



I have always had an image in my mind,
like a stone in my shoe.
Edward Povey, 1993

Essays by

Paul Islwyn Thomas – BBC Head of Arts and Culture 2000-2005

Huw Roberts – former Head of BBC Wales 2002-2006

Cefin Roberts – Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Wales 2003 – 2010

Professor Anthony Jones – Chancellor of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, WALES



EDWARD POVEY

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WITH ESSAYS BY

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Edward Povey

Introduced and edited by Hugh Featherstone Blyth

EDITED BY

Ken Owen and Hugh Featherstone Blyth

Museum of Modern Art, Wales



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Page 2: *Diner*, 2011 (detail). Oil on canvas, 28 x 20 in. (71.1 x 50.8 cm). Collection of the artist

Pages 4-5: *The Children*, 2011 (detail). Oil on canvas, 40 x 32 in. (101.6 x 81.3 cm). Collection of the artist

Page 7: *Fairy*, 2011 (detail). Oil on canvas, 48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm). Collection of the artist

Page 8: *White Bowl*, 2011 (detail). Oil on canvas, 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm). Collection of the artist

Pages 14-15: Edward Povey's studio, Sub Rosa, USA. Photograph by Trisha McWaters ©2011 Trisha McWaters

Page 130 : *August*, 2011 (detail). Stone lithograph, 18.25 x 14 in. (46.3 x 35.6 cm). National Museum of Wales





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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In his attitude to essays, books and programs reflecting his life and career, Edward Povey has always taken the view that he should not intrude on the opinions and theories of writers, or the approaches of photographers. He wants to avoid diluting their valid response to his life and career – virtually whatever tone they take, with his own inevitable subjectivity. Within the studio, he similarly works from the standpoint of exploring and revealing his *own* vision, quite independent of the views of others.

Povey always wanted his imagery to be ‘drunk with atmosphere and still damp from his own experience’. None-the-less, he believes that the worlds which he presents on canvas come without any explanation or interpretation from him, in the same way that trees, mountains, objects and occurrences appear in the world without any interpretation or theory as to their existence. He accordingly gave free reign to the writers in this book. Despite this, it has to be borne in mind that any view of his career, which has spanned around 40 years and has included more than 30 overlapping themed periods of work carried out in several countries – cannot easily be conveyed in a single book.

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Edward Povey is an invited member of the Royal

Cambrian Academy of Art

Professor Anthony Jones : Chancellor of the School of the

Art Institute Of Chicago

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MasterCard Europe, Brussels



ESSAYS



HUW ROBERTS
Head of BBC Wales (2002—2006)

A Personal Minotaur

Edward Povey's art communicates a very real message about the human condition in a way which makes you re-examine the conventions of the visible world. Strikingly, his refusal to accept convention in his work is matched by an equally unconventional approach to presenting it. For two decades, between periods in his studio, he elucidated his theories and themes in series of pithy lectures across four countries. He addressed his art collectors directly, partly to make a point. Not that he was attempting to 'explain' his art – but that he was deeply acquainting his buyers with the relationship between themselves, art and the subconscious. He savoured the honest immediacy and intimacy of the approach.

Ironically then, in 2006 he was advocated for a knighthood for his services to the world of art, and in 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government presented him alongside Catherine Zeta-Jones, Sir Tom Jones, Katherine Jenkins and Sir Anthony Hopkins in the publication: *At Home With The Joneses*, published in New York. But his career had always been unfathomable in this way.

Perhaps the radical dream of modernism required the abandonment of the traditional atelier skills, which hitherto had underpinned the making of art. Despite the positive and refreshing results of modernism, the viewing public were not disenchanted (because even in their outrage, they were entertained by the debate) but rather were disconnected from its message. In his career generally, Edward Povey seemingly sought to invest his art

Opposite:
Edward Povey
The Caernarfon Mural, 1979
Oil based house paint on primed cement
56 x 41 feet (17 x 12.5 meters)
Commissioned by Harlech Television,
Wales in celebration of the
Welsh National Eisteddfod
in Caernarfon, Wales
Sited in Caernarfon, Wales

with the atelier skills, and certainly in his early and very public work, to reconnect with the viewer. From within the BBC I recall the steady stream of news items about his murals, the documentaries and interviews on mural scaffoldings.

But this recent chapter of his paintings has caused me to change my perspective on Povey's goals. We assumed from his early murals, as I suspect we assume of all muralists, that he was primarily a campaigner of sorts, and that he was only an artisan artist. I now begin to realize that he has, all the while, cherished a far more private aim, granted that it may have been subconsciously. He was unfolding a private and troubled vision behind an apparently socio-political motive. Inside the public performer and craftsman was a personal labyrinth filled with sleeping monsters, being slowly woken up through the decades of his work. And I believe that we recognize these monsters as our own.

Huw Roberts © 2006 and 2011



Opposite:
Edward Povey
Woman with Minotaur, 1987
Conte crayon on paper
21.5 x 29 in. (54.6 x 73.7 cm)
Collection of Mr. B.N. Nix, England

Opposite:
Edward Povey
Wheelchair Man (detail), 1990
Oil on canvas
33.75 x 37.5 in. (86 x 95 cm)
Collection of Dr. Paul Nickson, Wales

Huw Roberts was formerly head of BBC Wales, head of the London Press Office at ITN, and currently he is Deputy Chair of Artes Mundi and a board member of the Institute of Welsh Affairs.



PAUL ISLWYN THOMAS
Head of Arts & Culture for BBC Wales (2000-2005)

The Razor in the Glove

At the time when I was Head of Arts and Culture for BBC Wales, Edward Povey had already been contributing to British culture for thirty years – hence, his being proposed for a knighthood in 2006, in recognition of his services to the world of art.

Povey is an exceptional creative force and has dedicated his entire life to his art. However, he brings a paradox to society. Even when he painted multi-storey murals, he interwove very personal tableaux from an evidently tormented childhood into his otherwise universal creations. His recent paintings are dim and monumental, and are increasingly assaulted by his interior visions – yet from the very start of his career he has fascinated the media and has been an essentially ‘public’ phenomenon.

What deepens the enigma is that he has forged this ever more ‘internal reference point’ in a period when artists are seemingly dazzled into responding to the post modern and conceptual expectations of museums.

But artists who begin their careers as muralists carry several qualities forwards through their work: an unfortunate hard-edged finish to their forms; a facility for design, and the need for narrative. Diego Rivera is a good example of this, and Povey also more or less conforms.

However, his latest collection of paintings about gender and vulnerability paradoxically makes us reconsider his earlier works – bringing our attention

Opposite:
Edward Povey
Diner, 2011
Oil on canvas
28 x 20 in. (71.1 x 50.8 cm)
Collection of the Artist

back to those ‘personal tableaux’, in murals which, with hindsight, appear imposing but almost ghostly. Despite their six-storey scale, they evinced a shadowy, impassive quality which we almost missed at the time. His new paintings are softly terrifying, only six feet tall, yet equally monumental, more gently impassive, but in fact like a razor concealed in a kid glove.

His work draws on the many influences of his own life: his passion for theology and psychology, his journeys through diverse cultures, his exposure to Western, Oriental and tribal art. I know enough not to accuse Povey of creating art with a conscious political message but, in reflecting upon his recent works, I find a concern rising in me. Has he inhabited rooms in the human psyche which allow him, albeit unwittingly, to actually see truths about society and family life, which I would fervently hope were only ‘art’? I begin to suspect that this was always his role: to make art much like an artisan, who simply toils and does what he has learned to do. Edward Povey, the man, is personally humorous and constrained but, and here is the point, Edward Povey the artist involuntarily brings these shadowy scenes – like glimpses inside ‘a theatre of the truth’ – to tell unsettling truths about us and our flawed humanity.

Paul Islwyn Thomas © 2006 and 2011

- Head of Arts & Culture for BBC Wales (2000-2005)
- Founder Trustee of the Artes Mundi International Visual Art Prize
- Chairman, Bafta Wales (2008-9)
- Recipient of BAFTA Wales Awards for Best Documentary, Best Short film, Best Director and twice the prestigious Gwyn Alf Williams Special Award for contribution of history on television
- International Juror for the EMMY Awards (Documentary Category)
- International Juror for the Celtic Media Awards
- Trustee of the Elizabeth Evans Foundation to support young performing artists.
- Founder of Indus Films – BAFTA Award winning company
- Currently, Creative Director, Bulb Films – specializing in creative programming for an international market
- Latest project – a 90’ feature length film about the REQUIEM for BBC Four (Remembrance Day 2012)



Opposite Top:
Edward Povey
The Hall of Illusion mural,
The Childhood panel, (detail), 1993
Oil on primed horsehair plaster
74.3 x 94.3 in. (188 x 238.6 cm)
Commissioned by the University of Wales
The Times newspaper, London ©1993

Opposite Bottom:
Edward Povey
The Hall of Illusion mural,
The Synthesist panel, (detail), 1993
Oil on primed horsehair plaster
74.3 x 94.3 in. (188 x 238.6 cm)
Commissioned by the University of Wales
The Times newspaper, London ©1993



PROFESSOR ANTHONY JONES CBE, former President and current Chancellor of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Body of Knowledge

Internationally known arts administrator, broadcaster, writer, and historian of art and design. Professor Anthony Jones wrote this analysis of Edward Povey's art and his career (below), in 2006 in support of a bid for Povey to be considered for a knighthood, in recognition of his service to the world of art, and his contribution to culture in Britain.



“Povey is an extraordinary figurative painter of great power, schooled in the classical traditions of brilliantly-crafted composition, whose work is executed with a highly personal and idiosyncratic style. While he freely references his debt to the painters of the Italian Renaissance, to the monumental early works of Picasso, the drama of Caravaggio, or the complex works of Spencer, his work is nevertheless completely original and of his own invention. He is a painter whose work extends the traditions he respects, and adds to the language of painting, adds to the ‘body of knowledge’. He is one of the very few ‘easel-painters’ who can transfer from smaller scale to the vast – his huge mural *The Hall of Illusion* (see pp. 110 & 111) for the Powys Hall at the University of Wales, Bangor, is a quite astounding achievement.

There are very few painters working today who can equal Povey’s highly original compositions, which are complex and challenging, but communicate so readily with a wide audience. Edward Povey is a distinguished artist whose life and continuing work deserves recognition.”

Professor Jones has served twice as President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, has also served as Director of the Glasgow School of Art (1980–1986), and was appointed by Queen Elizabeth II the Director of the Royal College of Art, London (1992–1997). Professor Jones has published several books and many essays on art and design, curated numerous exhibitions, and has hosted three television series for the BBC. He is a recognized authority on the development of art, design, and architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries. He is Honorary Director of the Osaka University of the Arts, Honorary Professor of the University of Wales, and was conferred the Austrian Cross for services to European education. He has been awarded two Honorary Doctorates, was made an Honorary Member of the American Institute of Architects, is the Senior Fellow of the Royal College of Art, London, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. In 2003, Professor Jones was conferred the honor of Commander of the British Empire by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales.

Opposite Top:
Pablo Picasso
Three Women at the Spring, 1921
Oil on canvas
80.27 x 68.5 in. (203.9 x 174 cm)
© 2011 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Opposite Bottom:
Edward Povey
Two Women Smoking Pipes, 1998
Oil on canvas
26 x 18 in. (66 x 45.7 cm)
Private collection in Miami



ALAN FELTUS

A Painter's Thoughts on the Works of Edward Povey

Edward Povey's work fits into an uninterrupted continuum of centuries of figure painters that spans from the great Flemish and Italian Medieval painters to those I consider to be the most interesting artists of our time. What the paintings in this tradition have in common is, above all, the magic of invention. When we ask ourselves what makes one painting out of a thousand that portray the same subject stand out as special or unique, we are considering this aspect of painting. In fact, they are all unique, but some are more wonderful than others, depending on our point of view. We look at what the paintings portray other than those iconographic things that are necessary to the subject. The required pieces of the narrative of any Biblical subject are just a few simple things. A winged angel and Mary, for example. A Flemish Annunciation painting might have a magnificent Gothic interior with an array of beautiful objects on a tipped table placed between the two figures, other antique furniture, and the angel and Mary cloaked in drapery that is only seen in Flemish painting, drawn quite differently than that of any Italian painting. There is a staging to the room space and a stylization to the depiction of every element in the painting that is clearly Flemish and is also particular to the individual painter whose work we are looking at. We painters become very interested in the minutiae of paintings we turn to for inspiration and guidance. And generally speaking artists learn more from the art of the past than from any other source. In art school we basically learn how to look at art and then for the rest of our lives we continue to study the masters.

Opposite, Top:
Fig 1
Stanley Spencer
Map Reading and Bed Making, 1932
The Burghclere Murals, of. Newbury,
England
Oil on canvas
84 x 73 in. (213.4 x 185.4 cm) and 41.5 x
73 in. (105.4 x 185.4 cm)
©2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New
York / DACS, London

Opposite, Bottom:
Fig. 2
Edward Povey
The Return of Saint Padarn, 1983
Oil on canvas
Center Panel: 90 x 68 in. (228.6 x 172.7
cm)
Side Panels: 68 x 54 in. (172.7 x 137.1 cm)
Aberystwyth Town Hall, Wales



Fig. 3
Cave painting from Lascaux, France
Period of the Upper Paleolithic ca. 15,000
B.C.



Fig. 4
Pablo Picasso
Le Taureau, 1946
Lithograph
11.4 x 16.1 in. (28.9 x 41 cm)
© 2011 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York

I have always believed that from the oldest known art to the art of today there is no qualitative improvement. The drawing of a cow in a Lascaux cave (fig. 3) is as sophisticated as a cow drawn by Picasso (fig. 4). There is no progress in art. This I firmly believe. There are only changes. In essence it is the personal imagery and the differences in how we paint that distinguishes painters from one another. We paint what we know and that makes our paintings personal, and we paint the way we choose to paint, working within the limits of our ability, most often with the same materials used for many centuries. In other words we paint the way we can, and in many ways that says that no two of us are alike.

There are two separate aspects to Edward Povey's paintings. Both of these aspects are essential to appreciating Povey's paintings. One is what he constructs from his memories and his feelings; the personal content that shapes his narrative, that narrative being about his demons, pieces from his sometimes dark past, that in ways still haunt him. I have long believed that the most personal inner vision of any artist is likely to be very interesting to those who view his art. And strangely what we artists consider very personal, we share with the world without conditions. But we may present this material in ways not very well explained, the way dreams and memories can be unclear in content and meaning even to ourselves. I have never needed to completely understand the things that interest me. To understand entirely would be quite impossible to begin with, and wouldn't make things more meaningful in terms of how we appreciate them. Povey's world of imagery is a fascinating one, very full of things left unexplained.

The other aspect of Povey's paintings is what he describes when speaking of compositional structure, what can be seen when one turns a painting upside down so that the subject matter doesn't distract from seeing the arrangement of tonal blocks. A large part of the strength of Edward Povey's work is in the orchestration of color and form. For me the best paintings by any painter of any period are those in which there is a perfect balance between the abstract structure and the narrative content. When I am equally aware of both the composition and the subject matter, paintings are more successful than when one dominates so that the other might go unnoticed.

The period in the 1970s during which Povey painted the many exterior murals was like an apprenticeship, a time of training himself to paint. Strangely he wasn't apprenticed to anyone, and he chose to work on a monumental scale, setting himself fairly impossible goals and facing

challenging obstacles that probably no other young painter would take on. I don't know if anyone was making that kind of multi-story murals on buildings anywhere at the time. It was an undertaking like what the Mexican Muralists and the WPA artists in the U.S. had done a generation earlier, but they were not working in isolation from other mural painters. They formed a context that would have offered them support that Povey didn't have. I think the murals and larger paintings by Stanley Spencer (fig. 1, p. 29) were probably Povey's closest source of guidance, but Povey was enough unlike Spencer that a comparison is not very meaningful. What Povey and Spencer shared was being English and being completely obsessed and committed to the making of very elaborate imagery. I believe Stanley Spencer would have been very interested to see Povey's murals (figs. 5, 6) if he was still around when Povey was making them. In complexity and ambition they seem so like his own.

The paintings of Edward Povey are beautiful, rich in color and complex in compositional structure. Their narrative content is intriguing. They are worlds I like to get lost in, mysterious like our best remembered dreams, only better. Nostalgic in terms of time and place. Timeless, and also clearly of our time. They seem familiar and at the same time are totally new and surprising. Povey's painting *Twins*, 2010-2011 (fig. 7, p. 32), like



Fig. 5
Edward Povey
The Wakes, 1980
Oil-based house paint on primed cement
24 x 13 feet (7.31 x 3.96 meters)
Sited in Manchester, England

Below:
Fig. 6
Edward Povey
The Street Circus, 1977
Oil-based house paint on primed cement
13 x 35 feet (3.96 x 10.66 meters)
Sited in Conwy, Wales





all of his recent works, is an image of something magical rather than what we might see in the real world. In *Twins* we have three cardboard boxes full of dishes, cups and saucers. A checkered table cloth, a checkered floor. We see a total disarray in terms of housekeeping, but a perfect kind of order in painters' terms. A perfect composition. The room and hallway look familiar. A man is seen floating above the twin sisters, floating the way figures in Italian paintings floated for centuries, only this one is in his black suit and tie, trousers rolled up, no shoes, no socks. He floats there as though men do that sort of thing routinely these days. But who is he and what is he doing there? He seems to have been interrupted by us, the viewer, as he is about to intervene in an episode of sibling rivalry. Or perhaps he has something more sinister in mind. That's about all we can know, if we can know that much. The ambiguity in Povey's paintings is necessary; it allows the paintings to continue to intrigue us. We can construct a meaning and then that meaning will alter as it will, over and over.



Opposite Top:
Fig. 7
Edward Povey
Twins, 2010-2011
Oil on canvas
72 x 50 in. (182.9 x 127 cm)
Collection of the artist

Opposite Bottom
Fig. 8
Balthus
Les Joueurs de Cartes, 1966-1973
Casein, oil and tempera on canvas
74.8 x 88.6 in. (190 x 225 cm)
© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

Alan Feltus is an American painter represented by Forum Gallery in New York. He is one of the finest figurative symbolist painters alive today. He lives and works in the hills behind Assisi in Italy with his painter wife, Lani Irwin.

Page 36:
Edward Povey
High Shelf, 2009
Oil on canvas
32 x 26 in. (81.6 x 66 cm)
Collection of the artist

COMMENTARY



EDWARD POVEY

Inside the Myriorama

Myriorama was the name originally given in the 19th century to sets of illustrated cards that children could arrange and re-arrange to form different pictures. Later in the century the name was also applied to shows using a sequence of impressive visual effects to entertain and inform an audience.

