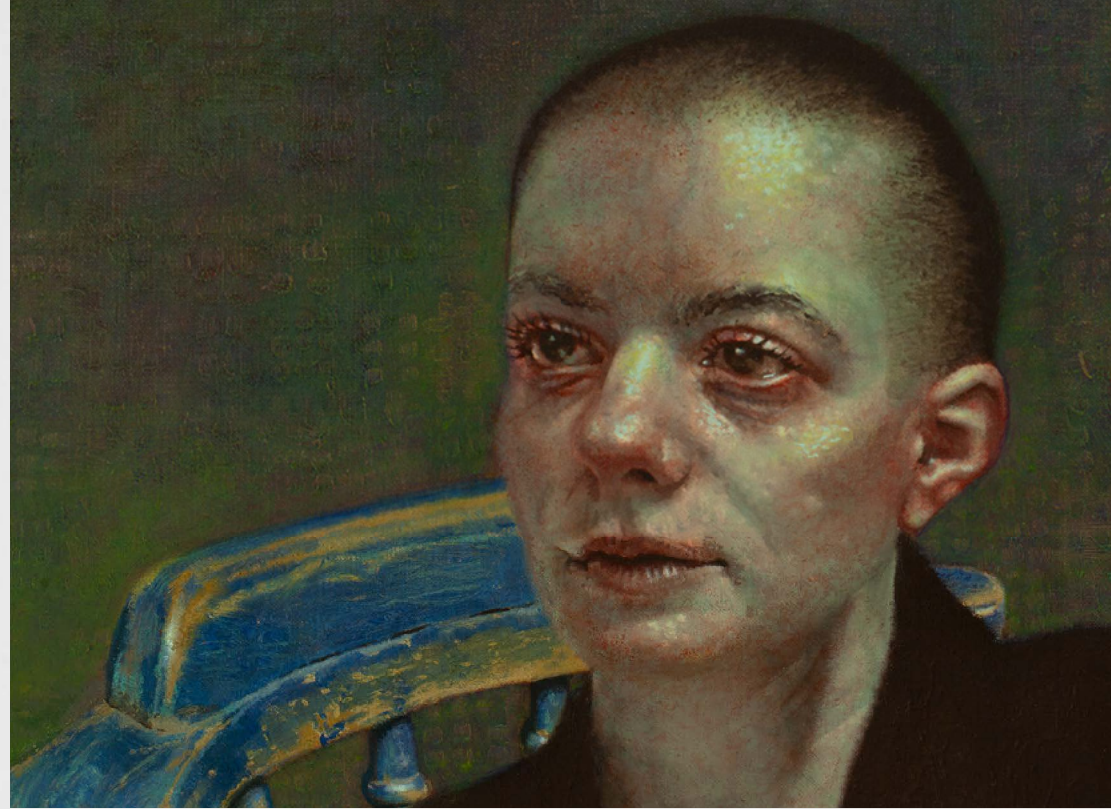
incident, I met, quite by chance, my former co-workers at a book fair. I was astonished to hear that these discarded illustrations, which had been produced at the borderline moment of exhaustion, had provoked a heated discussion in the publishing house, because they showed something that is not customary in illustrations.

Apparently, I managed to condense in these illustrations a world full of opposites, on one hand idyllic and carefree, but subcutaneously teeming with some mysterious horror. Since then I have been wondering to what extent this gesture of extreme

exhaustion, almost somnambulistic work unleashed the cognitive power of art, in a way let rationalism off the leash and allowed my imagination to clothe fear, uncertainty and horror in shapes.

In fact, this problem still accompanies me today, as I wonder to what extent art's creation in the world goes beyond mere authorial commentary and tells us not so much about the artist's thoughts, but more of the universal truth about the real world. Whenever I think about this, the works of contemporary British painter Edward Povey come to mind.





Above: *Cast* (detail) Opposite page: Edward Povey in his studio.

Edward Povey's paintings are like a concentrate that acts as a commentary on reality. In his paintings, there is a longing for a world that has passed away, but at the same time there is also a strong confrontation with what *is* now. In other words, every beauty contained in Povey's paintings, is like a coin, it has another side, some mysterious obverse.

In art, Edward Povey has never been a proponent of conventional solutions. Starting with the fact that he always worked in a figurative

mode although for most of his life it was not very fashionable. Secondly, his career began with work on large-format murals several stories high. When the artist reached a certain level of recognition and admiration for his murals, he simply stopped painting them, moving to the West Indies to rethink his further artistic path there.

Edward Povey was born in south London in 1951. He grew up as an only child, obsessively painting, and drawing was like an compulsive neurosis for him during



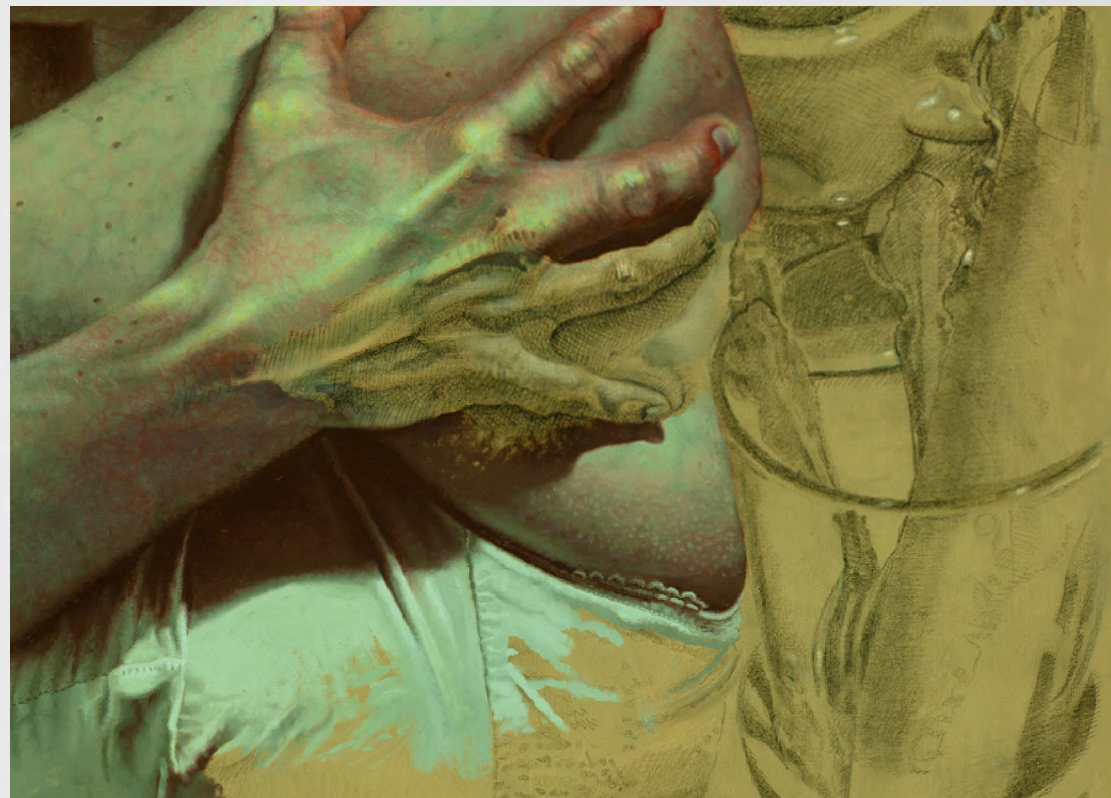
his childhood,]. In fact as a child he never let the pencil out of his hand, as if the world created in the drawings were to act as some form of invisible glass separating this sensitive child from the real world.

When the time to choose a future profession came, young Edward began studying at Eastbourne College for Art and Design, followed by psychology and painting at The University of Wales. There he became famous as a painter of multi-story murals. When his first success came, the

artist unexpectedly moves his studio to the West Indies for seven years to the island of Grenada, where he tries his hand at oil painting, abandoning mural work altogether. Another success comes just as quickly, after only a few years his works began to find their way into private collections in the United States.