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY

HUGH FEATHERSTONE BLYTH – *When I saw the plates that were going to be included in this book, I was surprised to find so many works missing that I regard as significant. I complained. We argued to and fro by email: me pointing out whole periods of Povey paintings which seemed to have been ignored, Edward explaining why the editors have taken that route.*

But the truth is, despite Povey's alleged shyness with regard to making policy statements about his art, this book definitely carries a subtext. It is designed to chart a very particular journey and the choices made during it. However, since the genesis of this journey is neither a place nor a time and its goal is best recognized by the artist himself, the relevance of these choices may appear arbitrary. They are not.

The current cycle of works, which are referred to here as 'Gender paintings', for want of a more defining term, marks a tidal moment in Edward Povey's ongoing relationship with his subjects and his medium. The works that have nourished this tide

represent only about a fiftieth of the artist's entire oeuvre. All are paintings that vector a particular sub-set of ideas and methods. For many years, understanding and developing these have been among the artist's significant preoccupations.

How are our perceptions of gender formed? What underpins and what undermines our sexuality? What gender assumptions do we make about ourselves and others based on who we think we are? What roles do we choose to play and why? How can such material be shown within the structured dynamic of a painting? What formal methods are best suited to demonstrating the tensions present in a delicate subject? How will what we 'think we see' affect our response? What does the 'seen' reveal about the 'seer'?

One vital part of the process that Povey uses when working out a canvas is that of note-taking. These notes can be anything from the scribbled phrase on a beer-mat or envelope so beloved of all great inventors, to copious exposures of themes and

ideas, theories of colour or tonality, expressions in sketch and quizzical 'questions to self' that explore the dynamics of a work in progress, observations about light or perspective, mood or expression. Povey has always written about the creative process. This goes far beyond a mere reference for recall. Sometimes the notes are closer to manifesto, borderline dogmatic, judgemental. A kind man, Povey will say things to his notepad that he would never burden you with in person. It is his way of talking to himself.

Edward Povey's art is a message in a bottle. It has travelled very far to get here. Much of this journey has been a mental one, a labyrinthine gallery of the many possibilities presented by one idea. And just as his paintings are the real-world expressions of these journeys, so his notes and writings are the clues he leaves for himself to help find his way back. However understandable, the notes do not actually need to be understood, for they are an understanding already reached by an artist with his art.

Like most working notes, these are not the product of happenstance, but rather the fruit of research, however hard the thread might be to follow. There is a scientific effort behind Edward's trawling of the outer world and the inner reaches of his own subconscious. Each painting, besides being an expression, impression or compression of thoughts and feelings is also a challenge to be surmounted, an enigma to be resolved. And while every canvas offers its own resolution, this is never a final answer. No painting stands alone. Each is best understood in the context of its fellows from the past, as well as its contemporaries. This research is like the ongoing reconfiguration of a complex puzzle, a Rubik's cube that Povey is earnestly revolving, shaping and twisting. His notes are a key to unlocking this process.

Like a scientist running a sequence of experiments, Edward Povey is probing artistic and thematic dilemmas that will only be successfully reconciled by an entire series of works. There will be a moment of fulfilment, that brief zone of comfort that comes with achievement. Notes will be gathered, filed away, stock will be taken. Then Povey will move on, just as he has done for the last forty years.

The following essay may best be understood as notes from Edward Povey's own frontline that I have very, very lightly nudged into the form they now take.

Hugh Featherstone Blyth, 2011

EDWARD POVEY – Whatever artists may tell us about their fierce privacy, art is an extraordinary love affair between the brazenly public and the achingly private. It is understandable though, to want your personal responses to the world, to be seen by the world. My first massive murals were public commissions with guidelines for their execution. I was young, but I quickly developed the knack of placating my patrons by providing some of the imagery that they requested, whilst including the painted faces of my aunt Violet and my Dad, walking me through my childhood. These scenes from my own life snuggled down comfortably among the famous dramas I was expected to depict, perched up on my scaffolding in the full view of Main Street.

It was an ideal apprenticeship really, because it denied me the freedom to exclusively paint my personal reflections until I could do it in a natural and unselfconscious way. Had I the time and money to paint exclusively out of my own preoccupations right from the start, the results would have been pompous and stilted.

Freedom is over-rated. These huge murals, recounting the lives of individuals, most of whom I had never met, surprisingly produced in me a desire to show their guileless ordinariness, their heart-seizing 'belonging' in life. Yet within a decade I was declining commissions in favour of more creative freedom.

In the West Indies, while I was coming to terms with symbolism, I explored my compositions by writing for days and, in the process, writing my way 'downstairs' into the subconscious. I would finally arrive at a place where I could comfortably handle ideas and images, shaping and re-shaping them. That place became a resource that I have frequented ever since, though recently I have felt the need to deliberately pipe these 'visions of the subconscious' through the filter of some very conscious understandings.

For example, at times I have deliberately contrived to shock my viewers. I now realize that shock is a tired routine in the art world, and was always an inarticulate and Neanderthal approach to the presentation of ideas. Today, shock is only truly valued for the thrill it brings to teenage splatter movies. Artists might handle it, but only with caution, because artworks endure far too long to permit the use of such fleeting devices.

However, the current sexual subject matter of my paintings does take me into the 'shock-infested waters' of intentional melodrama. Early in this group of paintings I sensed a tipping-point, where the inevitable shock value began to endanger the solemn and non-political atmosphere I wanted to maintain. I have a thrilling, rich and aroused response to some of the dim and 'processional' works of Spencer and Rego, Balthus and Casorati, where they achieve a primeval gravitas while dressed

up so mundanely. I need therefore to present my sexualized children in the shadow of a distraction. This muffles the inevitable shocks, which might otherwise subvert my real goals.

I chose to stage these potentially worrisome events back-to-back with carefully detailed scenes of everyday tasks, like the boy in *Fairy* (pp 66-67), meticulously packing his suitcase. The undoubted shock-value of the clearly distraught and voluptuous woman, crammed into a child's fairy costume, is somehow 'cloaked' by the boy's concentration on his task. With similar effect, the trans-sexual man in *Diner* (pp 82-83) is delicately rolling a cigarette. This simple action builds a little bridge across which we may pass to engage with the subject undisturbed.

Another cloaking device which I have used in previous paintings, and which appears in 'Diner', is to remove the figures' ability to see. They do not need to see, it is enough that they are seen by us. The 'Diner' character is wall-eyed, causing a similar 'visual dispersal' in the viewer. This disturbing 'blindness' of the trans-sexual pre-empts any possible shock effect, allowing us more freedom to stare unselfconsciously, and perhaps with more empathy. Thus we become guiltless voyeurs.

At times in the past I have used theatre and carnival themes. I notice that these themes work as a more pronounced form of 'cloaking'. They suggest that the imagery is not true, that this is 'acting'. I am now inclined to believe that this form of cloaking undermines the painting's truth, unless an element of doubt or an additional layer of 'lie that tells the truth' is appropriate to the theme being presented.

A progression of themes has surfaced in my art, but I cannot take responsibility for the logic of

their precise order. However I suggest that there is a rationale, a kind of evolution which parallels my life experience in some fashion. I might say that I am presently interested in issues of gender and the interface between children, sexuality and the adults in their lives. But this would not strictly be true. I only suggest that the Gender paintings, as I refer to them, are about these issues. The truth is that I simply display what I see in my mind. The concepts emerge and may carry a stowed cargo of meaning, cloaked in the guise of gender. I have myself made many such thin assumptions about my themes. Certainly these are ceremonies involving tension, eroticism and confusion, but we are like hidden onlookers, and can only guess at their purpose, if the word purpose even pertains. I certainly don't paint with one in mind.

I have accepted then, that there is a wisdom behind the apparently random flow of ideas and concepts in my art. Even now, after decades, I'm discovering that unless I produce a stream of paintings continually, I miss out episodes in my own development. I miss chapters of possible paintings, the next of which would have connected with the current one, extending and elaborating it. I still absurdly expect this progression of developing concepts to be random, whereas it is anything but. For example, at this stage in the Gender paintings, my attention has been caught powerfully by notions of a more diagonal-based composition, coupled with clearer tonal blocks – much like those dim religious paintings with a blackened group of figures, and a marvellous negative shape of mottled tan sky inserted between them like a jigsaw piece, massive and evocative. This will change the Gender paintings now. It will clarify and improve one aspect of the current group. However, what thrills and captivates me now, will at some point die in me – rendering

me unable to comprehend the subtleties of the concept enough to paint it. It is as if these chapters arrive with their own timeline, after which they expire.

However contemporary the subject matter, any artist is still dependent upon a language of visual imagery and laws of articulate communication which have evolved and been built by the experience of his predecessors. Imagine 21st Century psychological and sexual imagery presented with the finesse of Vermeer. His transparent interpretation can be compared to a good writer, of whose presence we are unaware. The 'modesty' of the writer leaves the reader absorbed in the imagery and the story.

Another concern which influences the Gender paintings, and which is founded on past Masters, is a balance of colour, tonal value and complexity of composition. Working with my wife, we noticed that paintings with high tonal contrast, which depend upon tonality for their strength, are usually very limited in colour. From Caravaggio through Sargent to Casorati, and much of Picasso, this rule of thumb is followed. My painting 'Fairy' attempted to learn from this. It was painted in three colours, one of which is white, the only exception being the alizarin crimson wings and corset, which were a necessary focus. The resulting painting appears to have a full range of colour, but is in fact deceptively limited. A notable exception to this principle of balance occurs in the Pre-Raphaelites, whose works paid the price, in my opinion. The Colourists of 1890 to 1920 demonstrated the flip-side of the coin, using strong and varied chords of colour, therefore having to limit their tonal breadth. Black and white photographs of many of their paintings reveal their deliberate lack of tonal breadth.

I believe that complexity of composition is the third aspect of balance, providing a theoretical triangle within which the artist must make choices, distributing a limited amount of emphasis. A painting, like a passage in music, can withstand only a certain amount of emphasis. To shovel more emphasis in will simply create noise: an unintelligible scream, though some might argue that an unintelligible scream, by definition, makes an interesting statement.

I am convinced that the making of good art is virtually impossible. To accomplish the aim of keeping an insistent theme within the bounds of eloquence; to realize the universal within the particular; to create monumental works from fragile components; to construct a visual figurative illusion whilst simultaneously building abstract strength; to use colour to create architecture on the illusory plane while synchronously producing a chord which is both tuned and appropriate to the theme... all of this taken together is well-nigh unachievable. But that's why we have museums, to showcase those rare and astonishing instances where the almost impossible is achieved.

Art transmutes human responses into significant insights, monumental ceremonies, and awe-inspiring gathering of symbols and references. The medium is largely irrelevant. Much like a good melody, we aren't concerned with the choice of instruments, as long as they are appropriate to the composition.

I am interested in sources: how paintings may repeatedly show events which are not in the artist's vicinity, or even in his memory. Certain characters reoccur in rooms of a similar volume and atmosphere, apparently unresolved within the artist. The boy in my paintings is always naked or nearly naked, wearing skimpy show

costumes such as tutus or leotards. He balances or dances, performing for either seen or unseen observers, pale and seemingly waiting for a decision regarding his fate. I don't actually think that this boy is me, but rather a version of me seen in family photographs, yet one I cannot recall ever being.

There is also a man who moves slowly, in a baggy black suit, numbed and entranced. He is often blind or entirely distracted, and he never wears a shirt or shoes. He is reminiscent of a refugee. Sometimes he is with the boy and sometimes without, and he never engages with the people whose company he shares. His role is like that of memory or the subconscious: present but not on the same plane.

These figures are a strong concoction of reality and imagination. At certain times in my career I have painted from live models, for example in the painting *The Definitive* (p. 101), but if I paint with my models present I become distracted. More importantly though, a model presents a volume of information that diverts me from accurate visualization. Deliberately posed and lit photographs of models form only one slice of the body of input to the particular mix of form, lighting, distortion and simplification that I have in mind for a figure in a painting. Models can only approximate what I am visualizing. They are essentially stand-ins for the characters which my imagination specifies.

This is also true of rooms, furniture and objects. My mental image of a painting is not represented in the outside world – except in fragments, as in a Myriorama pack. Internally, all the parts and layers of the painting are littered through a kind of psychical labyrinth. I am never sure quite where in the labyrinth I will find all these components. Thus I am at all times living a

parallel life internally, gestating any number of variously unfinished paintings, each awaiting its potential future. To others I probably seem distracted.

The rooms in my paintings often have only enough furniture to show their temporariness. Repeated paintings show white institutional English cups and saucers set on round cloth-covered tables – none of which feature in my childhood. The cups are always clean and empty, like a pleasant encounter that is about to occur: a relationship in the wings.

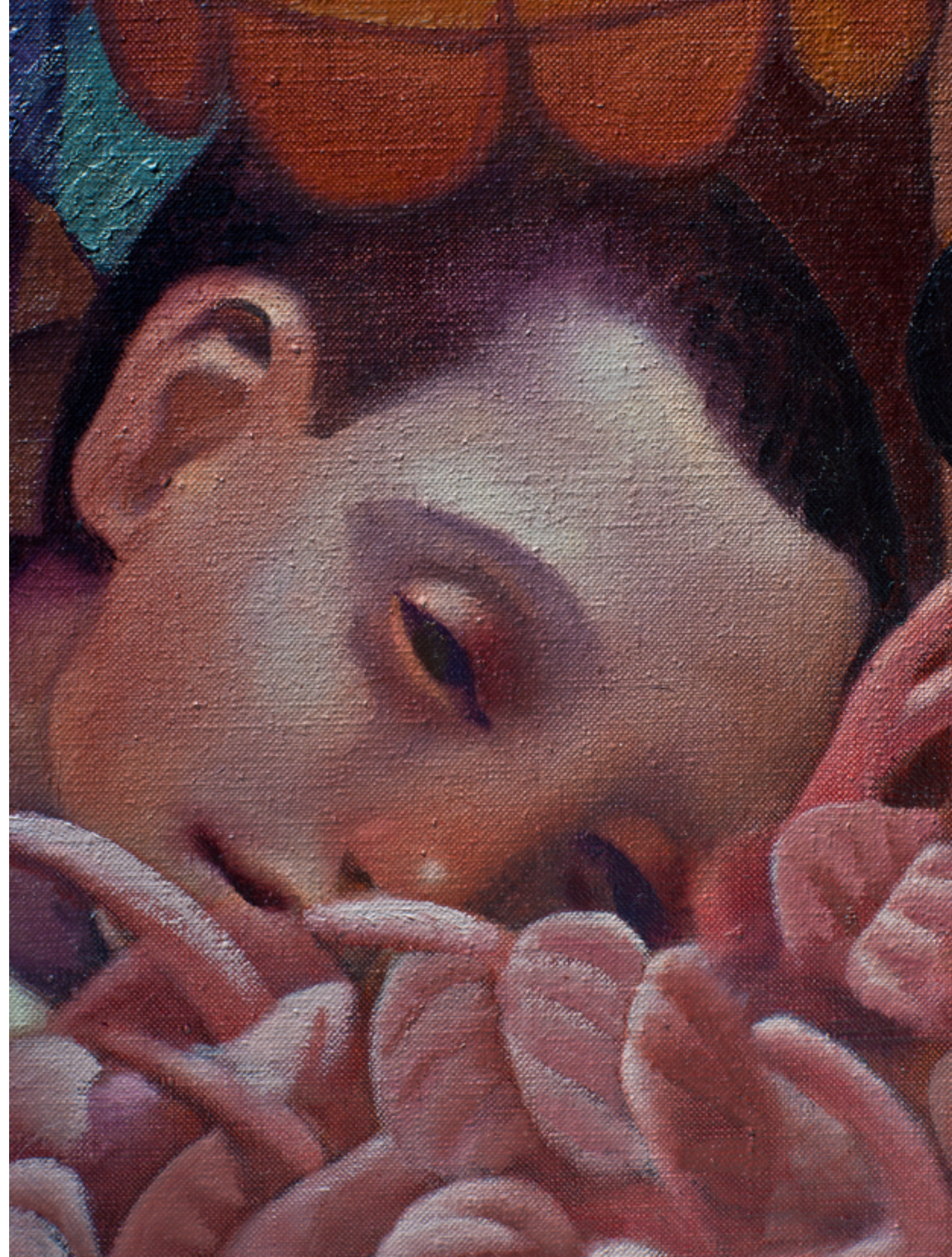
I am weirdly certain about distances, proportions and perspectives, sometimes drawing my viewers in uncomfortably close, so that they see the table top flatly from above, whilst staring nose to nose with the characters, as if hovering about a foot above the table. Despite this intrusive closeness, the characters hardly ever return their gaze.

There was a time when my paintings carried an agenda, and I was a vague campaigner with a paintbrush. Now my paintings are not made with

any viewer in mind. I am transcribing images more sensed than seen, and which challenge my skills to show them as atmospherically as I sense them, and in as much detail. I have a ‘tunnel vision’ of these works, such that I can only visualize each aspect in dislocation, until they are finally gathered into a painting.

I am like a peculiar child, who finds darling solace in a hoard of curious finds. In my case, these are concealed in my subconscious. However dark or lurid these subconscious ‘places’ are, it comforts me deeply to go there, though once the canvases have their first layer of paint, I set about the process of scouring away any sign of my presence. Ultimately, it is all about the people who inhabit the paintings: allowing them to dictate whether objects are present or absent, and whether the lighting is correct for them, irrespective of the clarity or dimness it imparts. I want to drown events and situations in the uncertainty which surrounds them in life, not for any conscious purpose, but because I see my inner world with the same ambiguity and distraction with which I see my life.

Edward Povey, 2011



Opposite:
Edward Povey
The Half-landing, 2010
Oil on canvas
40 x 44 in. (101.6 x 111.8 cm)
Collection of the artist

BIOGRAPHY



CEFIN ROBERTS

Edward Povey – Through a Glass Darkly

I did not actually *meet* Edward Povey until 1984, but after ten years of watching him in television interviews and newspapers, I believed I already knew the man. And then finally we crossed paths in a miners' cottage in the Welsh mountains, owned by two well-known actors who had bought it from Edward and his first wife. That night the party conjectured on how, when you buy a home from a famous artist, you hope to discover a 'long lost painting'. We all followed Edward into his former attic and in truth, jubilantly returned with a long lost Povey painting.

The English and Welsh have had a contentious history, and while the Welsh are mild-mannered, they don't necessarily embrace the English. Povey was English and had arrived from London as a student at the University of Wales. I later learned that two art colleges on the south coast of England had rejected the 22 year-old back in 1973. He was starting to discover that he was a figurative painter, and fell victim to British art colleges' commitment to abstract art. They had dismissively told him to study illustration.

His response was to move to the isolation of Wales, study art and psychology, and create an apprenticeship of his own (fig. 9). I have since pondered what that suggests about his character. He was clearly stubborn by nature, which has served him well, and also apparently provided him with a fiery temper that is rarely seen behind his otherwise charming and even dreamy countenance.