By 1991, Edward Povey was already exhibiting in New York's John Whitney Payson Gallery alongside the great American masters. Currently, the artist lives and works in Devon, England.

Opposite: *Imperium* (detail)  
Below: *Amplexum* (detail)



He makes no secret of the fact that, in addition to perfecting his painting skills, his studies in psychology are equally important to him. For example when painting, the series of paintings: Childhood, Illusion or Desire, he wanted to convey in them not only a visual layer but some part of the universal truth about life.

What increases my admiration is Povey's extraordinary work with models, using elaborate sets and costumes, which he renders in cubist perspectives mixed with early Renaissance methods of painting bodies, the artist gives complex compositions, teeming with some inner life.

One can see in these paintings a great longing to create a perfect way of depicting such complex and sensitive human emotions, the relationship between memory and imagination. Art critics call his work Emotional Realism, and they are correct. Because they are not easy paintings, they have a kind of insistence in them, and show the artist's fascination with androgyny, which has its roots in Edward's childhood, when his father kept telling him that he would never be a "real man." The artist says this about his art: "What interests me infinitely in the creation of paintings and the problems associated with it is to try to go beyond the image, beyond the paint. Just as writers are not particularly interested in the pen they write with, I am not

particularly interested in paint. Paint is largely a mean to an end, and I'm interested in something that hides underneath. Painting is an attempt to get something that is ephemeral, it's like sculpting smoke in the air."

The world created by Edward Povey in his paintings is bizarre yet beautiful, it is like a maze filled with emotions, props, and memories. Through this nature of the works, his paintings confront our view of the world, pose uncomfortable questions, such as the idea of dying, or aging bodies. The artist weaves numerous ordinary items into the compositions of his paintings, such as teacups & cutlery, medical supplies and old photographs. Because of this, the paintings look like storehouses of curiosities, viewing them is like wandering through a dream, when in the morning we try to unravel the mysteries hidden in it. It's as if the artist is removing layer after layer of the unnecessary veneer from his memory to reveal something that has universal meaning to him.

His paintings, at least for me, are like unfinished, layered paintings, they are populated with incomplete human figures. These figures often look like they are in convalescence, the women are hairless, wearing caps that cover their heads. The artist deliberately leaves visible under-drawings in some of the paintings, while also rendering visible veins, bones and ligaments with great



Above: *Amplexum* (detail) Below: *Table* (detail).





care, rigorously detailed to reveal some disjointed ambiguity.

On first viewing, the depicted body painted with a greenish under-painting and translucent glazes taken as if from Raphael's technique is disquieting, a flattened composition in a Cubist manner. However, as time goes by, when one looks at these paintings they unexpectedly resonate and resemble early Renaissance painting, like a diorama of somnambulist mortality, they have something universal about them. They often reveal a dimension that we would prefer to eliminate from

our experience. In other words, Edward Povey paints as if he is in altered states of consciousness. He lifts the curtain for us, behind which he shows us worlds taken out of his imagination and memories.

Not everyone dares to peek behind that curtain, because what they find there can terrify. It's hard to chase these images out from under our eyelids later, when we close them in the evening.

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Translated from Polish.

Below: *Décousu* (detail) Opposite: *Sous Le Cerveau* (detail) Following page: *Table* (detail)..