Fig. 9
Edward Povey, 1974
In his studio in Wales
Chris Gibbs ©

Fig. 10
Edward Povey, 1992
At work on *The Hall of Illusion* mural
Powys Hall, University of Wales.
Don Draper ©



THE MURAL APPRENTICESHIP

He determined to complete his college assignments only during college hours, so that all his spare time could be spent painting portraits and murals, which had begun to emerge as commissions. Beginning in 1975 he literally painted the products sold in stores onto the exterior walls of buildings (fig. 11a & 11b), and was immediately noticed by the press and the BBC, and was both loved and occasionally criticized by the townspeople. Within months, he grew tired of painting merchandise and began to include human figures in his increasingly large murals.

Povey's professors were bemused at this student who played no part in college social life, who furiously cycled between lectures wearing homemade spats to protect his trousers from the bicycle chain, and who appeared on their televisions at night, working high up on multi-story scaffoldings in the rain, fulfilling his commissions.

By 1979 one of the BBC's rival stations, HTV commissioned him to paint a four-storey mural (fig. 12) and filmed a 70-minute documentary to follow its design through to completion. In a scandal almost thirty years later, the owners of the wall declared that they had found a buyer in the United States willing to pay 2.5 million pounds sterling to have the famous Povey wall itself transported to America. Front page news stories and regional government meetings ensued for some time.

At the age of 30 Edward Povey was changing. It was 1981 and he and his wife Vivien had two sons, Daniel and Thomas, whom he must have barely seen, given that by now he had painted almost thirty multi-storey murals in England and Wales. He had become famous, and coach parties would arrive all day to watch him paint. The last mural of that period – *Pots* (fig. 13), shows how the murals had become shadowed, controlled in colour, and complex in composition. Personal stories began to appear discreetly on the walls, and he was anxious to challenge his skills – for example, by placing a floating translucent scarf across hundreds of square feet of complicated background imagery, all described in a single layer of oil-based house paint. In the grey British winters Povey could be seen balancing along the wet scaffolding rails in the wind, having removed the walking boards, so as to clearly see all six stories at once.

In September of that year he said in a BBC interview: "I must stop painting the murals now. They have taught me a lot about composition



Fig. 11a & 11b
Storage Jars, 1975 — Before & After
Oil based house paint on primed cement
14 x 15 feet (4.3 x 4.6 metres)
Commissioned by Messrs. Albin and
Gibbs, Wales
Sited in Bangor, Wales



Fig. 12
Helter-skelter, 1979
Oil-based house paint on primed cement
56 x 41 feet (17 x 12.5 metres)
Commissioned by Harlech Television,
Wales
In celebration of the Welsh National
Eisteddfod
in Caernarfon, Wales
Sited in Caernarfon, Wales

Opposite:
Fig. 13
Pots, 1981
Oil based house paint on primed cement
50 x 31 feet (15.3 x 9.4 metres)
Commissioned by Craftcentre Cymru,
Wales
Sited in Porthmadog, Wales



Fig. 14
Edward Povey, wife Vivien and son Thomas, 1982
Povey's studio in Perdmontemps, Grenada, W.I. working on The Church Gate painting.
Arthur Winner ©



Fig. 15
Stanley Spencer
Portrait of Patricia Preece, 1933
Oil on canvas
33 x 39 in. (83.8 x 73.7 cm)
© 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London

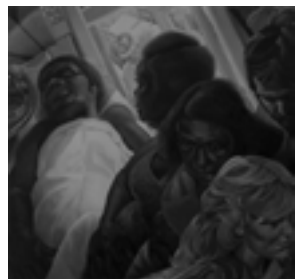


Fig. 16
The Passing, 1983
Oil on canvas
30 x 30 in. (76.2 x 76.2 cm)
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. M. Hakimi, Grenada, W.I.

and certainly taught me to work, but they have also brought me to an awareness of other areas of painting that I need to think about, which can only be explored on the scale of a canvas.”

SYMBOLISM AND FEAR

Twelve months later, Povey and his family were living in a house on stilts on the tropical island of Grenada, where he built a rope bridge across to a tin-roofed studio (fig. 14). He began to write and paint his way into a study of symbolism, attempting to understand how meaning is conveyed on several levels: from the use of universal though personal symbols, as well as in subtle pictorial ways, using atmosphere, gesture and connotation. Also, over a ten year period he had evolved a method of creating compositions for paintings by at first writing and then by shaping interiors and figures in series of progressively adjusted line drawings – referring only to his inner sense of the relationship between the composition and its suggested meaning. The eccentric figurative works of Stanley Spencer (fig. 15) became a useful influence for Povey, alongside those of the glamorous Polish Art Deco painter Tamara de Lempicka.

His study of symbolism had just begun when the 1983 Communist take-over and US intervention occurred on Grenada. The Povey family disappeared from public view into a maelstrom of shoot-on-sight curfews and the infamous communist coup. One night they drove through a curfew to avoid a bombing raid, seeking shelter at the home of a friend. They slept under tables in his basement; while it later transpired that on that very night their host was on the list of an active death squad.

Apparently Edward was the seventh Edward Povey in the male line, and the only child of an ex-seaman who was prone to sadism. Despite his enduring and close camaraderie with his mother, they produced an artist son who was inevitably fearful by nature. The experiences of 1983 had a particularly terrifying cast to Povey, leading to a dark and powerful sobering of his subject matter (fig. 16). Now he wrote obsessively for days at a time about each painting and its layered meaning, translating the results into precise and complex designs, each transferred onto canvas using tiny grid systems. His paintings became tapestries of convoluted forms, impossibly tangled and anxious (fig. 17). Gunther Weil – the compatriot of Timothy Leary – came to the island to discuss a commission with Povey and, by now, other American art collectors

had begun to buy his paintings, including Ronni Ginott, a close friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton. All this gave Povey some confidence in his accumulating learning.

My first meeting with Edward Povey in the miners' cottage occurred at around this time, on his annual visit to Britain. As a playwright I can recall being fascinated with this man, because he was so fabulously contradictory. He came across as humorous and engaging, combining an unsurpassed enthusiasm for his art with a disarming modesty. But I knew him to be rageful and stubborn beyond reason – a man who would walk on wet scaffolding rails six stories up – yet he was also ashamed of his dread during the Grenadian bombing raids when he would lie in cold sweats, ashen-faced, fainting while his wife and sons crawled into the shower stall to shelter. All this threw inexplicable twists into his apparent humour and conviviality, but there was more – which I would not appreciate for many years to come.



Fig. 17
Romance and Rebellion, 1985
Oil on canvas
36 x 30 in. (91.4 x 76.2 cm)
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. D. Draper, England

Below:
Fig. 18
Edward Povey
The Trial of Saint Deiniol, 1982
Oil on board
17 x 22 feet (5.18 x 6.7 metres)
Commissioned by John Ross-Jones, Wales
Currently sited at the Schaller Collection, Connecticut, USA
The New York Times © 1986





Fig. 19
The cultural delegation from Britain to China (from left) Stanley Spencer, Leonard Hawkes, Rex Warner, Hugh Casson and AJ Ayer, 1954
John Chinnery ©

Clearly Povey and his family had emerged unscathed from the conflict, to remain for a further six years on the island of Grenada, with him locked in his new studio down a long hallway, his marriage slowly falling apart and their growing sons apparently thriving.

His career was inexorably expanding and in 1986 he began to make annual trips to visit his collectors in the USA. Soon after his arrival there, he came to know Zena H. Temkin, a one-time campaign manager for George Bush Senior and now a collector of his works. She suggested that he change his professional name from 'Ed Povey', which it had in fact been hitherto, to his birth name of 'Edward Povey'. She had said: "Only an 'Edward' can make such monumental paintings!" He was secretly offended; after all, he had always been called 'Ed', but he soon accepted her wise advice. Edward was more appropriate, and he also came to prefer the name.

I heard that he had shown his 17 x 22 feet, 19-panel *Trial of Saint Deiniol* (fig. 18) painting in Manhattan, in which the modest Saint is seen suffering at the hands of the ignorant. The artist Peter Max came to visit Edward Povey and, extraordinarily, *The New York Times* had sent the photographer Dith Pran on whom *The Killing Fields* movie was based, to talk with Povey and to photograph the painting. Povey recalled how, during his discussions with Dith Pran, a modesty and self-effacement emanated from this man who had suffered such brutal treatment at the hands of the Khmer Rouge regime. It seemed to Povey both poetic and heart-rending. The first section of *The New York Times* on Sunday April 6th 1986 showed a photo article featuring *The Trial of Saint Deiniol* painting being brought to New York.

Povey flew from New York back to London where The Tate Gallery had offered for him to study and paint directly from Sickert and Gauguin paintings in the public galleries, to further his understanding of colour. Also the BBC had arranged for the recently retired President of the Royal Academy of Arts in London – Sir Hugh Casson KCVO, RA, RDI – to interview Povey about his career. Between filming engagements, he and Sir Hugh would find cafés for lunches and dinners, at which the humble former President told stories of him and Stanley Spencer in China (fig. 19.) Sir Hugh told Povey: "Certainly your eccentricities wouldn't exclude you from artistic greatness. Stanley was completely bananas, and he was a genius. In China, Stanley used to tell complete strangers in detail about his beloved wife Hilda and his lesbian second wife Patricia,

and they didn't even speak English!" On one occasion filming had to be interrupted so that Povey and Sir Hugh could go in search of Hugh Casson's weakness: chocolate éclairs.

Edward Povey's studies in symbolism finally gave rise to simpler paintings. No less brooding, but now larger in scale, exploring the subjects of passion and longing, loss and devastation. But he was also making paintings about the anguish within his marriage (fig. 20). His wife became distressed when she finally realized the significance of these paintings, which led her to destroy some of his canvas designs, and finally she left him altogether after seventeen years together. During the period of despair in his marriage, Povey had been developing a relationship with Joycie Hollingsworth, an attractive Californian ceramicist who moved into his home immediately after Vivien left him and, just as immediately, he returned to his studio. It made me question the role of relationships for him – whether their primary function was to protect him from loneliness and fear, so that he could focus on his work.

COLOUR AND PSYCHOLOGY

In 1989 Povey moved his studio back to England. He was continuing his relationship with Joycie Hollingsworth, and was studying colour with the art dealer Jan de Maere in Belgium and then discussing the subject of colour with Malcolm Liepke in New York. Having deeply explored *meaning* in his art, Povey now shifted his focus to cover *surface*: to understand colour and the impact of the chords of colour which he was using – irrespective of the themes of the paintings. Colour was going to be a preoccupation from now on, since he never regarded himself as a natural colourist. So he committed himself to the influence of Vuillard, Bonnard and James Ensor – as his mentor, Jan de Maere had suggested. Composition, on the other hand, was a subject that he felt he naturally understood.

In England he simultaneously became engrossed with the impact of family psychology on his art, and worked on large modern crucifixions, which he was to show in 1991 with John Whitney-Payson's Gallery – The Midtown Payson Gallery in New York, alongside the works of Paul Cadmus, Jack Levine and Walt Kuhn. The crucifixions had begun to reveal the ghost of his own childhood, in which he had been sexually abused but, more extraordinarily, humiliated and regularly threatened with death by his intimidating father from a young age. This had resulted

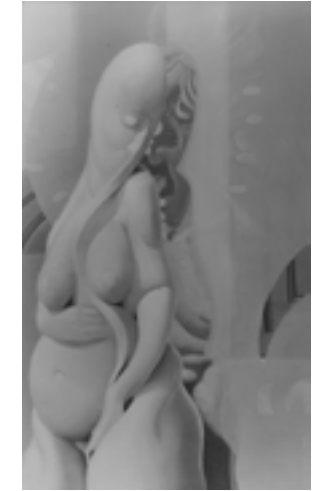


Fig. 20
Statue and Beast, 1987
Oil on canvas
46.25 x 27.5 in. (117.5 x 69.9 cm)
Private Collection in the USA



Fig. 21
Edward Povey
The Hall of Illusion mural, 1993
Oil on primed horsehair plaster
20 x 40 feet (6.1 x 12.2 metres)
Commissioned by the University of Wales
The Times newspaper, London © 1993



Fig. 22
Edward Povey, 1992
Designing *The Hall of Illusion* mural
in Johannes Andersen's cave guest suite
in Grenada, W.I.
Trish Bethany ©

in Povey's emigration to Canada at the tender age of 18, where he had travelled, written music and intensely drawn for two happy years before returning to apply to art colleges in Britain.

In 1991, aged 40 he was spending his time in his attic studio in the pretty Northern English town of Guisborough, from which his various models came and went daily. His rooms were provided by the mayor of the town, in exchange for a large nude painting of his Californian girlfriend. At some point, he and Joycie must have parted company because I heard that he was dating Rafaele Nicholson: the artist grand-daughter of the painter Winifred Nicholson and Ben Nicholson the abstractionist – who subsequently left Winifred to marry the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. At a lunch with the Nicholson family and the curator of Kettle's Yard, Povey debated with Barbara Hepworth's sister his use of child abuse as a theme for his art. But his nemesis: the fear of artistic narrative in the age of abstraction, led to a good natured impasse. Povey had mentioned of the Hepworth sister: "She seemed painfully Bohemian and nutty in that Bloomsbury Group kind of way, but look who's talking."

Povey now spent a third of his year in the USA, giving lectures about his art to gatherings of his collectors and studying in museums. On one of these visits, he found himself in the company of a friend of the now deceased Tamara de Lempicka – whose paintings had influenced him so much during his years in the West Indies. The theatrical clarity of the lighting in many of Povey's paintings shows the impact of the art of the extraordinarily beautiful de Lempicka, who had died in 1980 in California – a year before Povey left for Grenada.

THE HALL OF ILLUSION

Unknown to Edward Povey, he had an admirer: the Vice-Chancellor of the University of North Wales and, later, Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Professor Eric Sunderland, who offered him the 20 x 40 ft stage wall of the Powys Chamber Concert Hall as a mural commission. The project took a year and a half to complete and resulted in *The Hall of Illusion* mural (fig. 21, also see p. 110, 111). It was designed in the cave home of Johannes Andersen in Grenada (fig. 22), and painted in oil on the original horse hair plaster wall. The mural's seven panels were framed by trompe l'oeil stonework and followed seven stages of life from childhood to old age, culminating in a paper-winged old man embracing the child he once was. Povey said he believed this was a scene of self-acceptance.

BBC television, radio and the national press in Britain followed the project and in a final unveiling in early 1993, Povey theatrically presented the mural using projection, smoke, and the haunting strains of Verdi's Requiem to enthusiastic audiences. *The Times* newspaper of London named it as one of the ten most important University-owned artworks in Britain.

The University of Wales then offered Edward Povey the use of a building as a home and studio, in exchange for an additional Povey work for its art collection. They chose one of the portraits created at the time of his first murals (fig. 23). This provided him with the stability to increase his productivity and to hire staff to manage framing, administration and shipping – thus again he was back in the ocean-side town of Bangor, Wales, where he had arrived as a student twenty years before. He still toured his collectors in the USA in addition to working with several galleries. The media watched his exploits with increased fascination, commissioning diary programmes to record the daily life of his career. I heard him on BBC radio in one such programme, speaking underground from the Catacombs of Paris where he was researching interiors for his paintings. He was enjoying this period – basking in the glow of his increased reputation after painting *The Hall of Illusion* mural and now reveling in the influence of Picasso's neo-classical figures (1922), and finding uses for their solidity and monumentality in his own art. It was in this state that he began an intense but troubled relationship with Alison Bone, sister of one of his oldest friends, and they alternately lived together and fell apart while Povey opened a new chapter on his art.

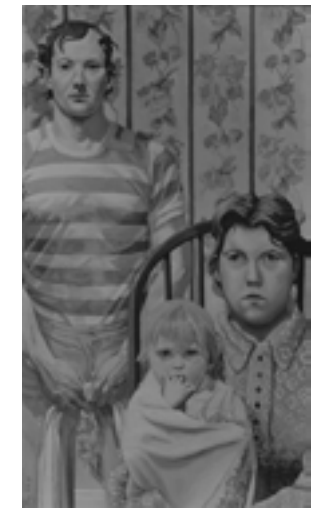


Fig. 23
Family, 1980
Oil on canvas
52 x 31.5 in. (132.1 x 79.9 cm)
Collection of the University of Wales

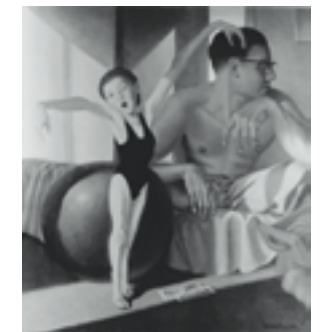


Fig. 24
The Innocents, 1992
Oil on canvas
31 x 28 in. (78.7 x 71.1 cm)
Private collection in Israel



Fig. 25
Woman Searching the Skies, 1997
 Bronze
 21 x 23 x 23 in. (53.3 x 58.4 x 58.4 cm)
 Limited edition

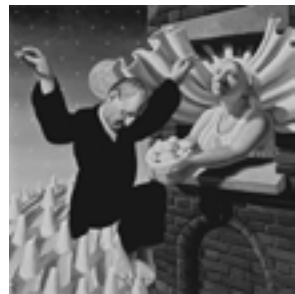


Fig. 26
Difficult Offering, 2000
 Oil on canvas
 38 x 38 in. (96.5 x 96.5 cm)
 Private collection in England

DESIGNS FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS

It was 1994 and Povey was at his most prolific. His art was selling well and he began searching for ways to draw his art from a less *intentional* level, which led him to consider somehow opening his creative process to the unconscious [Crucifixion By Choice, see p. 108], so that less predictable themes would rise in his work – strengthening its integrity.

One has to set this creative decision of 1994 against the backdrop of other factors in his life. He had finally confronted his father with accusations about his childhood (fig. 24.) “In the cowardly form of a letter,” Povey confessed, unaware that his father was dying of lung cancer. He finally visited him on the boat on which he and his mother had been living and offered him whatever would ease his suffering in his declining months. His father casually asked for six bullets for his service revolver, so that he might take his own life. Povey didn’t have to ask the lurid purpose of the remaining five rounds, because his father made it clear that he intended to fulfill his lifelong threat of killing Edward and his mother. Before the wish could be fulfilled, his father died, strangely never once having commented on his son’s art career during his life, despite the fact that when Edward was painting fervently at the age of ten, he had made his first painting easel. Povey had stood at the funeral confused and ashamed of his dry eyes.

By the following year, in contrast, Edward Povey’s sons, Daniel and Thomas, who had been raised around the studio on a tropical island, climbing trees and making paintings of their own, had now entered Oxford and Cambridge Universities to study the sciences. Simultaneously, Alison Bone insisted that Povey marry her or leave – partly brought about by her perhaps understandable rejection of his dedication to his art. He quietly withdrew further into the very private world of his studio, even building a sound-proof door between him and his staff. In these years, Povey hid from the world, making paintings of men dancing alone, with blank eyes like bronzes, drifting in an empty space. Out of politeness, and to avoid further conflict – he married Alison Bone at a registry office wedding in 1997, signing the papers through the haze of a migraine. He began to make bronzes in the same year, first sculpting a powerful woman searching the skies for signs of meaning (fig. 25).