Table  
2022  
Oil on Belgian linen  
200 x 200 cm | 79 x 79 in



*Sous Le Cerveau*  
2022  
Oil on Belgian linen  
140 X 120 cm | 55.25 X 47.25 in

[video commentary](#)



*Décousu*  
2022  
Oil on Belgian linen  
140 X 120 cm | 55.25 X 47.25 in

[video commentary](#)



*Blessure*  
2022  
Oil on Belgian linen  
140 X 120 cm | 55.25 X 47.25 in

[video commentary](#)



*Imperium*  
2022  
Oil on Belgian linen  
140 X 120 cm | 55.25 X 47.25 in



*Amplexum*  
2020  
Oil and graphite on Belgian linen  
140 X 120 cm | 55.25 X 47.25 in



Cast  
2020  
Oil on Belgian linen  
76.2 X 71.1 cm | 30 X 28 in







## Biography

2023 - BLACKLIST - Inclusion of Povey paintings in an upcoming episode of the American crime thriller television series that premiered on NBC on September 23, 2013. The paintings hang in a collector's home used for the episode.

2022 - A Diorama Of Somnambulist Mortality - The works of Edward Povey, blog article. by Professor Roman Konik, Head of the Department of Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Wrocław in Poland.

2023 - Povey artworks are shown alongside Modern Masters such as Chagall, Leger, Matisse, Miro, Monet, Picasso and Renoir, and Post-War

artists such as Lichtenstein, Riopelle, Warhol and Wesselmann at The Palm Beach Show, West Palm Beach.

2023 - Povey artworks are shown alongside Modern Masters such as Chagall, Leger, Matisse, Miro, Monet, Picasso and Renoir, and Post-War artists such as Lichtenstein, Riopelle, Warhol and Wesselmann at The San Francisco Fall Show.

2023 - Waterhouse & Dodd's Summer Group Show includes Povey artworks.

2022 - Povey artworks are shown alongside Modern Masters such as Chagall, Leger, Matisse, Miro, Monet, Picasso and Renoir, and Post-War artists such as Lichtenstein, Riopelle,

Warhol and Wesselmann at The Palm Beach Show, West Palm Beach

2022 - Povey artworks are shown alongside Roberto Matta, Lynn Chadwick, Saint Clair Cemin, and Annina Roescheisen alongside other Modernist and Contemporary artists. at Art Fair Miami

2021 - Povey accepts representation with Waterhouse & Dodd, New York.

2021 - LIVING DIORAMA - Interview by Carmen Lozano, renowned art blogger who has also written about artists Ángeles Santos, Ruxandra Niculae, Marta en Marte, Juan Silva, and Raymon Paynet.

2021 EDWARD POVEY IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW with Abi Joy Samuels on Instagram #@paintguide. Povey speaks about his training, motivation, his angry father, studio on a tropical island, his murals in Wales, anatomy training with medical school cadavers, and his passion for his work. He also speaks about his plans for the coming year.

2021 - ART IS LINE blog, interviewed by Italian Art Critic Simone Fappanni, who has also written about the Futurists, the Surrealists, Picasso, Mirò, Dalí, and Moore.

2021 - Background And Process, - Article. Discourse and exploration by the psychoanalyst and art historian, Jean-François Ferbos.

2021 - PROVOK MAGAZINE, Miami, USA. MNEMONIC CREATURES - In-depth interview. Other interviews

include Damien Hirst, Banksy, Gerhard Richter, Basquiat, and Cindy Sherman.

2021 - Edward Povey - Emotional Realism. Documentary Short Film by Italian film maker PETER PAHOR.

2021 - INCOMPLETE Edward Povey Cinematic portrait by Italian film maker PETER PAHOR.

2021 - C MAG, Alberta University of the Arts MORTAL PAINTER - Interview by arts writer Kristie Feener.

2021 - WHY NOW - Edward Povey interviewed by Editor-in-chief Harvey Solomon-Brady for Why Now, the positive media platform launched by Gabriel Jagger, son of Rolling Stone Mick Jagger.

2021 - Povey artworks appear at the Los Angeles Art Show in July/August with Arcadia Contemporary, Pasadena, California

2021 - Povey artworks appear at the Los Angeles Art Fair in February with Arcadia Contemporary, Pasadena, California

2021 - REVISTA LITERÁRIA PIXÉ - Brazil. Magazine feature. The December 2021 issue is to feature 40 images of Povey's paintings. The Revista Literária Pixé publishes poems, short stories and chronicles by Brazilian authors from the most diverse origins. In each edition, a different visual artist is invited to illustrate all the pages, joining text to the proposed visualities.

2020 - Artnet News - article discussing Edward Povey showing in a group exhibition titled ISOLATION MASTERED at the JD Malat Gallery, Mayfair, London. Exhibition juried by: Simon de Pury- Art Dealer & Auctioneer Dylan Jones- Editor of GQ Robert Montgomery- Artist David Bellingham- Art historian, author and Programme Director of the MA in Art Business, Sotheby's Institute of Art London Katrin Fridriks- Artist Gavin Rossdale- Musician and Art Collector Jean-David Malat- Founder, JD Malat Gallery Victoria Aboucaya- Director, JD Malat Gallery and special guest, Gavin Turk- Artist 2020 Magazine feature: Revue Magistature, Paris, France 2020 Magazine feature: Nostromo Magazine, Valencia, ES

2019 - Povey begins to show with Arcadia Contemporary, Pasadena, California. Povey's now elderly mother had begun to fail, and so he and his wife, artist Tolar Schultz, returned to the UK to rejoin her. There he continued to pursue this new profoundly authentic line of paintings, deep in the countryside only 290 miles from the site of Edward Povey's distant childhood in London

2016 - 2018 - the Povey and Schultz duo made two collections of paintings each year, but they were both simultaneously reawakening the evolution of their own individual art, which had been paused in 2012. Refreshed by his creative sojourn with Schultz and inspired by new research in the National Gallery of Art in London, Povey alighted upon the idea of combining Cubist mixed perspectives with Early Renaissance methods of

painting flesh. Through his demanding emotional life experiences, he still carried the undiminished vision of congruent cherishing in human relationships, encapsulated in the motif of a man longingly serenading a sleeping woman through the night, lost in reverie. This subject, employing Modernist strength and Raphael's tenderness, could answer his long-sought wish of creating a better way of showing complicated and vulnerable emotions. A New Orleans art dealer offered Povey and Schultz an artists' residency at her river home in late 2018, and the peaceful isolation provided Povey with the perfect environment in which to shake the wrinkles out of his breakthrough.

2016 - I.E.E.E. - the largest organization of engineers in the world, published their charter for ethics in artificial intelligence, using Povey and Schultz paintings as illustrations. They also advise the White House and the United Nations on the subject.

2016 - Photographed by Philip Rogers.

2013-15 - Povey begins to collaborate with the artist Tolar Schultz on building a new concept combining abstraction and liminal figuration, documented by Italian Museum Curator Giuseppe Bachi; and the Former Head of Public Policy of BBC Wales and Deputy Chair of Artes Mundi, Huw Roberts

2013-14 - Garmon Press - publishes the first five volumes of the Public Catalogue Foundation series Oil Paintings in Public Ownership. Povey works appear in four of the five initial volumes, more are expected in

subsequent volumes. BBC interviews with Huw Roberts - former head of BBC Wales, and Paul Islwyn Thomas - former head of Arts and Culture BBC Wales- in which he discusses his new exploration, employing larger canvases and complex methods of harvesting imagery, abandoning his previous approaches to painting and advancing into a more challenging and also more direct, visceral style. He combines realistic forms with pure abstract forms in the same paintings, giving rise to a seamless 'visual language': one that opens the door to new and eloquent possibilities in style and meaning, and which is considerably more impactful on live viewers of his paintings. Continues to work in his isolated studio in the USA. Shows at Art Palm Beach - West Palm Beach, Atlanta, New Orleans

2011-12 - MOMA Wales authors Edward Povey book: Discusses his career, in which Povey created more than 3500 artworks with subsequent placement into 600 public, corporate and private collections in 16 countries. The BBC and the UK Public Catalogue Foundation Partnership published most of Povey's publicly owned works in their Your Paintings Project which has put the UK's entire national collection of over 210,000 oil paintings online. Continues to decline representation by commercial galleries during a period of reevaluation of his painting