RECOGNITION AND FRAGMENTATION

Edward Povey had always declined membership of any arts organizations and, perhaps arrogantly, demurred to enter competitions or juried shows, and so despite his large body of art and significant media attention, he

tended to choose a path outside the more conventional art establishment. But at around this time, he was invited to Buckingham Palace, the home of Queen Elizabeth of England. In 1997 the National Library of Wales Art Collection began purchasing his art for the nation.

The late Sir Kyffin Williams, then president of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, personally asked him to join the Academy. It was Sir Kyffin (arguably the most famous landscape painter in Wales) who nine years later supported the playwright Ken Owen in his bid to propose Edward Povey for a knighthood in 2006 in recognition of his services to the world of art. This was supported by the head of the BBC, and the President of the Art Institute of Chicago. Sir Kyffin wrote to the Prime Minister Tony Blair: “I’ve always believed Edward Povey to be a very talented artist. In the world of art he is certainly a maverick, for his work is very individual and is based upon sound draftsmanship. ...part of my admiration stems from the fact that he is his own man – fashion is obviously something he ignores. He is a talented artistic loner...” Sir Kyffin sadly died later in the same year.

Despite the discomfort of his marriage to Alison (and perhaps because of it) in 1998 – following the wave of recognition the year before – the 47-year-old Povey distracted himself by commencing the huge task of the designing, and later building of Arcady: a Victorian style home for him and Alison on the Welsh island of Anglesey.

INVENTIONS OF PROCESS

Whilst Povey was orchestrating the building of the towers, arches and pagoda of Arcady in 1999, he also commenced a collection of large paintings using Alison and himself as the models, showing himself floating unsupported in a *divine repose* while Alison offered him a bowl of eggs and lemons (fig. 26)(life and sourness shown as inseparable). The repeated use of himself and his wife as models lent a strangely incestuous and eccentric atmosphere to these works, however Povey suggested that: “They emerged from a desire to somehow paint the impossible, and to paint the *acceptance* of the impossible.”

Until this point, Povey would seek compositions by carrying his inner sense of a design through repeatedly adjusted cartoon drawings. The drawings were then *fleshed out* with photographs of carefully posed and lit figures and objects, all of which had to be found. The design would then continue to evolve during the painting process. But in 2001, when he turned 50, he was trying out new ways to *provoke* the unconscious to

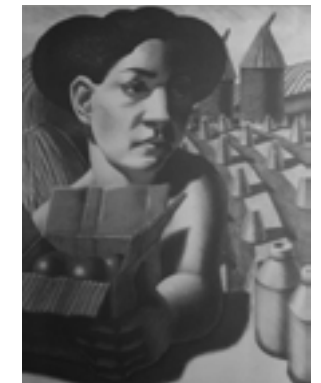


Fig. 27
August, 2000
 Stone lithograph
 18.25 x 14 in. (46.4 x 35.6 cm)
 Commissioned by The Contemporary
 Arts Society for Wales
 Collection of The National Museum
 of Wales



Fig. 28
A Man Giving Birds to the Sky, 2002
 Bronze
 84 in. tall (213.4 cm)
 Sited at the entrance of Texas Tech
 Medical School, Amarillo, TX



Fig. 29
 Edward Povey research photograph, 2001
 Six of the seven models of the *'The Seven Drives'*
 Edward Povey was filmed by the BBC
 posing and photographing the models.
 The stage of Theatr Gwynedd, Wales
 BBC © 2001



Fig. 30
 Marionette, 2002
 Oil on canvas
 34 x 26 in. (86.4 x 66 cm)
 Private collection in the USA

produce designs for paintings and so he decided to change the *origins* of his inspirations. He began by assembling what he called an 'invented family' of models: an unrelated man, woman, and two children – who could be posed and re-posed in search of suggested meanings. This invented family, all posed simultaneously, allowed him to physically search for situations which registered in his unconscious as significant. He would guide the models regarding their attitudes, feelings and relationships with the other models, as well as their gestures and poses. His assistants would move spotlights around the 'family', bring them new clothing and adjust the background as Povey registered the requirements of the design. A gradual transition had begun to occur, which unwittingly set the stage for Edward Povey's most significant re-evaluation of his art and the deepening of his understanding of it. The process was to stretch to a ten year period.

In the same year, all the major museums of Wales acquired Povey works (fig. 27), and his seven foot bronze – *The Man Giving Birds To The Sky* (fig. 28) was commissioned by a medical school in the USA as a centerpiece for its atrium. Later in the year he took the concept of shaping ideas directly with models and went a step further: he gathered seven actors onto the stage of a theatre before BBC cameras, surrounded by furniture and drapery, with each of the actors dressed to represent a human 'drive' such as ambition, love, the inner child, the unconscious, etc. He built complex designs using the actors as marionettes, each positioned by him, in rooms constructed and adjusted around them and lit from the theatre gantries above (fig. 29). He was creating worlds actively and spontaneously, but these were the troubled worlds of the psyche, in which he was seeking 'patterns' which might divulge significances. The BBC news programmes showed him thoughtfully concentrating, coaching his models and fine-tuning his *invented worlds*. While he was completing the resulting collection of paintings, the New York artists Alan Feltus and Lani Irwin came to stay at Arcady and the Twin Towers were felled by terrorists.

In 2002 he simplified his 'stage' using only three models simultaneously: two clearly erotic women and a boy, beside white tables of crockery. The results were clean and strong, with paradoxically dark implications and dim reflections of Povey's own childhood, which invited the viewer to unwittingly become a voyeur (fig. 30). Now that Arcady was complete, he surmised that he had been seduced by his own ambitions, which had devoured his money and energy ruthlessly, using him like the child puppet. I disagree, and maintain that Povey is not seduced by his

ambitions but rather by his *visions*, which he has always been willing to go to any lengths to realize. There is a difference. At around this time he started to notice the works of Balthus and Hockney, as he began considering sex as a subject for his paintings.

Finally that year he brought an actress from Texas to pose beside a Welsh male dancer in patterned and opulent scenarios built in the sitting room at Arcady. In this collection (fig. 31) he was continuing the 'posed groups' technique of physically creating compositional concepts, but was attempting to parallel *the illusion of space* with a *surface pattern* in the paintings. This is a common paradox in painting, which itself was a symbol, since the collection had so much to do with theatre, which in turn eloquently symbolized his emotional *lie* in his new home and his failing marriage. Like all the other series, this one sold entirely into private and corporate art collections internationally.

THE TRANSITION TO THE LABYRINTH

In 2003, in a lecture to his collectors in Florida, Povey met his present wife, DL Tolar, with whom he found a profound ability to debate his concerns about his art. This meeting flourished into a 'babes in the wood' romance and within two years she was displaying the first signs of talent as an artist in her own right. I saw him only occasionally during the years that followed, but understood that as he reduced his University of Wales studio, he spent increasing time not only touring his collectors but also researching and painting in the USA, in various rented or loaned studios, often with DL Tolar, as her commitments allowed – certainly redefining his lifestyle.

On one such trip in 2004 Povey took his experimentation with his creative process, and opened a new approach. He had been inspired by a painting of a gay man in a yellow shirt which he had seen in a museum, and was interested in the choreography of flamboyant homosexuals, so he visited a series of gay men in their apartments in New York and took hundreds of photographs of them at their most natural and unposed. In this instance he was researching *actual* human behaviour for the first time, rather than intentional posing. The photographs were edited down to a chosen few which served as a basis for a small collection of paintings (fig. 32), which are now in art collections in London, Texas, New Jersey, and in a British University Art Collection. The collection had failed to reveal the flamboyant choreography which he had been seeking and instead what emerged was an investigation into how people define themselves in

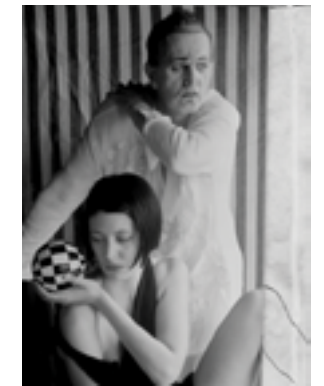


Fig. 31
A Matter of Fact, 2002
 Oil on canvas
 26 x 20 in. (66 x 50.8 cm)
 Private collection in the USA

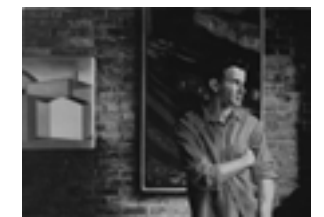


Fig. 32
Abstract, 2005
 Oil on canvas
 36 x 50 in. (91.4 x 127 cm)
 Collection of T. Wilkinson, Goldman
 Sachs Bank, London

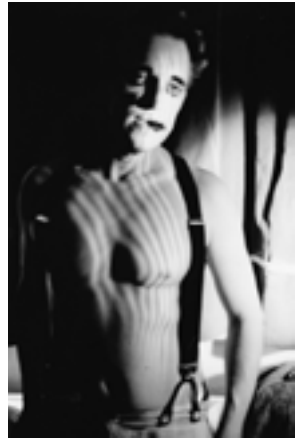


Fig. 33
Edward Povey, 2004
Photograph
At Chris Draper's Studio, London
Artist, illustrator Chris Draper© 2004



Fig. 34
Chequered Ball, 2009
Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm)
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. P. Wright –
Corporate Counsel for Exxon Mobil,
Houston TX, retired.



Fig. 35
Caravaggio,
The Entombment of Christ, 1602-4
Oil on canvas
118.1 x 79.9 in. (300 x 203 cm)
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome

society, using clothing, décor and attitude. The gay men were ideal for the concept, yet Povey had failed to notice how the paintings pertained to his own period of radical redefinition.

After this collection of paintings, Povey abandoned his use of photographs as a *means* of exploring subject matter, with which he had experimented for three years, and returned to his lifelong technique of writing to 'unwrap' the notions and fragile ideas for a potential painting, then evolving the design in line drawings and finally finding the objects and models to *fresh out* the finished design. But now he began to add new stages to his process: clear notes to design the several different aspects of colour and compositional diagrams allowing him to perfect the strength of his compositions.

Meeting him with DL Tolar in Wales, I saw a Povey who was more grounded, more full, and in her company he somehow dared to be more 'ruthless'. He appeared to *need* to deconstruct his art, question his assumptions, and unfold the sleeping images of his childhood onto monumental and provocative canvases, effectively entering the labyrinth of his inner life, channelling the fuel of his paradoxical feelings, and giving faces to the fears which stood in the shadows. He had needed the catalyst which DL Tolar provided. But Povey disputed the notion that he was *re-evaluating* his art. He maintained that: "The process of making art *is* the process of continual re-evaluation, much like playing chess. Art without re-evaluation is dead." Nonetheless, Edward Povey was now aware that he had an entirely unexpressed and haunted world within him (fig. 33).

During 2004 Povey's inevitable divorce proceedings began. He was unsettled in every sense. He had started to envision a different lifestyle and whilst he still toured his collectors in the USA, he was preoccupied with the notion that his life was not serving his art. He could imagine an almost monastically private lifestyle which would shelter the delicate process of making his new paintings.

GENDER AND CHANGE

In a series of properties and hotels in Wales, England and the USA, Povey created temporary studios and commenced his slow evolution towards what were to become known as the Gender paintings. In the meantime everything was changing around him: the Museum of Modern Art in Wales acquired a Povey painting; actors Eric McCormack (*Will and Grace N.B.C.*), Kate Mulgrew (*Star Trek* and *Equus, Broadway*), Anne Bobby

(*Broadway: I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*) and Xaviera Hollander (*The Happy Hooker*, author and theatrical entrepreneur), progressively began to acquire his paintings; and two of his most important works were stolen from a massive private collection of sixty Povey pieces in London, causing Sotheby's and Christie's to publish an alert and Interpol to initiate a search; however the paintings have never been recovered. In addition, Povey's sons had achieved degrees and doctorates in Oxford and Cambridge. Daniel was establishing a world reputation as an inventor of neural nets for human voice recognition, and Thomas was a researcher of jet engines and a Physics professor at Oxford. Meanwhile by 2007 he and Tolar were designing Sub Rosa, a deeply ornate and eccentric studio filled with antiques, but hidden inside a Moorish fortress exterior on a wide acreage of oak woods in the USA. By 2009 their lifestyle had acquired the privacy of which Povey had dreamed, as he ceased touring his collectors and entirely devoted himself to a discussion about the technique, content and philosophy of his new Gender paintings. Finally this theme, from a man whose father had told him that he would: "... never make a man."

He explained his process to me in letters: "It began with the realization that in all really good paintings, the tonal construction is *fundamental*. Turned upside down, and photographed in black and white, paintings must thrill your mind. I then began to notice a balance between the complexity of the design, the amount of colour, and the extremity of tonal contrast (fig. 34). For example, Caravaggio (fig. 35) and Sargent used relatively simple compositions, strong tonal contrast, and a limited palette. In my opinion the Pre-Raphaelites overloaded on all three categories." I wondered at Povey, whom I had followed since he was little more than 20-years-old, who was now close to his 60th birthday, and who still displayed the same youthful urgency as always: a slow anger about his art and a fresh adventurousness. I find no way to resolve this with his fearfulness and dread of loneliness.

In 2010 he discussed his theories about his subject matter, writing from his Sub Rosa studio: "I did want to disclose some issues about sex and also about vulnerability and childhood, but I sought to avoid a *message* or a campaign. I simply 'see' situations, with figures gathered thus and thus, gesturing like this, lit like that, all very specific. It sometimes takes months to find the model or the costume that I have 'seen'. I'm not suggesting that I have necessarily been to these places or actually seen these events, but without any intention or plan, I 'see' a succession of situations clearly, week by week, some of which make paintings. I wanted a ceremonial



Fig. 36
Fairy (detail), 2011
Oil on canvas
48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm)
Collection of the artist



Fig. 37
Diner, 2011
Oil on canvas
28 x 20 in. (71.1 x 50.8 cm)
Collection of the artist

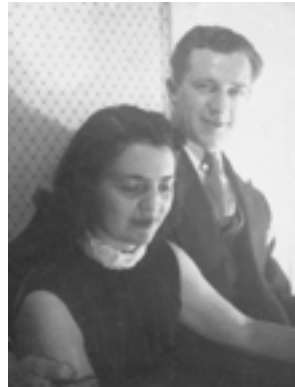


Fig. 38
Edward Povey Senior and Iris Povey, 1950
Family wedding in London, England
Unknown photographer

solemnity, but then half concealed in apparent ordinariness: cloaked, in a sense, by having the figures perform an everyday task very carefully (note the boy carefully packing his suitcase in *Fairy* (fig. 36), and the blind transvestite rolling a cigarette in *Diner* (fig. 37), as a distraction – much like a magician cloaks his preparations using distraction – deliberately drawing our attention away from the central issue. In this way I want to make discreet and sacred events. Fearfully painful situations presented casually.”

His Gender paintings are small windows onto a dim place where awful, deeply familiar situations transpire, disguising themselves as commonplace. Sexual encounters passionately embraced by doubt, and human interactions so perilously balanced, that they verge on being unconscionable, yet all this is presented with Povey’s impossible charm and politeness. Nonetheless, expressing *the dark side* is not actually Povey’s goal. Like in a happy and well-lit home where cables of electricity are bound to snake through its innards, he is most likely showing the terrifying cables which lie at the marrow of ordinary and fairly happy lives.

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

Povey remains a mystery to me. In the middle years I believed I was getting to know him, and yet in the light of what he calls his Gender Paintings, I find myself as conflicted as when I only followed him in the media, and before we met in the miners’ cottage. To have known a man for so long – and now to gaze into sharply shadowed worlds on canvas, in which situations are demonstrated impassively, often with discreetly showcased genitalia and the sense that the lives of the figures: *our* lives, are inherently emotionally skinned and raw – somehow disappoints me. Is it that I cannot accept knowing this man for so long, and understanding him so little? Or is it that he makes me wonder whether I know anyone?

Only this year I learned some extraordinary eccentricities about Povey’s life. It appears that after fainting during a film about nuclear war as a schoolboy, he has never read a newspaper or watched television since, however his home does have a vintage art deco movie theatre with carpeted walls, raked seating and velvet curtains. He has never participated in a sport, or watched a sport so much as once. He never listens to recorded music, has never voted in an election, served on a committee, or joined a club. He also dislikes talking on the telephone, and makes less than one phone call a week.

How can a man so obsessively private be so well travelled, and so comfortable in giving media interviews, and lectures? And how can a man who has literally never read the news, be so well informed and so stunningly articulate in philosophy? I suspect that he would answer: “Precisely *because* of my privacy and my dislike of misinformation and media melodrama.” He is indisputably beyond unique and he has justified enemies, but he is no fool. It is as if he runs perpetually on a quiet and delightful *rage*.

Edward Povey was born in 1951 in the damp rooms of his great aunt Violet’s gas-lit house in the southeast corner of a London still recovering from the Second World War, and still strewn with bomb sites, where half slumped buildings would wait with unreachable sections of exposed rooms high up in the rain: pictures hanging askew, flapping wallpaper, and furniture still bizarrely in place under the sky. His father was a tanned and handsome sailor, his mother was a pretty shop girl (fig. 38), and Aunt Violet’s husband, Les (fig. 39), would bring Edward ice cream from the corner tobacconists. Les was stocky and kind, with a large square face, and he died when Edward was seven years old and was just beginning to draw obsessively.



Opposite:
Fig. 39
Edward Povey, age 5 – with his Uncle Les
and Aunt Violet, 1956
Trafalgar Square, London

PLATES

FAIRY, 2011

Oil on canvas
 48 x 64 in. (121.9 x 162.6 cm)
 Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
 2011 – Researched using items purchased in a toy store, a vintage suitcase, and models
 2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

Do these need to be more composed? As in Lani Irwin – holding objects, or with boxes,... a room? Somehow more off-balance and strange – more about the face. Tina (model) comes to mind. This is the opposite of the stylized Neo-Classical, impassive people. Colour is important ... Red ears and nose. Short back and sides (the boy). Dim dusk light. Very dark on the right side. Lamp-lit on the left.

A normal situation of action 'cloaks' the real meaning, making it subtle: i.e. a trade, an occupation, maintenance, cooking, hair-cutting or combing. 'Cloaking' in art mirrors 'cloaking' in abusive situations. Both are deception of a sort. Cloaking in art = the cloaking of message. The disguising, diluting, off-focusing of message – thus allowing the viewer to enter a conversation rather than a monologue.
 Edward Povey 2011



Sketchbook drawing, 2011



Sketchbook drawing, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
 Pen & correction fluid on card

THE CHILDREN, 2011

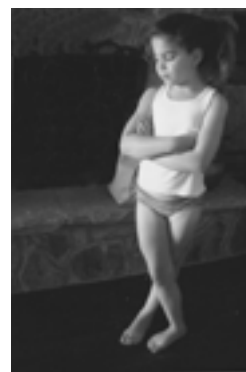
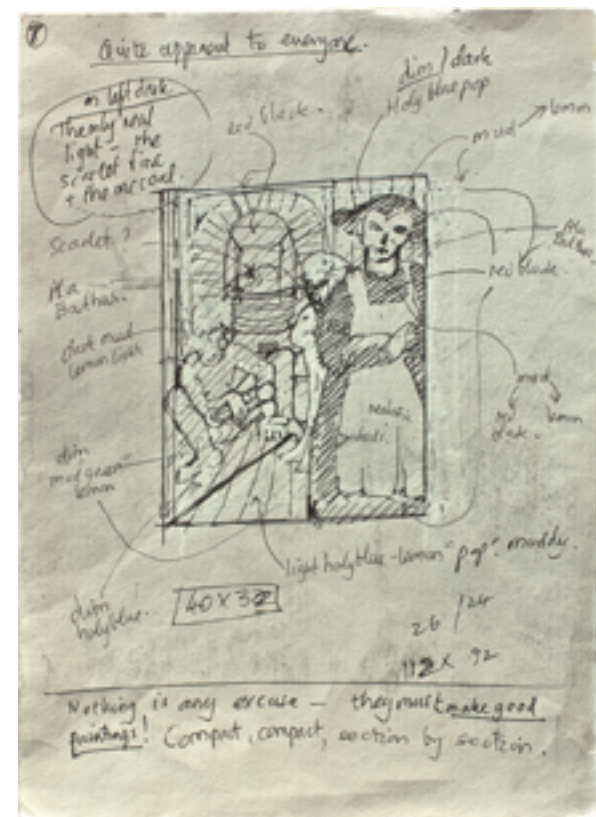
Oil on canvas
40 x 32 in. (101.6 x 81.3 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
2011 – Researched using local models
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

We live in a subtle age, or more accurately, we are afraid to say anything. At least it seems that anything that might be said in art immediately appears obvious, passé, or self-consciously political? Or is it that we have truly decided that art is not to be second rate literature or politics. That art is reserved for what cannot be said in a sentence. Maybe for what cannot really be conveyed in words at all. Visual art.
Edward Povey 2010



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper

TWINS, 2011

Oil on canvas
72 x 50 in. (182.9 x 127 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
2011 – Researched using the mayor's assistant and previous photographs of models, and also Povey himself
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

The 'angel' is Matt, glowering. Big. So that between his weight levitated – and the twins' battle, it is scary – and yet seen as if in a dream. Richly lit and composed. It's all about fidelity to the parts that work. Cut them out and move them and don't think of trying to redraw what is already good.

If I take Matt and treat him in a Balthus 'Baron...' way, I start to see the idea. Now paint in the 'Him, Him' way – directly. It needs pale but beautiful, sexy children. Abused, solemn and perfect.

This is like a public room. A place where they lay on receptions or weddings, bar mitzvahs. It has that smell of old food and bleach. Things that happen in such rooms are changed...different from what might happen in a home. Here everyone is a stranger or an acquaintance. The walls and woodwork are all easy-clean gloss paint.



Sketchbook drawing, 2011



Sketchbook drawing, 2011



Sketchbook drawing, 2011

Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper





TWINS, 2011 (continued)



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph from Povey's archives, 2011

It is serviceable. And so in this place we are all nobody. And yet it is also haunted with a million moments of commitment: the vows, the hopes for happiness, the resolutions and religious contracts. It has the air of a battle field – where men are numbers, and yet where they face themselves, and emerge alive or dead. How can such great moments occur in such prosaic surroundings?

The ominous angel flies and indicates gloweringly. Smolderingly. Intentionally massive and heavy, and airborne. The hatchway disappears and is replaced by the empty hallway. The doorway at the end though... ajar and leaving the question of what lies beyond. I know what is there and cannot speak about it. No one can speak about it. The twins must be stocky and insane. Crazy and unstoppable. Tearing at each other and also erotic...luridly sexual. They must be everything that we are, to our dregs. Punching idiots in the midst of the clearing-away of plates, the ending of the event. He indicates them. He indicates them. He indicates them... and looks at us.

Edward Povey 2009



Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on card



MAID, 2011

Oil on canvas
40 x 30 in. (101.6 x 76.2 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
2011 – Researched using previous photographs of models, and also using himself and DL Tolar for positioning
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

Then in comes what? In that drama. In that drama. Leaning in the doorway, faint. She is without question. Balancing nude on the wardrobe. In doorway, head raised, close to door frame and holding door open. That blue-pink flesh again.

And black, black hair. Very tall window. Rain-covered? She's talking and pointing and grabbing a fist of sheet off the bed. She has that wide Francis Bacon crazy face and tricorner hair. She has a tremulous thin gown and underwear, breasts small and almost visible. Either she's singing or talking. Could be dusk, blue dusk but with that pale skin...

Here is a 'new' place which I had thought of for years. Doing what I love. Great boiling scenes? Tall. Moving quickly, sketchily, seems important. Then depending upon successive glazes for sculpture and form. I somehow want to not think too much about the compositions and content, but to blast to a daring place of prancing people from nightmares and dreams, quickly glimpsed doing the absurd, the worryingly meaningless. But the faces and fabrics finished like 'Injunctions'? Certainly the tonal construction is critical – like 'Vestry'. It's a very just-do-it feeling.

Edward Povey 2009



THE VESTRY, 2009

Oil on canvas
28 x 24 in. (71.1 x 61 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2009 – Designed and painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

The priests all pulling something down (clothing & lace) from a high shelf, and shaded old bronze coat books. With ruddy faces and long noses, and in their midst a beautiful and sexy boy with luscious lips and white-blue, never-seen-the-sun flesh. And a man on the left offers a mask and grins. The boy stands in his own light. Big-featured man with mask, and big hands. Ruddy half shaded priests in back. The boy in strong, pale, white light.

I wonder whether these are conceived like 'Mother and Child'? Like 'Him, Him' but with beauty. I know there's a crowded Renaissance/medieval religious art quality but – with a corner, a window blown in, a texture, chequers. A face with a long nose – so easy. And points of lemon light or blue light. A block of black. And a mask under them, lying there. I think if I just stretch canvases and paint them, crowds will emerge. All different. No planning. And I see shafts of light, wonderfully shaded faces, someone tied up. Sometimes they'll all be painted out into black, ivory, or glazed deep into shade. Then a body sometimes, with white, blue-white skin, showing the veins. A man in a suit with horns and wings... anything. The fool's hat and carnival costume?

They are crammed at the outset. It starts in a jostling place, a Sobo, London carnival. But I see priests in black with fine features... anything. A white corner of a wall. All I like – a shaft of light. A tea cup. The clarity of 'Injunctions' in terms of planes and intentions, but quickly drawn, then executed with scumbling and ruddy glazes and lemon lights as in Skip (Liepke). A boy might appear in the middle in his own light. Anyone could get a cast of any colour – or bright red. Edward Povey 2010

WHITE BOWL, 2011

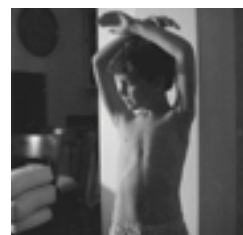
Oil on canvas
40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

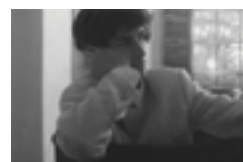
2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
2011 – Researched in hardware stores, and using a young boy as a model
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

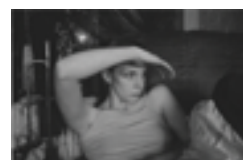
You mustn't let your work get in the way of what you see, and neither must your 'looking' get in the way of what you are seeing inside. That place is seeded by your reservoir of experience and hidden feelings. Art is not sacred. It only becomes so – when it is what you see.
Edward Povey 2009



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper

FATHER, WASH ME CLEAN, 2011

Oil on canvas
 54 x 30 in. (137.2 x 76.2 cm)
 Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes
 2011 – Researched in hardware stores and using a young boy as a model
 2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

Structure the perspective. Pale and cool the boy, almost pale grey on a dim mid-tone (slightly light). Tone the background with a light pale blue window, but the painting is a riot of dark, intense Meirion (Ginsberg) colours. Pale, almost featureless face – just blurred eyes.

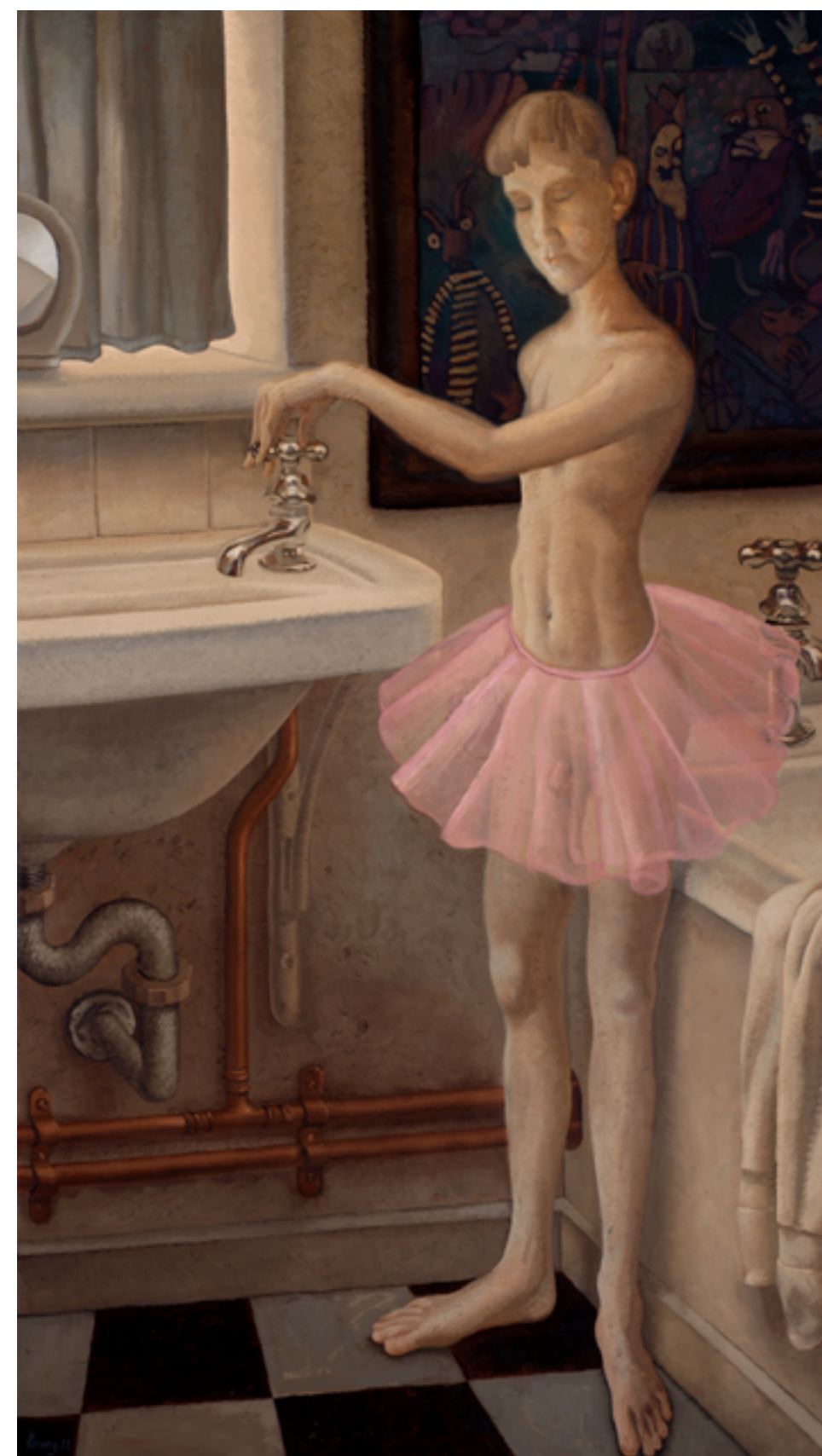
Or like the tall, thin teenager recently found, or the squat Balthazar baby – is it possible to simply create evocative situations? Mine are already to an extent. But the distortions and empathy could be more. Characters that by their being we are more in touch with. À la Balthus, Spencer, Picasso – anatomical correctness is secondary. Making a pleasing form comes first. In Balthus' case, very well shaped and painted forms – but only related to reality. Primarily a form with conviction – lit right, shaded right, coloured nicely but lyrically invented to be expressive. Edward Povey 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
 Pen & correction fluid on paper

LIPSTICK, 2011

Oil on canvas
26 X 24 in. (66 x 61 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

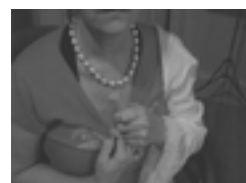
2011 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA
2011 – Researched using an actor from the film: 'Elizabeth', as a model
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

White, white and soft black (Jezebel). White, long-fingered, delicate hands.
Edward Povey 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011

DINER, 2011

Oil on canvas

28 x 20 in. (71.1 x 50.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2011 – Designed on several excursions in bookstores and cafes

2011 – Researched using a local artist as a model

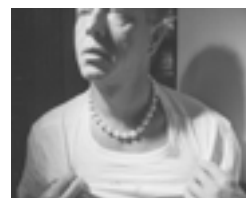
2011 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

Corner table. Pale and beautiful. Mid-tone warm Viridian Green woodwork vs. mid-tone scarlet counters, chair and cherries. White and black top. White and shadowed china. White icing. White cigarette paper. Both warm – will that white work? Warm Raw Sienna to Permanent Mauve and lemon highlights. Or blue, violet and Raw Umber? Flesh a dim version of the white. Waxy. What black? Emerges from white choice.

A beautiful paleness and soft prettiness in such a totally unlikely place. Lost people, strange people.

Dull, shocking pink plastic chair. Red cherries. Warm Emerald Green old paint. Got to photo the woodwork for reference. Mouth open slightly to reveal lower teeth. Eyes skewed to outsides. Black and white blouse scribbled over and over. Knock left. Pale face. Sick.
Edward Povey 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Left: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper

THE HALF LANDING, 2010

Oil on canvas
40 x 44 in. (101.6 x 111.8 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2009 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA
2010 – Researched and painted at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

NOTES

In this interior they perhaps dance alone. They have been drinking. They read. People come and go. The night comes on. There are the things of childhood, and yet no children. Mythic events take place, yet nothing disturbs the reader.

The waiter, the indistinct caller, the host, the man with heavy eyes. The woman in the Spanish Cape. (Paraphrasing T.S. Eliot's poem: 'Sweeney among the Nightingales', 1920). A place of transition.

Sisters – feminine aspects of us that appear at times of transition? An old landing – an old place...memories. In that place maybe we transit. We move.

The lilies – a glut. An abundance of openness and readiness, erotically, psychologically.

He comes to visit the sisters, bearing arum lilies. One strokes them, senses them. One is distracted by him from her reading. She is open and sexually receptive. An indistinct visitor sits beyond...also reading. Two pools of light – circles of light. 'The Card Players', Cezanne, foreshortened. Townscape: Saint Ives or New York.

His head is so far in the flowers, he can't see where he's going! The man is that 1920's black hair, thin nose, ruddy complexion. It's about people who bring so much. Who are filled with longing and in love with being in love – but truly abandoned children. They bring it all, and are admired, even cherished, but abandoned again. Again and again they climb the stairs with their longing. A treadmill of loss.

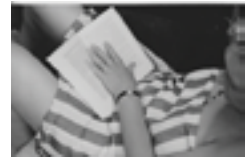
Edward Povey 2005



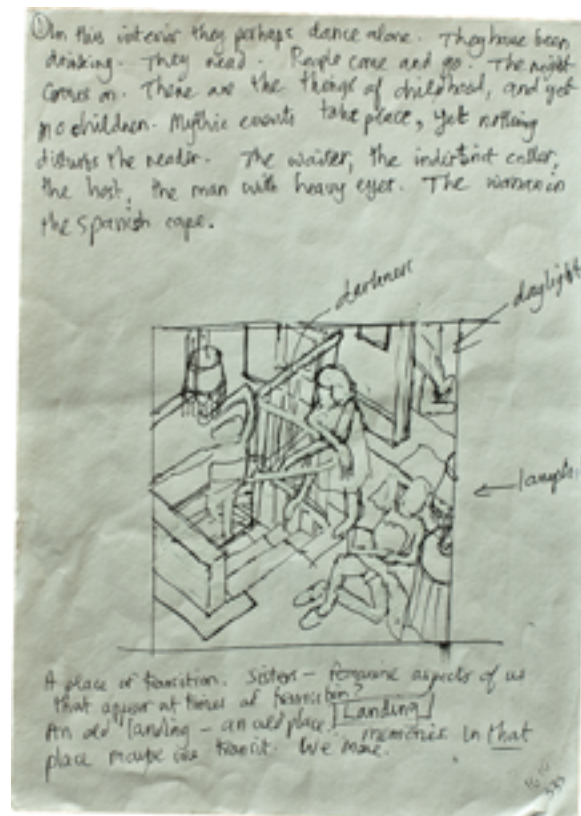
Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper

HOTEL ROOM, 2009

Oil on canvas

96 x 70 in. (243.8 x 177.8 cm)

The Christy Collection, Texas, USA

HISTORY

2009 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

2009 – Researched and painted using various neighbors and friends as models. Also Povey conducted photography sessions at the home of friends Karen Boden and Jeff Vasgaard, using Mr. Vasgaard's grandsons and furniture to recreate the hotel room depicted in the design

NOTES

So take Paula Rego's boisterous meticulousness – the large-limbed people with heavy Celtic beads and mad eyes. But use Rivera's unexpected 'Spencer reaches' – quite unabashed, to make a good composition. See the large-limbed reaching mad Celts. Reaching and turning.

Now be prepared to introduce good colour, with the altered colour of Hicks-Jenkins and Bartlett – except using R.B. Kitaj's fauve emphasis on colour – where he loses edges and runs colour from thing to thing so inappropriately and so dreamily. And like Kitaj – lay in fogs of colour like flown clouds, dropped between characters on the stage. And this is a stage.

But now what vision informs it all? I do see a tan stage of wood and canvas, and big stuffed 1920's chairs, but I also see the lilac and scarlet clouds flown in, and Balthus opening the thighs of a private world.

Why do I need to shock? To resist instead of seduce and embrace? I see the audience pushed. Startled. Mr. Rhodes with his soft and loose jowls and kind attitude, wearing black. Mr. Cousins with his ruby face and pimples. The English.

A maid. Stout, in black and white. A broad Slavic face. Scary. Fiery. Strict. She rules 'from below'.