2008-10 - BBC Television, ITV Television, S4C Television and Welsh & English regional newspapers celebrate Povey's contribution to art in Britain. Enters a period of transition in the visual language employed in

his paintings. During this evolution he withdraws from gallery representation, seeking a seclusion which will serve his research. He privately explores through his Emotional Expression Period of paintings. Moves to build an isolated studio in the USA

2006-07 - Proposed for a knighthood for his services to the world of art. Knighthood Proposal supported by Ken Owen - playwright; the Chancellor of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Artistic Director of the Welsh National Theater; the Head of BBC Wales; the Head of Arts and Culture for BBC Wales; Lady Anglesey. Studios: Wales, Florida. Shows in Wales, West Palm Beach; Virginia Beach Contemporary Art Museum

2005 - The Times Newspaper, London: Povey's Hall of Illusion mural oil painting is named one of the ten most important university-owned artworks in Britain. Studies form in London art museums, continuing his Pain Beauty and Memory Period paintings. Studios: California, Florida and Wales. Shows in New Orleans, West Palm Beach, Wales

2002-04 - Deepens his approach to design and develops his Creative Working Methods Period. By July 2003 he enters his Pain Beauty and Memory Period of paintings. Studios: Grenada, West Indies; California; Florida; Wales. Shows in Wales, France, Barcelona, San Francisco, New Orleans, and West Palm Beach

2000-01 - In Style Magazine: May 2001: Will Wonders Never Cease, article. Showing Eric McCormack

(actor of Will and Grace sitcom) with an Edward Povey painting in his collection. The Lord Chamberlain invites Edward Povey to Buckingham Palace to meet with Her Majesty the Queen of England and The Prince of Wales. Studios: Wales, Spain. Shows in Wales, France, San Francisco, New Orleans

1997-99 - Invited to join the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art. Museums in Britain and the USA begin acquiring Povey works. The National Library Museum of Wales acquire three Povey works for the nation. BBC Radio create a Diary Program following Povey on his research for his paintings and sculptures: France, London, Wales. Begins sculpting, public and private, as an extension to his forms in paint, furthering his Psychology and Philosophy Period of paintings Studios: Wales. Shows in Singapore, New Orleans, New York, London

1994-96 - Deepens his studies in the relationship between art and the psyche. Researches new ways to evolve concepts with models using theaters and elaborate staging and costumes. The BBC follows his evolution, in both his professional and personal lives. He continues through the Childhood, Illusion and Desire Period of paintings, and begins the Psychology and Philosophy Period of paintings. Studios: Wales - courtesy of the University of Wales; Florida, West Indies. Shows in London, New York, San Francisco, New Orleans, Beverley Hills, Scottsdale, Miami, Hong Kong, Brussels, Wales, France

1992-93 - Public commission: Hall of Illusion mural: 20 X 40 ft. interior oil painting in the Chamber Concert Hall of the University of Wales. The commission is followed by BBC Television, S4C Television; BBC Radio Four and regional and national newspapers. Studios: Guisborough, England; Bangor City, Wales. Designs the Hall of Illusion mural on the island of Grenada, West Indies

1987-91 - Studies psychology and narrative in art whilst he builds the extensive Childhood, Illusion and Desire Period of paintings. Studio: Guisborough, England courtesy of the town mayor. Shows in Belgium, London, New York

1982-86 - The New York Times send photographer Dith Pran (on whom the movie The Killing Fields was based) to photograph Povey in New York with The Trial of Saint Deiniol painting at Art Expo New York 1986. Povey is advised by George Bush Senior's former campaign manager Zena Temkin on shaping his public persona. The BBC film Edward Povey with former President of the Royal Academy of Art in London - Sir Hugh Casson KCVO, RA, RDI in which Sir Hugh interviews Povey about his art career. Public and private commissions for collections in the United States, London, Wales, Belgium, West Indies. Studies symbolism and trains in color with Jan de Maere in Brussels and works through the Tapestry Period of paintings Studio: Grenada, West Indies.