A hotel room. I like the way it's all over the place – chaos. Sending you running and running, trying to understand. Like life. Each painting is its own drama. Its own 'situation'. There's no such thing as a collection.

Man faint, leaning in a doorway. He is in greys, grey-blues. Whittish pinafore and blue sky dabbed like Gwen John. Bright colours. Pink and blue clothes. Then scarlets and lilacs and oranges. Tender, tender pale skins and pink eye-rims.

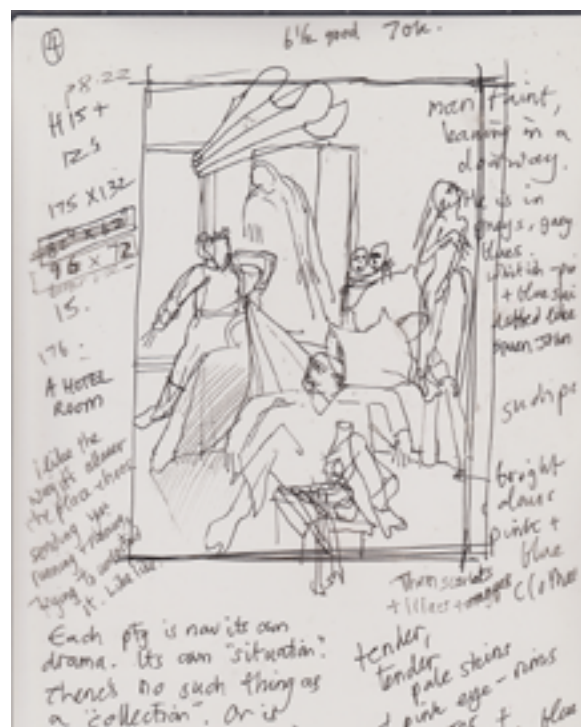
Edward Povey 2007



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Photograph of posed model, 2011



Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2011
Pen & correction fluid on paper



PRIVATE COURTYARD, 2009

Oil on canvas
58 x 42 in. (147.3 x 106.7 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY

2009 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA
2009 – Researched and painted using the son of a neighbor as s model.

NOTES

It's the fabric of your approach to the world. The truth of your admitted unspoken beliefs. I see beings – pale and extremely sensitive, tiptoeing so that they hardly touch the floor.

Dick was right – solving childhood issues led to confronting the unspoken beliefs, the fabric of your approach – from which all the new and best art comes. Thin, tiptoeing men. Delicate, undressed children.

'Dance of Choosing'.

What is it of Hemingway – in the camps and nightmares of loyalty that inspire this? A little dance in such circumstances? Sunlight? Or is it moonlight, it is so dim? Or searchlight? 'Private Expression'. Light from behind. Deep ruddy faces and bright silhouettes, and clear lines, umbra's and penumbras.

Ah yes, all very nice. But where is it, the unforgettable? But I don't quite see that 'at odds' thing anymore. What do I see? Like backstage, I see a man wrestling with scenery and a costume.

What I like in this world is different. In that world a fabulous cleanliness. A strong light. What really is beyond the likes of outer and inner worlds though? There are scenes that absolutely say it. I know that. I like the hemmed-in, sharply-lit space, with stocky figures. I like her tucked waist. Wide top of head. The madness of the wide head and dark eyes. The dancer again.

Edward Povey 2009



Photograph of posed model, 2009



Photograph of posed model, 2009



Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2009
Pen & correction fluid on paper





HIGH SHELF, 2009

Oil on canvas
32 x 26 in. (81.3 x 66 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY
2009 – Designed at The Number 207 Studio in the USA
2009 – Researched using Povey as the model, with a dress found by DL Tolar in a charity shop
2009 – Painted at The Edward Povey Studio at Sub Rosa, USA

Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2011



TO LEARN AN INSTRUMENT, 2009

Oil on canvas
26 x 22 in. (66 x 55.9 cm)
Collection of the artist

HISTORY
2008 – Designed at the Red Cabin Studio in Wales
2008 – Daughter of Povey's landlord was photographed for the work
2009 – Painted at The Number 207 Studio in the USA

NOTES

I know I like the cheeky 50's boy with the protruding ears and ski-slope nose. A luscious face, but with the "bun" or duck's ass hairstyle. Soft and large and emotional and soft waxy shines. But how does this square with emotional expression in paint? It doesn't.

Or is it just that the theme and situation – genitals and violence produce such high emotion that it leads me to "feel" high strung colour? To dapple flesh and to want to paint things with a few unadjusted, expressive strokes. Can I make these characters well-painted, and with facial expressions? Yes, and found them in that model of face. In this 50's face I see a whole range of feeling, but a certain innocence, like the closed world of a movie. Cobalt/slightly blue is the colour. He is painting, with that big sensual mouth speaking.

Edward Povey 2007



THE ZINKEISEN QUALITY, 2007

Oil on canvas
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)
Collection of Mr. D. Pritchard, Wales

EXHIBITIONS

2001 – *The Zinkeisen Collection, Edward Povey Studio, Wales*

HISTORY

2006 – *Designed in London at the National Portrait Gallery and in Cumbria*
2007 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

NOTES

Here we are gazing into the silent world. The place where there is no world – only a consciousness, an awareness. All else is shadowy and vague. There are hints of shape, a touch of light. But he – the creator, is forming from mere possibility, a powerful world of his choosing. All green-brown, tawny, old blanket colours. Just allow the flesh lights to rise up and make the statement. Large bodies and eight inch heads. Scarlet pops sometimes. Thickish paint, clear, clear landscapes of flesh. Maybe a couch of the same colour. Blankets, scarves, jackets, sweaters, shirts, and ties. Even glasses. 1930's swept up hair. Vanessa Bell/Woalf/Augustus John. Above all I want to exclude from these paintings 'thinness of concept'. 'Thinness of validity as a painting – using the power of architecture, paint and painterliness (broken marks, lively surface and contrasting levels of finish (just drawing – covered – refined) to give richness. They must not be just calm and sweet but must have a 'buckled and cramped', tense and spiky quality – using 'accessories', sharp lighting and fabulous facial architecture. Large features gathered around an act. Edward Povey 2006



PERSONAL ENTANGLEMENT, 2007

Oil on canvas
20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm)
In a private collection in Wales

EXHIBITIONS

2001 – *The Zinkeisen Collection, Edward Povey Studio, Wales*
2007 – *Salon showings in New York, Seattle, Miami and Austin*
2008 – *Wales, City museums in 6 cities*

HISTORY

2006 – *Designed in London at the National Portrait Gallery and in Cumbria*
2007 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

NOTES

...child versions with those hawk-like eyes and wooden toys, and those tall faces with almond eyes and clean, lumpy lines (Remember J.S. Sargent and find Vanessa Bell and the self-portraitist (Anna Zinkeisen). Also women versions. Prostitutes with garters and provocative clothing. Maybe the men with loosened bow ties. All very grounded in photo reality but with extended, warped, abstracted and extreme, buckled, expressive hands and poses. And impassive faces as always. What is happening? The Bohemian Bloomsbury poet in the turmoil of love and life. The ongoing story now. Maybe such people with an accessory: a cigar, a flower in his hair, a huge dice cut in half, and he holds the knife. Or cutting the pack (with a knife, in half). Rolling the dice. A small act made into a big deal with a very dexterous hand. Clear areas of light and shade. I see this concept of the tangled man – clearly painted in ivory, on a dapple of grey-blue-green, with just a few hints of colour in his clothing, and a white half moon on the table. Singing. Edward Povey 2006



BEFORE, 2006

Oil on canvas

20 x 22 in. (50.8 x 55.9 cm)

Collection of Mr. B. Fogel, Sarasota, Florida

EXHIBITIONS

2006 – *Edward Povey's Symbolism, Plas Glyn y Weddwo Museum, Wales*
 2006 – *The Painted Tower Collection, Edward Povey Studio Salon showing*
 2006 – *Salon showings, New York, Seattle, Austin, Miami, Sarasota*

HISTORY

2005 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*
 2006 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

Right: Sketchbook drawing, 2006
Pen & correction fluid on paper



PAINTED TOWER, 2006

Oil on canvas

24 x 20 in. (61 x 50.8 cm)

Collection of Michael LaVallie, New Jersey, USA

EXHIBITIONS

2006 – *Edward Povey's Symbolism, Plas Glyn y Weddwo Museum, Wales*
 2006 – *The Painted Tower Collection, Edward Povey Studio Salon showing*
 2006 – *Salon showings, New York and West Palm Beach*

HISTORY

2005 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*
 2006 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

Photograph of posed model, 2009



THE FLYING MAN, 2005

Oil on canvas

48 x 34 in. (121.9 x 86.4 cm)

The LaVallie Collection in New Jersey, USA

EXHIBITIONS

2006 – Edward Povey Paintings, Serendipity Gallery, West Palm Beach

HISTORY

2005 – Designed at a café in Big Sur, California

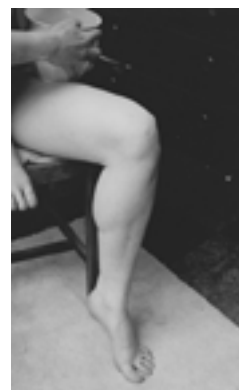
2005 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales

NOTES

Inside, outside, on ledges. I need comfort, with tea and an outside view. The sensuality of the sheets. Semi-wakefulness. Cuddled. Cuddled. Sunday morning – this is the feeling. A sense of endless time available. Anything is possible. Nothing can fail. Risk and precariousness with no danger: like in relationships – what happens is what happens. What happens is going to continue. It is what it is. Don't lament it not being something else. In career and life you cannot fail because perhaps you get what you believe you are worthy of. It's all very stable. It's fixed and reliable except in the area of our choices.

The flesh shadows have scarlet dabs, pale blue appears in the lights. Blacks are dark mauve or dark grey-blue. Flooded with light: pale lemony white and creamy white. Or a tricky blend of pink-lilac white and lime green-yellow with tan overlaid.

Edward Povey 2004



Photograph of posed model, 2005



DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE, 2005

Oil on canvas

48 x 36 in. (121.9 x 91.4 cm)

The LaVallie Collection in New Jersey, USA

EXHIBITIONS

2006 – Edward Povey Paintings, Serendipity Gallery, West Palm Beach

HISTORY

2005 – Designed at a café in Big Sur, California

2005 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales

NOTES

About colour. Cream-bone-peach on top. Peach to Salmon to pink to scarlet. Terra cotta. Paler blue, slightly tourquoisy. Very dark blue-black. Prussian. Stripes. (Lilac) : (Mustard and tan and pea lime.) Inside, outside on ledges. Michael said "Happy", dammit! 'A Man Giving Birds' and 'Blue Birds'. For some reason I was back in Perdmontemps (waste of time) in that room with the lads. Viv somewhere. Now I have Donna. Golden. Anything and everything is good. The 'Blue Birds', Mehri and number eleven. Where now? A golden opportunity. Holding the tray. I love that combination: the cartoon clarity of light and form, blinded with the earthly Italian religious atmosphere.

Edward Povey 2004



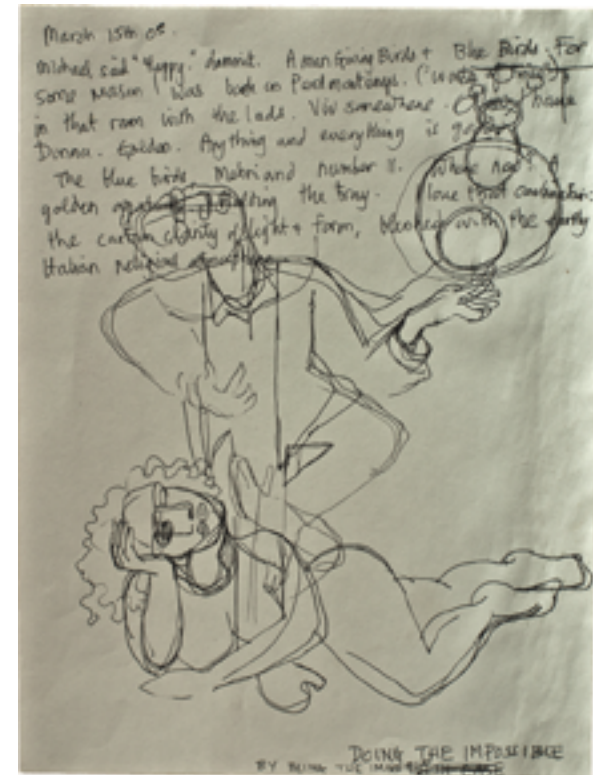
~, 2005



Photograph of posed model, 2005



Sketchbook drawing, 2005



Sketchbook drawing and notes, 2005



AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES, 2004

Oil on canvas

20 x 24 in. (50.8 x 61 cm)

Collection of theater producer Paul Lucas in New York, USA

EXHIBITIONS

2004 – Edward Povey, Meridian Art Gallery, England

2006 – Salon showings, Florida

2007 – Salon showings, Wales

HISTORY

2004 – Designed and painted at the home of friend Pat Hadley in Grenada.

NOTES

I like the almost monotone sculptural clarity. Lined edges in brown. Such clarity. Shadows at first painted a single color, later just detailed with a second lighter or darker tone – to first give simple sections of tone, and later, only enough detail to convey the idea. Slip-on shoes, summer dresses. French armchairs. Very dark shadows everywhere. And readers. They are still and they learn. There is an erotic element. All this is in a very simple French or Italian interior. Nicotine-stained walls. Greenish-brown floors. Diffuse directional light.

Edward Povey 2004



THE DEFINITIVE, 2001

Oil on canvas

20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

Collection of the artist

EXHIBITIONS

2002 – Edward Povey Paintings, Hanson Gallery, New Orleans

2004 – Salon showings, Seattle and New York

2004 – Edward Povey, Serendipity Gallery, West Palm Beach

2006 – Salon showings, Wales

2008 – Wales, City museums in 6 cities

2009 – Edward Povey Retrospective, Povey Studio, Sub Rosa, USA

HISTORY

2001 – Designed and painted in a rented cottage in the Sierra Nevada Mountains

NOTES

You see a colour, mix it. As you put it down you refer to the subject to see where it goes (and keep referring back). In your peripheral vision you see another colour – a bit bluer and a bit darker. You mix it and bring it back, and see another. It's a race to keep up with what you're seeing. You have to mix them when you see them because they're so subtle that you'd take too long to recreate them. You only know them as an adjustment of another previously used colour.

Edward Povey 2001



THE BLUE BRIDGE, 1999

Oil on canvas
 26 x 22 in. (66 x 55.9 cm)
 Private collection in England

EXHIBITIONS

1999 – *Edward Povey Paintings*, Martin Tinney Gallery, Wales
 1998 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*
 1999 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

Right: Sketchbook drawing, 1998
 Pen & correction fluid on paper



SERENADING THE LODGER I, 1999

Oil on canvas
 20 x 18 in. (50.8 x 45.7 cm)
 Private collection in Los Angeles

EXHIBITIONS

1999 – *Edward Povey*, Hanson Gallery, San Francisco

HISTORY

1997 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*
 1998-9 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

NOTES

Bent figures now: necks, wrists, wonderfully twisted and angled to allow them to see from new angles. But then resolve the resultant form. It may not be real (in

a human body sense) but it can be made real as an illusory 3D form. Clarify and stylize cloth and togas etc.. But tonally decide them – either narrow within their area, or wide tonally. Those pensive Feltus faces. Watching and demonstrating. The stylization of all the elements: the instrument's wood, the drapery, the table, the crooked hands and heads, the writing and books. These are all useful excuses which can be arranged and rearranged. Played like a piano. Tonally tuned and adjusted. He serenades and watches intently, between fierce concentration and profound distraction. She rests above the books and the Formosa Interminos paper, and with her dangling Marat's hand. He can truly be with her now, in all the spaces between the lute's strings.
 Edward Povey 1999

The painting arose from the suicide of Mebrangis Mabboobian-Jones, who stabbed herself in a mental hospital in England in 1998. She was a lodger with Povey and his first wife in 1978-1980.



A MAN WITH A PAPER CROWN, 1998

Oil on canvas

16 x 12 in. (40.6 x 30.5 cm)

Private collection in New York

EXHIBITIONS

1998 – *The Paper Crown Collection*, Salon showings in London and Surrey

1998 – *Edward Povey Paintings*, Martin Tinney Gallery, Wales

1998 – *Povey*, Hanson Gallery, New Orleans

HISTORY

1997 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

1998 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*



A WOMAN SITTING ON PEBBLES, 1998

Oil on canvas

20 x 16 in. (50.8 X 40.6 cm)

A private collection in England

EXHIBITIONS

1998 – *The Paper Crown Collection*, Showings in London and Surrey

HISTORY

1997 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

1998 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales*

NOTES

The maelstrom where women turn, wait. That long pause. Cloth. I think I've cracked it. I like planes and tones and definite light. Definite planes described by accurate colour and tone and definite light. Simplified, thick limbs. A marvelous

Casorati tonality. And by all means show Balthus' sexuality and religious mood. Any element which I wish to hold static (i.e. the beach in the background, the arm shielding the eyes, the toga) – evolve it. A little different in each painting. Developed. Have fun with the fact that it's easy and practiced and can now be evolved.

Cloth – clarity of form. Pebbles – a clarity. Study them shadowed, so as the tonal set-up is real and true, not a dreamt up estimate. Then clarify the light and form of what is real and true. Study what Botero, Maillol and Casorati do to the human form. I like it, but what do I want of it? I see heads affectionately on one side, the slightest smile. Clown's hats. I see them smiling at something slight, mild, pleasant. Like a tiny green cat. A fluffy ball. These women, let their gesture and head position say it all, but their faces be just on the edge of expression. The slight and the mighty concerns side by side.

Edward Povey 1998

SLEIGHT OF HAND, 1997

Oil on canvas

22 x 20 in. (55.9 x 50.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

EXHIBITIONS

1997 – Salon showings in New York

1997 – Povey, Hanson Gallery, New Orleans

1998 – Group Show, Hanson Gallery, San Francisco

1999 – Group Show, Hanson Gallery, Carmel

1999 – Salon showings in New York

2000 – The muralist Edward Povey, Bangor Art Museum, Wales

2000 – Salon showings in Connecticut

2000 – Group Show, The Wally Findlay Gallery, New York

2001 – Salon Showing in Houston, TX

2002 – Works about Childhood, The Edward Povey Studio Salon showing, Wales

HISTORY

1996 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales

1997 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Wales

NOTES

My current mentors: Rivera ('Women Making Tacos'), Spencer ('Swan Upping At Cookham'), Picasso ('Three Minstrels'), and Baltus (woman and orange tabby and bowl). Inner states: Casorati is too bland and empty. Definitive light and shade to give pattern and surface and depth. Wonderful, huge, well-formed, massive hands with shadows thrown across them as in 'Swan', 'The House' and 'Injunctions'.

Faces: tons of impassive presence – like Picasso's 'Couple' Dancing'. Either masklike or classical. Same colours. Clothes and furniture: you can use the most unusual objects or styles. Base them on a thing seen, or a place been. Lovely repeated patterns, beautiful colours. Perhaps now finally use the tables, chairs, windows to build a new world. Clear light and shade.

Chuck Berry said: "Any old way you use it..." I like music which lands on its feet however you throw it. I think good art lands on its feet whatever you do with it. It's tough.

Edward Povey 1996



Right: Sketchbook drawing, 1997





**CRUCIFIXION BY CHOICE,
1994**

Oil on canvas
43 x 28 in. (109.2 x 71.1 cm)

Collection of Mr. Gerald Luboff and Mr. Kenneth Parry,
NJ, USA

EXHIBITIONS

1994 – 110th Annual Summer Show, Royal Cambrian Academy, Wales
1994 – Group Show, Louis Newman Galleries, Beverly Hills
1995 – Group Show, The Eleanor Ettinger Gallery, New York
1996 – Povey Works, Meridian Gallery, England
1998 – Salon showings in New Jersey
1999 – Salons showings in New York
2000 – The Wally Findlay Galleries, New York

2000 – Salon showing in New Jersey
2000 – Edward Povey, Hanson Gallery, New Orleans

HISTORY

1998 – Designed and painted at the Green Door Studio in Wales



**I WAS A CHILD ACROBAT,
1991**

Oil on canvas
34 x 22 in. (86.4 x 55.9 cm)

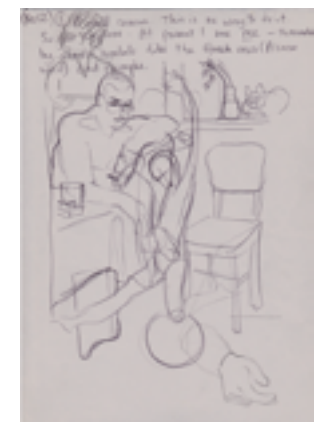
EXHIBITIONS

1991 – The Midtown Payson Gallery, New York with Paul Cadmus, Walt Kuhn and Jack Levine
1993 – The Raydon Gallery, Madison Avenue, New York
1994 – The Art of Edward Povey, Schaller Willcox Salon, Torrington, Connecticut
1995 – Salon showings in New York and New Jersey

HISTORY

1990 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England
1991 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England from live models

Right: Sketchbook drawing, 1991





THE HALL OF ILLUSION, 1991-1993

Oil on prepared horse hair plaster
20 x 40 feet (6.1 x 12.2 meters)

Sited at The University of Wales, Main Arts Hall

HISTORY

In June 1991 the University of Wales at Bangor offered Edward Povey the stage wall of the Powys Hall, in a commission which was to stand as the largest in the history of the University. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Sunderland C.B.E., instigated and oversaw the project, which spanned two years from inception to unveiling.

The University chose a theme for the mural, from ideas presented by the artist, who then returned to the West Indies to evolve the design which he now named *The Hall of Illusion*.

"I was living in the North of England at the time, but I couldn't have taken that leap of faith, or conjured up a fantastic vision in such a down to earth place. So I went back to Grenada, which has a wild and virgin spirit. I worked in Johannes Andersen's cave house, which literally is carved out of the cliff directly above the thundering waves. With the heat, the Grenadian workers, the scorpions and the mosquitoes: this is the place to lose yourself."

The late New York art authority and Madison Avenue dealer, Alexander R. Raydon, said this of Povey's creativity:

"He uses a unique process for creating and evolving compositions. In a manner likened to self hypnosis, he writes in order to guide his descent into the subconscious. In this suspended state he then composes – writing and drawing, intertwining forms and shapes with his symbols and layered meanings, and emerges with his uniquely complex and powerful compositions:"

spiralling, mind and soul challenging, exploring the inner depths and mysteries of life."

He returned after a month, with the cartoon of a seven panel, 20 x 40 ft. painting involving seventy life-size figures. In April 1992 he gridded the design onto the wall, and in July the painting phase began.

Povey had decided to extend architect Henry Hare's "classical freestyle" architecture into the mural, by designing a central stone arch, two side arches topped with oak cornices, and four spandrel panels above, divided by stone pillars with oak capitals. All this was to be executed in trompe d'oeil painting.

He had intended to paint University staff into the many figures in the mural, but as the work progressed, he concluded that these would become a distraction from the

more important visual goals. The only heads which finally represented actual people were those Povey considered relevant to the theme: early students who became First World War soldiers, the artist and his family, his father, his uncle, his lover and a close friend.

After six hundred hours of work, in the final stages of colour adjustment, he was simultaneously trying to take the painting back to his original vision, and forward to a new chord of colour.

Edward Povey had written in Johannes Andersen's cave:

"The light almost hums. You can see real skin, like Christ-on-the-Cross flesh, like Pieta flesh. Pale and solid. Not unromantic, but cool. Cool and damp with emotion. The paper is beautiful. There is drifting smoke and deep cast shadows."

THE FORSAKING, 1991

Oil on canvas

45 x 32 in. (114.3 x 81.3 cm)

Collection of Mr. & Mrs. P. Cahill, Plouyé, France

EXHIBITIONS

1991 – *The Midtown Payson Gallery, New York with Paul Cadmus, Walt Kuhn and Jack Levine*

1992 – *The Raydon Gallery, Madison Avenue, New York*

HISTORY

1990 – *Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England*

1991 – *Researched using local models*

1991 – *Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England*

NOTES

This is a world of dreams. The world in which an object is there because we fancy it so. I know that the human heart takes fancies for the most sound of reasons: not always right – but always understandable. Why hast Thou forsaken me?

Designing and painting is like watching the back door of an old theatre in the mist. Out of the mist come figures, characters which move and change and recede and sometimes disappear. Scenery and furniture come and go, moving and settling into compositions. Art is not to be judged as a crafted object. It is an experience – like war, or romance, a living image. It's not what it is, it's what it does. The cold eye can't see the spirit. The cold brush can't show the spirit.

Edward Povey 1990

*'The Forsaking' was a kind of turning point. I had done quite a few crucifixions over the years, but I had arrived in the north of England straight from *The West Indies*, feeling desperate. I was in the process of being divorced by my first wife, Vivien. Suddenly my sons were living with her, I had left my friends overseas, and now in this new place I didn't know a soul. I found a decent studio courtesy of the town mayor, and plunged into my work on the one hand, and into psychotherapy on the other – trying to resolve the losses of my childhood. It seemed that the other transitions in my life, and my loneliness, had created a vacuum which brought back early fears and anxieties. I found a good psychotherapist, and for the very first time I talked about my experiences as a child, but within months he began to cancel appointments with me. I heard later that strangely and sadly he had died. The new crucifixions dominated the studio, and were refreshingly 'abrasive' to make. They somehow gave me a cause. These paintings were given a simple palette, and had a soft mid-tone warmth to them. T*

he subject matter was paradoxically soothed by being set in my childhood living room, underplaying, somehow 'blinding' the central crucifixion. My father in his characteristic pose at the table in his 'singlet' as he called it, and with one leg up on his chair. His tea cup beside him, in this case influenced by a painting of the Dutch magic realist painter Dick Ket (1902–1940), who also bizarrely died so young. My painting 'Crucifixion of The Willful Son' sold somewhere (I can't recall where), and was used as a cover illustration on a book about psychology and religion. 'The Forsaking' went on show at the Midtown Payson Gallery in New York, with Walt Kuhn, Paul Cadmus and Jack Levine. A British buyer purchased the painting, which now hangs in France.

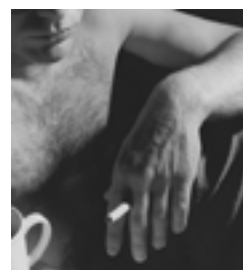
To think that the boy still hangs on his cross in his own living room, while normal family life goes on around him.

Edward Povey 2011

Right: sketchbook drawing, 1991



Sketchbook drawing, 1991



Photograph of posed model, 1991



CHILD AND EBONY BULL, 1989

Oil on canvas

21.5 x 18.5 in. (54.6 x 47cm)

The Temkin Collection, Connecticut, USA

EXHIBITIONS

1989 – Salon showings in New York with Alex Raydon, and Connecticut

HISTORY

1988 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England

1989 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England

NOTES

'The Child, the Beast and the Artist'. Narcissus and Goldmund (spiritual and creative). Aunt Violet's. Asher (Lev) – children with the beast in. I grew up in 1940's rooms. Half a century ago. My studio room, but with the green chenille table cloth. I was a little boy. A nice little boy 'who you could take anywhere' according to mum. He had smooth skin, a high voice, yellow brown eyes, fair hair. He liked making things and drawing. He was afraid of his father, and frustrated. In him he had a power, which we will call The Beast. An incredible loneliness. A desire to talk, explain, tell everyone things. A burning passion and tenderness and sensitivity, and suppressed anger. The boy carried a giant.

He was pure – a little saint. Lovable – and about to bring music and writing and paintings into the world. There is great strength in the purity of that child. He belongs to me, and I don't want him lost or hurt anymore. Let him in and become complete. The boy comes home. Or the artist comes home from the war. Like a Spencer. I come home in truth. My boy was hoping I'd come back. Perhaps not quite as injured – almost mad. Almost evil, almost consumed and lost. The signs of religion, war, fatherhood, lost love.

The boy is in his Aunt Violet's house. Or waiting by the door down steps, under the steps. He's standing in his soft 1940's interior. The Beast is not yet a beast in the child: more a quiet force. A kind of god. A hero of the heart. Joycie said: "The boy has a sense of fun, a bit mischievous, tender, loving." The boy holding the beast/god? The boy holding a picture of his future? We grow up.

Beast: genie, monkey, lover, anger. It has passion, loneliness, insight, creativity, rapist. He stares into space: that very wide-eyed look. Semi-open mouth, baggy face. It's all there. Concealing shadows. Objects. Me. Me. Me. My mind, my soul, my passions. My genius. So I know it.

The idea here is to convolute the compositions towards 'Swan' (unlike Balthus) but with Balthus colour. The elements are realistic but the organization is somewhat dreamlike. Seek a good composition. Not just a crammed composition. Do they breathe anywhere?

Edward Povey 1989



FATHERS, SONS AND SOULS 1989

Oil on canvas

22 x 26 in. (55.9 x 66 cm)

Collection of The Raydon Gallery, Madison Avenue, New York

EXHIBITIONS

1989 – Salon showings in New York with Alex Raydon, and Connecticut

HISTORY

1988 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Guisborough, England

1989 – Painted at the Povey Studio in Guisborough, England from live models

NOTES

The souls can be Gauguin influenced. Honey skin, dark hair. Or Dan and Tom. 'Fathers, Sons and Souls'. My theatre at home.

Raising a child: revealing what is already there. The moodiness of Balthus. The crazy theatre – up at nights, shot by sunlight. The silent applause. The agony and the ecstasy. I am the child and the father. The father is in the child. The child is in the man. I raise my own self. The aging mortal raises the pure and loving soul, instead of the reverse. The child raises the man eventually. One is the actor.

The adult is the marionette in the blaze of illusion. The father: his emotions – laughing and crying masks. His illusions – costume, mask, make-up, spotlight. His tests – blinded and sweating. The child: Ever-present – behind the scenes. In the father – father puppet, child puppeteer. Concealed – in shadow. Calm and loving – protected from the spotlights. How does the child (in the father) bring him out of the blaze? Perhaps he can't. Perhaps that takes it too far. The father is on stage with the Chimera – tortured by it – it is also an illusion (puppet) on the hand of his father. Or the Chimera is a headdress (deceptive) on his father (who is a puppet) controlled by yet another child.

The children are good friends, though on stage the puppets are in combat. Is the setting the home? The 40's room, table, chairs – the theatre of ordinary life crossed with actual theatre? Home theatre. Must look like home. A clock with no hands: simply remove time.
Edward Povey 1989



PASSION CRUCIFIX, 1986

Oil on canvas

81 x 69 x 50.5 in. (205.7 x 175.2 x 128.3 cm)

The Schaller-Willcox Collection, Connecticut, USA

HISTORY

1985 – Commissioned by a general Infantryman with the US forces in Grenada

1985 – Designed at Rudolf's Café on the Carenage in Grenada, W.I.

1986 – Researched using photographs of a dancer in Edinburgh Scotland, several men experimenting with the crucifixion position, and Dr. Michele Friday in Grenada, W.I.

1986 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio on Rosa Hill, Grenada, W.I.

NOTES

'The Passion Crucifix'. The concept is abstract, the situation is unrealistic, so the image must be clear and realistic, on the principle that ephemeral subjects are shown realistically, and realistic subjects are shown ephemerally, or in a dreamlike way. I like him to be fleshy and pale in a pathetic, mortal way. The spotlight is very bright and nearly turns both their skin tones to white. Her wood. His skin.

Lit like Tom Yang. 'Daylight' from the right. Yellow-orange from the left. A nice sculptured dark area in the centre. The right daylight is a raking light and shows the pallid construction of bone and tissue. The left yellow shows the golden and bloody Mongolian flesh. The yellow is considerably less powerful. The red reflection just highlights the down and back-facing edges which the yellow cannot reach, and therefore bleach.

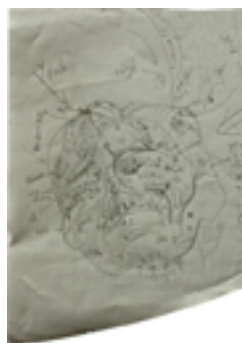
Hanging helplessly. Should he writhe or simply hang?

Red. Red and white. Red, white and wood. Red, white, honeyed wood and honeyed hair and honeyed ropes. Sundering perspective, darker towards the bottom. Standing in a pit of red passion. Simple. Alone and symbolic. Red like the hearts in which it stands. An altar to passion. The whole thing is whitish, polished and clean. She is standing on the stage, in the centre of attention, beaming rapturously. A spotlight. Possibly give her two feet to increase stability, to give the sense that he will be there until death. It looks too momentary at the moment. One inch red spots clearly model her dress by their definition. It gets worryingly giddy if the bottom is smaller. Pulls up top edge.

Edward Povey 1984



Sketchbook drawing, 1986



Drawing & color calculations, 1986



Right: Drawing & color calculations, 1986



ADAM AND EVE, 1984

Oil on canvas

37.5 x 32.25 in. (95.2 x 81.9 cm)

In a private collection in Connecticut

HISTORY

1983 – Designed at the Edward Povey Studio in Perdmontemps, Grenada, W.I. during the Grenada Intervention

1984 – Researched using unknown models in Grenada, W.I.

1984 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Perdmontemps, Grenada, W.I.

NOTES

I never see them looking at each other. Entwined like 'Mary Magdalene, Saint Peter and the Fool'. As if carved: all in one. A unit. A painting of one of the pulpit sculptures of Belgium, but marble. These white highlights as in Tamara de Lempicka. Michelangelo's 'Joseph, Mary and Jesus'. Modern clothing well-schemed. All folds like a holy family or pieta. The dead Christ. The dead lover: is this not the price?

One thing I notice is that I barely see the faces in these designs. In Tamara de Lempicka the faces are in focus. I see the situation and throw in suitable faces. In Europe I constantly saw faces and characters which amazed me by their extremity. Their extreme, rich characterization. This is Adam and Eve eating the apple. The serpent. The garden of Eden. Her beautiful, sleek eyes and darting, shy smile. His moody uncertainty, his inhibitions and the heavy load of his passions.

I take his passion out to be the serpent, leaving him philosophical and moody, with a warped Tamara de Lempicka face – all lumpy and 1930's. And she is seduced (as is possible) by the serpent of his passions (phallic) – the legged serpent. The lizard. She already carries her burden – pregnancy. Sleek eyes like the serpent, burdened, and beyond access to him.

It is a clear air. Hard blacks and whites. Some nice 'beaten' shadows. Already I want to warp the perspective. A reddish face or a Dick Ket face? Whitish, up to a waxy shine. I want the harshness on the one hand and the tenderness on the other. So I want a tender relationship (in the eyes) lit harshly. Tender skin and clothing. Beautiful shapes lit hard.

Edward Povey 1983



Sketchbook drawing, 1984



Right: Working drawing, 1984



CAFÉ, 1983

Oil on canvas (37.2 x 91.4cm)

Collection of Mr.& Mrs. David Ginott, New York, USA

HISTORY

1980 – Designed in Tel Aviv, Israel during the Israeli Independence Day Festivities

1983 – Researched using unknown models in Grenada, W.I., and photographs of the characters depicted

1983 – Painted at the Edward Povey Studio in Perdmontemps, Grenada, W.I. during the Grenada Intervention

NOTES

A bit like a slightly sickly stained glass window. Scarlet, crimson, Emerald-Lime Green, pale blue. The washed out faces of saints. Perhaps crossed with the church black. Jet black (a touch blued?). The black and white checkers you sometimes see. Sections of 'glass', washed out in the middle, passing through bright to a sooty dark area before the black leading.

It's the cheap café. Shadowless lighting and garish colours. Colours as bright at the top as at the bottom. Fabric pattern – especially leaf patterns. Include gold, tan, mid leaf greens and kbaki for holiness. A set of nice milky creams. The light makes the forms believable and very, very beautiful. It is an abstraction. They are a mixture of reality and 'demonstration' (expressive, literal) and abstract demonstration.

The Last Supper possibly against a backdrop of homosexuals (love)? Red light women (love)? ...and orthodox Jews (love)? Soldiers with guns and girls (love)? Dark but full of goodwill. Basically good and happy.

Crazy shop signs, Eastern and African incense-sellers (mystic love)? A lady who leans on her chair and waits for her husband (love)? A thin, tender boy and girl (love)? Men arm in arm, with black hair (love)? Middle-aged couples waiting for music (love)? Two men, identical, sitting together (love)? An absurdly sexual/violent Arab with split shorts.

Metal tubular furniture (rusty white and pale blue painted). Spencer just stood them up in groups. He wanted just to have 'said it'. Plain and simple. Let's make a glorious blessing of it.

Edward Povey 1981



Sketchbook drawing, 1983



Drawing calculations, 1983



Right: Sketchbook drawing & notes, 1983



APPENDIX

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Until recently Edward Povey has been somewhat unique in his attitude to exhibitions. This may be due to the unusual evolution of his career, which began with almost a decade of mural painting. He then worked from the seclusion of a tropical studio, traveling to execute public commissions.

During the 1990s and 2000s he had generated a large number of private collectors, and commenced the giving of lectures to assembled audiences of them, which he called 'salons', after the Gertrude Stein concept, reminiscent of her evenings of debate between artists such as Picasso and Matisse, and poets Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire. Povey loved how alive and visceral such experiences were.