1981-82 - Commission: The Trial of Saint Deiniol: 19-panel, 18 x 21 ft. painting. Studio: Shropshire, England

1974-81 - University of Wales: studied painting under Welsh artist Selwyn Jones. Public and private commissions: twenty-five multistory murals in Wales and England: documented by the BBC and British National Newspapers. Studios:

Bethesda and Bangor City, Wales. Studies composition and portraiture. Shows at the Royal Exchange, London; Bangor City Museum, Wales

1972-73 - Eastbourne College for Art and Design: Fine Art Foundation Course: studies drawing. Works through the South Coast Period of paintings. Studio: South Coast of England

Below: *Décousu* (detail)



## Selected Collections

### SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Wales, Museum of Modern Art  
Florida, Brevard Art Museum  
Wales, National Museum of Wales  
Wales, The National Library of Wales  
New York, J.P. Morgan Inc.  
Wales, Glynn Vivien Art Museum  
Venezuela, Procter and Gamble  
USA, 3M Art Collection  
Wisconsin, Alverno College  
Wales, Aberystwyth Town Hall  
London, Goldman Sachs  
Wales, Anglesey Museum Art Collection  
Belgium, MasterCard Europe  
Wales, University of Wales Art Collection  
Singapore, The British High Commission  
Wales, Contemporary Arts Society

Virginia Beach, the office of the Mayor

Texas Tech University Public Art Collection

Texas, The Citadelle Art Foundation

Holland, Galeri Gerard, The Hague

The Besharat Museum Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia

The Besharat Museum Gallery, Barbizon - France

### SELECTED PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Alex Gansa - screenwriter, producer, executive producer: Showtime series *Homeland*, *Beauty and the Beast* TV series, *The X-Files*, *Dawson's Creek*, *Numb3rs*, HBO's *Entourage*.

Jean David Malat - London-based art dealer and curator. Founder of the JD Malat Gallery, Mayfair, London; patron of Tate Gallery; patron of the Royal Academy of Art; supporter of Serpentine Gallery

Kate Mulgrew, actor (Broadway, Film and TV: Star Trek, Orange is the New Black)

Eric McCormack, actor (Broadway, Film, and TV: Will and Grace)

Anne Bobby, actor (Broadway, Film, and TV: Born on The Fourth of July)

John Staehely, lead guitarist, music producer (The band Spirit, Bob Dylan)

Xaviera Hollander, writer, producer (The Happy Hooker starring Lynn Redgrave)

Cefin Roberts, actor, director, Artistic Director of the Welsh National Theater

Gwen Ellis, actor (Stage, Film, and TV: The Jesus Movie; A Mind To Kill)

Wyn Bowen Harries, actor (Stage, Film, and TV: Ironclad; Coronation Street)

Professor and Mrs. Eric Sunderland, Former Chancellor of the University of Wales

Itzik Becher, performing artists' agent (Woody Allen, Peter Yarrow)

Gwenda Griffith, film and television

producer (Senior producer S4C Television)

Paul Islwyn Thomas, BBC film producer, former head of arts and culture: BBC

Huw Roberts, former head of BBC Wales; UK Prime Minister liaison

Harvey Guion, actor (Silent Fall, Holy Hell, Normalcy, Our Town)

Kathleen Guion, former Division President of Dollar General

Pete Telfer, film producer, and director (BBC, HTV Television, S4C Television)

Luned Emyr, BBC interviewer (BBC, HTV, S4C)

Ken Owen, playwright: (Stage, Radio, TV: Ethiopia Newydd, Genod Oer)

Paul Lucas, theater producer (Broadway, Edinburgh and Sydney Festivals)

Dana Friis-Hansen, director and CEO, Grand Rapids Art Museum

David and Teresa Wilkinson, Goldman Sachs Bank, Londo

*Povey artworks are in museums, corporate collections, and private collections in thirty-one countries across six continents*