Thus, during this time he certainly exhibited with galleries internationally, showing alongside artists whom he considered to be his influences, such as Paul Cadmus, Walt Kuhn, Jack Levine, Aponovich, Arson, Malcolm Liepke, Gwen John, Augustus John, Graham Sutherland, John Piper and George Tooker. But whilst his private sales were sufficient to finance his ongoing work in the studio, he was only tacitly invested in exhibitions with galleries.

In the last ten years Povey has withdrawn to his studio, declining exposure by galleries and even ceasing his extraordinary salon evenings so as to dedicate more time to the evolution of his art. Finally in 2011 he has begun realizing the need to expose his new collections of paintings within the context of reputable commercial galleries. For the first time he is exploring a move to exhibitions and publications which will broaden the analysis of his symbolism.

2008

Wales, City museums in 6 cities

Seattle, Salon showings

Connecticut, Salon showings

2007

New York, Salon showings

London, Salon showings

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

Wales, *Plas Glyn Y Weddŵ Museum*

Virginia Beach, *Contemporary Art Museum*

Miami, Salon showings

2006

Seattle, Salon showings

England, Salon showings

Wales, *Plas Glyn y Weddŵ Museum*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

West Palm Beach, *Serendipity Gallery*

2005

New Orleans, *Hanson Gallery*

West Palm Beach, *Serendipity Gallery*

Wales, *Plas Glyn Y Weddŵ Museum*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

2004

West Palm Beach, *Serendipity Gallery*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

New York, Salon showings

2003

Wales, *The Albany Gallery*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

New Orleans, *Hanson Gallery*

Seattle, Salon showings

2002

San Francisco, *Hanson Gallery*

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

France, *Musée Landivisiau*

Barcelona, *Three Nation Exhibition*

Brittany, *Sculpture Exhibition*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

2001

New Orleans, *Hanson Gallery*

New Jersey, Salon showings

Singapore, Salon showings

2000

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

Wales, *Bangor Art Museum*

Texas, *Amarillo Museum of Art*

Knoxville, Salon Showing

France, *Musée Landivisiau*

Brittany, *Sculpture Exhibition*

Wales, *Three Nation Exhibition*

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

San Francisco, *Hanson Gallery*

1999

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

British International Art Fairs, *Martin Tinney*

London, *John Martin Gallery*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

Connecticut, Salon showings

1998

Singapore, Salon Showings

New Orleans, *Hanson Gallery*

New York, Salon showings

1997

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

British Art Fairs, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

London, Salon showings

1996

New York, *Eleanor Ettinger Gallery*

Wales, *Rhyl Art Museum*

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

Texas, *Amarillo Museum of Art*

1995

Miami, Art Basel: *Horwitch Newman Galleries*

Beverly Hills, *Horwitch Newman Galleries*

London, Islington Art Fair: *Martin Tinney Gallery*

Hong Kong, Art Asia: *Eleanor Ettinger Gallery, N.Y.*

1994

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery*

Beverly Hills, *Louis Newman Galleries* with

Aponovich and Arson

Wales, *Martin Tinney Gallery* with Gwen John,

Augustus John, Graham Sutherland and John Piper

Wales, *National Museum of Wales*

1993

Wales, *Royal Cambrian Academy*

1992

New York, *Midtown Payson Galleries* with Paul

Cadmus, Walt Kuhn, Jack Levine and George Tooker

1991

The Hague, *Art Gallery Gerard*

New York, *Midtown Payson Galleries* with Paul

Cadmus, Walt Kuhn and Jack Levine

1990

England, *Meridian Contemporary Arts*

1989

Wales, *Theatr Ardudwy Gallery*

1988

Brussels, *Jan de Mare Galleries*

1986

New York, Jim Macmillan Salon showing

1984

Wales, *Theatr Gwynedd Gallery*

1983

Wales, *Aberystwyth Arts Centre*

1982

Wales, *Bodeilio Gallery*

Wales, *Bangor City Museum*

1980

Wales, *Mostyn Gallery*

1979

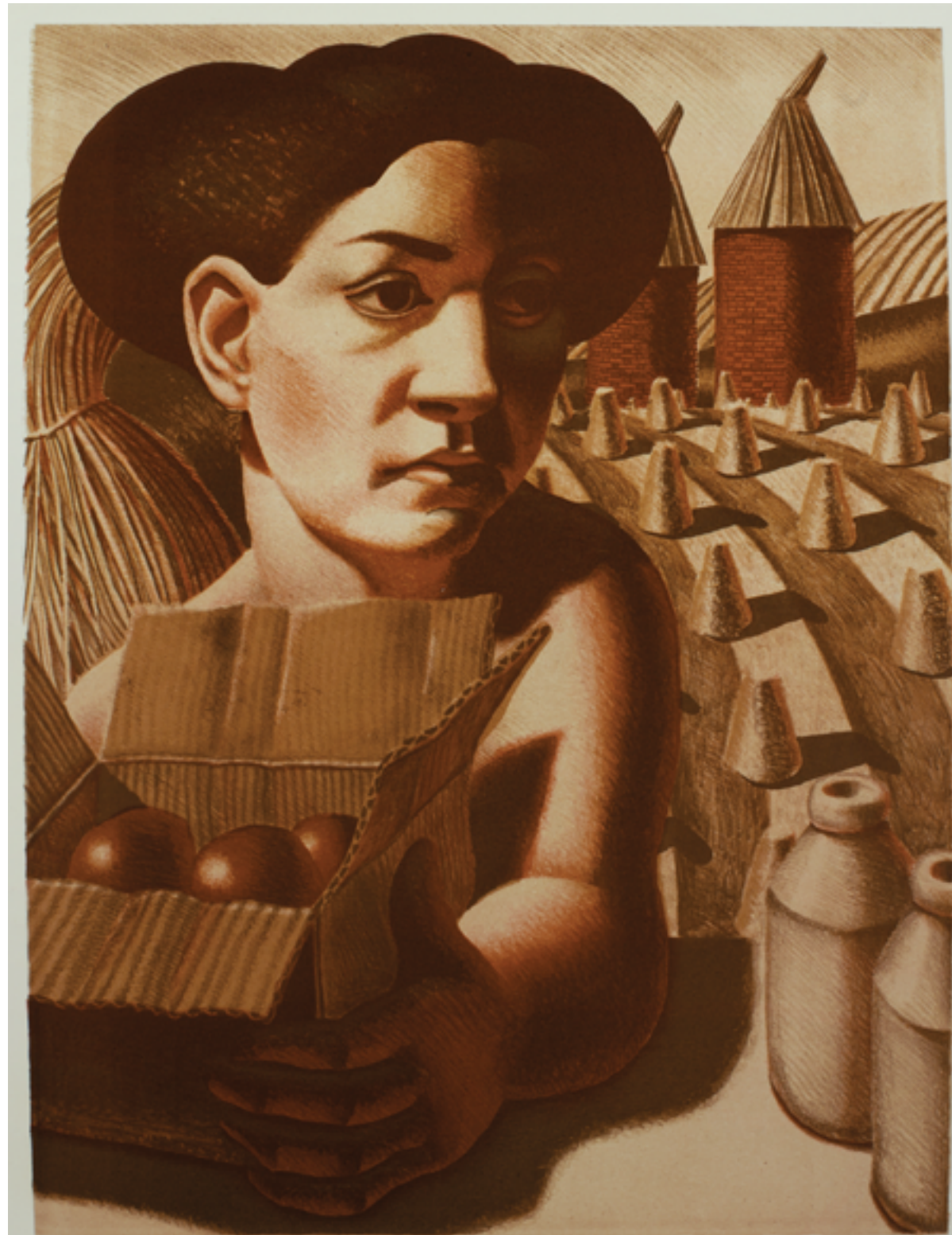
Wales, *Theatr Gwynedd Gallery*

1978

London, *Royal Exchange*, British Arts Council Exhibition

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & STUDIES

- 1979
Graham Cooper and Douglas Sargent: *Painting The Town*, ISBN:0714819794. Published by Phaidon, London. A short history of modern murals and their design, execution and importance in their local communities. Povey's murals are featured.
- 1979
HTV Wales: *Muriau Segontium*, directed by Gareth Owen, filmed by Meic Reynolds, edited by Barrie White and John Cross, produced by Gwyn Erfyl. Seventy-minute documentary about Povey painting the mural *Helter Skelter* in Wales.
- 1982
Hywel Harries: *Wales on Canvas*, ISBN:0862433568, Published by Lofa Press, Wales. The book includes a chapter on the mural paintings of Povey, 1975 to 1981.
- 1983
Marzieh Gail: *Other People, Other Places*, ISBN:0853981221, Published by George Ronald, Oxford, England. Dust jacket painting by Povey.
- 1986
BBC Television filming of Edward Povey interviewed by Sir Hugh Casson, former president of the Royal Academy of Art.
- 1986
New York Times First Section, Sunday April 6th. A photo article featuring the bringing of *The Trial of Saint Deiniol* painting to New York. Photograph by Dith Pran.
- 1986
 Harlech Television 30 minute Art Education Series featuring Edward Povey paintings.
- 1987
Ian Skidmore: *Gwynedd*, Published by Robert Hale, London. A recent history of the county of Gwynedd in North Wales, which discusses Povey's artistic contribution to Wales during the 1970s.
- 1987
Art News Magazine August issue published a major article, "From Gwynedd to Grenada", charting Edward Povey's artistic development since leaving Wales.
- 1990
The Artist's and Illustrator's Magazine, December issue. Profile of Edward Povey.
- 1992
BBC Television – Article about Edward Povey's University of Wales commissioned mural, *The Hall of Illusion*.
- 1992
HTV Prime Time – Article about The University of Wales' major commission.
- 1993
The Times Newspaper, London – Photo article on the work of Edward Povey.
- 1993
BBC Radio Four's – *Kaleidoscope* culture program featuring Edward Povey's *Hall of Illusion* mural. A National British Radio prime time broadcasting, London
- 1993
Maurice Cooke: Senior Art Lecturer at the University of Wales. Presented a public lecture about Povey's *Hall of Illusion* mural at the University of Wales. Mr. Cooke was an ardent supporter and a collector of Povey's work. He was a renowned art historian, as well as an extraordinarily astute collector of twentieth century art. His collection, which was handled by Sotheby's after his death in 2010, was reported to have realized between one and two million dollars at auction.
- 1994
HTV Program: Stand and Stare: Edward Povey was asked about art and commerce. Interviewer – Jan Peterson.
- 1994 – Present
Pete Telfer: A film director and producer who has collected footage on Povey's career since 1994.
- 1996
"Gwynfryn in Gwynedd" Radio Broadcast – An audio diary exploring Povey's daily life – spanning 7 months and including a research visit to the *Catacombes de Paris*.
- 1996
Artifacts HTV – A documentary previewing Edward Povey's paintings in the *The Art of Sleepwalking* exhibition at the Martin Tinney Gallery in Cardiff, Wales.
- 1997
Alan Torjussen: *Teaching Art In Wales*, ISBN:0708313485. Published by University Of Wales Press. Part of a series of teacher's publications featuring Povey's art.
- 1997
J. Gwynn Williams: *The University of Wales 1893-1993*, University of Wales Press. Includes a discussion regarding Povey's mural *Hall of Illusion*.
- 1998
BBC-based Homeland Television Productions: Povey on four months of studio work and a three month tour of his American Galleries and collectors, gathering material for a full length documentary. Director, Pete Telfer.
- 1998
HTV News – article, prior to his semi-annual US tour
- 1998
BBC Radio 4 – "You and Yours" Interviewed Povey about the art collection for the New Welsh Assembly Building.
- 1999
BBC Radio Wales – Skidmore in Conversation. An interview with Povey about his studio and his new sculptures, *Couple* and *Woman in the Wind*.
- 1999
The Times Newspaper, London – Higher Education Supplement. Photo article on the work of Edward Povey.
- 1999
Who's Who in Art – Biographies of Leading Men and Women in the World of Art in Britain Today: Artists, Designers, Craftsmen, Critics, Writers, Teachers and Curators, 28th Edition.
- 2000
 Antiques Trade Gazette – Article featuring one of Edward Povey's paintings.
- 2002
 British newspaper: The Western Mail – *Povey, An Explorer of Senses*. Article about Edward Povey's work. Written by Karen Price, arts and media correspondent.
- 2002
 British newspaper: The Daily Post – *Entertaining Artist's Second Look at his First Masterpiece* about a Povey retrospective.
- 2004
Architectural Digest – December Edition. Article of the home of Povey collector John Keenan, which showcased Mr. Keenan's impressive collection of Povey works.
- 2005
 The Times Newspaper, London – Higher Education Supplement – The October edition quotes Povey's mural *The Hall of Illusion* as one of the ten most important publicly owned artworks in Britain.
- 2007
S4C British Television Program – O4 Wal: featuring Edward Povey's studio and the works of art produced there.
- 2007
 British newspaper The Daily Post – article reports *An Alert over stolen Art*, regarding the theft of two major Povey artworks from a private collector in Surrey, England. Christie's, Sotheby's, Bonhams and Interpol were involved in seeking the thieves.
- 2007
Welsh Assembly Government: At Home With The Joneses, published by The Wales International Center, New York. Presents the contributions to world culture made by Edward Povey, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Sir Tom Jones, Katherine Jenkins and Sir Anthony Hopkins.
- 2008
Jordan M. Leach – *The Hall of Illusion*, 7 part orchestral symphony written by the British composer, and dedicated to Edward Povey and his *Hall of Illusion* mural.
- 2008
British newspaper: North Wales Chronicle: *The Caernarfon Mural For Sale*. Extensive articles were written concerning the appearance of an advertisement on the eBay auction site, concerning the wall on which the Caernarfon mural, *Helter Skelter* is painted. Subsequent articles followed the story's development, including a statement by the owner of a bid for 2.5 million pounds.
- 2009
Iosifidis Kiriakos – *Mural Art Volume Two* – Murals on Huge Public Surfaces Around the World from Graffiti to Trompe l'oeil, featuring a section on Povey's murals.
- 2009
 2010 Katie Lench – *Caernarfon* – features Povey's famous Caernarfon mural *Helter Skelter*, painted during Povey's self-styled "apprenticeship" in the 1970s.
- 2013
Keith Nichols – *Edward Povey – An Analysis*: currently being researched and written. Keith Nichols is a British Consultant Clinical Psychologist and author of *Robert Lenkiewicz, The Artist and The Man*, ISBN 1-84114-457-6.



SELECTED COLLECTIONS

MOMA Wales
 The National Library of Wales
 J.P. Morgan Inc., New York
 Glynn Vivien Art Museum, Swansea
 Procter and Gamble, Venezuela
 3M Art Collection, USA
 National Museum of Wales
 Alverno College, Wisconsin
 Brevard Art Museum, Melbourne, Florida
 Mrs. Jagdish Singh, Punjab, India
 Actress Kate Mulgrew, New York
 Actor Eric McCormack, Los Angeles
 Actress Anne Bobby, New York
 Author Xaviera Hollander, Amsterdam
 Authors Ken and Elizabeth Mellor, Australia
 Mrs. and Mrs. Deets, Munich, Germany
 Mr. & Mrs. Bertenshaw, New Zealand
 Musician Hugh Featherstone Blyth, Belgium
 Mr. S. Butcher and Mrs. L. MacFarlane, St. Simon, France
 Ms. S. White, Carmel, California
 Mr. C. Schaller, Torrington, Connecticut
 Dr. K. Holmes & Dr. V. Gonzales, Seattle Aberystwyth
 Town Hall, Wales
 Performing Artists' Agent Itzik Becher, Scottsdale, AZ
 Mrs. Zoe Turner, Heriot-Watt University, Scotland
 John Kopycinski, St George's University, Grenada, W.I.
 Khotso Khabele, South Africa
 Dr. A. Singh, Rajasthan, India
 Mr. & Mrs. Draper, Birmingham, England
 Mrs. C. DiNoia, Valencia, Spain
 Goldman Sachs, London
 Anglesey Museum Art Collection, Wales
 MasterCard Europe, Belgium

Contemporary Arts Society of Wales
 The Collection of the Mayor of Virginia Beach
 The Citadelle Art Foundation, Canadian, Texas
 Mr. & Mrs. D Paxton, Austin, Texas (62 works)
 Mr. & Mrs. J. Batchelor, Cumbria, England
 Mr. & Mrs. D. Dunham, Chicago
 Mr. & Mrs. H. Cleveland, Knoxville, Tennessee
 Ms. Angela King, New Orleans
 Mr. Sheli Gupta, Kenya
 Mr. B. Almond and Mrs. Zhai Qiuxia, China
 Galeri Gerard, The Hague
 Mr. B. Nix, Phaidon Books, London
 Dana Friis-Hansen, Director and CEO, Grand Rapids Art
 Museum
 Mr. & Mrs. Calisch, Sarasota, Florida
 Mr. & Mrs. R. Marshall, Short Hills, New Jersey
 Mr. Paul Lucas – theater producer, New York
 University Of Wales Art Collection
 The Singapore British High Commission

Opposite Page:
AUGUST, 2000
 Stone lithograph. 17 x 13 in. (43.2 x 33 cm). Commissioned by
 The Contemporary Arts Society for Wales.

We are grateful to the Glynn Vivien Art Museum, Wales;
 The National Library of Wales;
 and the National Museum of Wales

OBSERVATIONS

On the art of Edward Povey

XAVIERA HOLLANDER

Author and theater producer

“Clearly Edward Povey is a complex and unique man, but knowing his art, I maintain that it is better to meet Povey’s paintings, and not to meet the man. Here is why: It allows you to savor a delicious confusion.

Some of his paintings convince you that he is guileless and innocent. Some suggest that he is unbalanced. And some make you believe that he is a Libertine, or at least an erotic obsessive. I would rather continue to wonder, and to enjoy Povey’s rich and uninhibited range of expression.”

SIR KYFFIN WILLIAMS KBE, RA

1918–2006

Artist, President of the Royal Cambrian Academy and appointed member of The Royal Academy of Arts in London

“I always believed Edward Povey to be a very talented artist. In the world of art he is certainly a maverick, for his work is very individual and is based upon sound draughtsmanship.

Part of my admiration for his work stems from the fact that he is his own man – fashion is obviously something he ignores. He is a talented artistic loner.”

KATE MULGREW

Actor

“Povey’s art is a guileless diorama of a world which is complex, erotic, and drowning in shadows.”

KEITH NICHOLS

Consultant Clinical Psychologist and author.

‘Edward Povey - An Analysis’ is currently being researched and written.

Povey’s use of figurative symbolism to illustrate the tensions in relationships and parenting, often recalling the theories of Erik Erikson, combine with the contrasting preoccupations of modern art to produce a rich and profound synergy. Although some artists in history decline over time, Povey still produces at a torrential rate while maintaining a perpetually refreshed depth of insight. Unlike many painters who apprenticed as muralists, Povey now increasingly presents a complex and pond-like surface to his paintings. I believe we can look forward to many years of outstanding works from this talented painter.

Below:
The Edward Povey Studio on the campus
of the University of Wales, Bangor.
1993-2007