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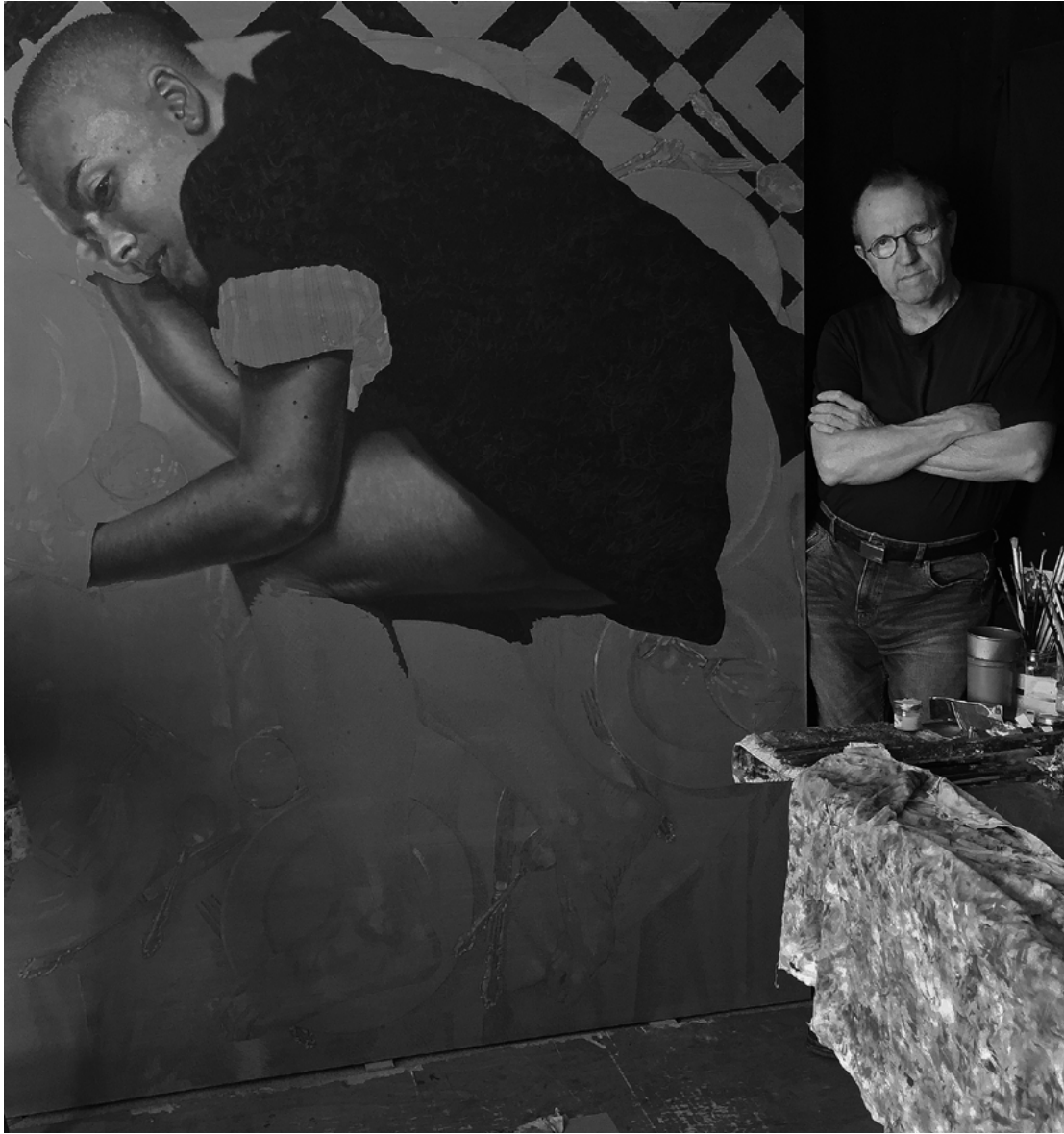
Edward Povey - Cinematic Portrait

Italian film maker Peter PAHOR

100 seconds

May 2021

<https://www.edwardpovey.com/biography>



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