



A new Edward
VIII oil painting is
commissioned

COVERSTORY

A new Edward VIII oil portrait is commissioned

Lord and Lady Edwards recently commissioned London-based bespoke art firm, Fabulous Masterpieces, to create a depiction of Edward, Prince of Wales in his Order of the Garter robes on oil canvas to be displayed in their seventy-room Trawscoed Mansion in Wales which is under renovation in the popular British Channel 4 television series, *The Restoration Man*, featuring George Clarke

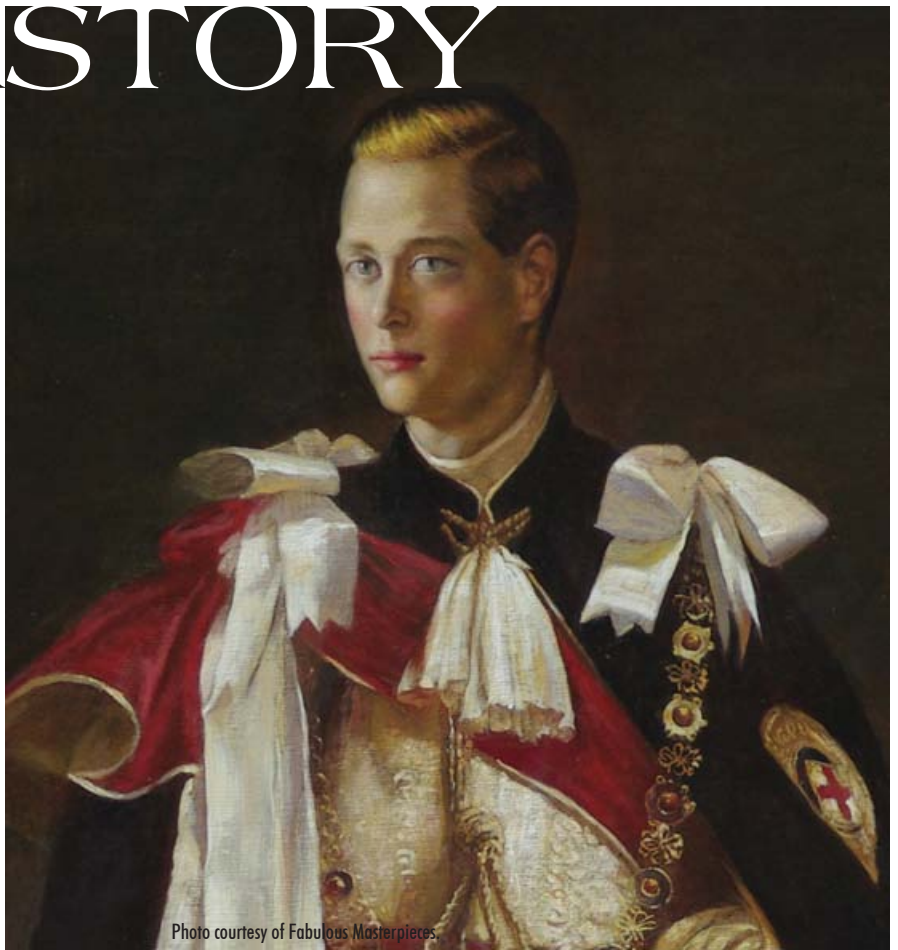


Photo courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces

Presenting a stately expression and exquisitely finished details, the figure of Edward VIII as the Prince of Wales looks out from an expertly-painted canvas, comprising a painting fit for an architectural gem. The painting, which was recently completed by fast-growing bespoke art company Fabulous Masterpieces, based in London, is the first of many custom historical artistic additions to Trawscoed Mansion. Located near Aberystwyth, Wales, the mansion is an impressive seventy-room abode built on a Roman fort site and dating back many hundreds of years.

Lord and Lady Edwards, the Fabulous Masterpieces clients who commissioned the painting as part of their ongoing effort to fully restore the mansion and appoint it in an appropriate style, were recently shown admiring the painting as it was featured on the popular television series *The Restoration Man*, which appears on the UK's Channel 4 and is hosted by George Clarke. The television documentary program explores the consid-

erable task being undertaken to bring Trawscoed back to its former glory and update it with enhancements, including the addition of the Edward VIII painting.

"We're absolutely delighted with it...we're delighted with that quality," exclaimed Lady Edwards, whose husband looked on appreciatively and noted, "That's the first of many." Television host Clarke added his own thoughts on the oil piece, saying, "That's fantastic." The quality of the painting itself reflects the dedication to precision, accuracy, and artistic execution that marks the works produced by Fabulous Masterpieces, which scaled the painting to perfectly fit within a panel moulding specified by the clients for placement.

Edward VIII visited Trawscoed in the 1920's during his tenure as Prince of Wales which makes the painting's placement especially poignant. Fabulous Masterpieces has been charged with producing several other related portraits of six of its most esteemed

visitors to be hung throughout the mansion including Queen Victoria, Winston Churchill, King Edward VII, Stanley Baldwin and William Gladstone. The ability to custom-order paintings that not only capture the artistic spirit and style desired but which can be created to exacting specifications to ensure a look and placement that are just right has helped to make the Trawscoed Mansion restoration project at once easier and more ambitious.

When the clients originally approached Fabulous Masterpiece co-founder Tim Bertram, the request was for an Edward VIII painting where he is wearing full ceremonial robes/dress. Finding original source photos proved to be difficult since Edward had a natural aversion to court-related dress. With the exception of his investiture as Prince of Wales, he was most often photographed or painted in varying military uniforms or in stylish menswear, considering he was one of the most influential men of the 20th century fashion-wise. This posed a problem in find-



LEFT: exterior view of Trawscoed Mansion. Photo courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces



LEFT: the Dining Room where the painting of Edward VIII will hang. Photo courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces

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ing appropriate ceremonial attire that the client expected. Of course had Edward been crowned in full coronation splendor and opened annually his parliaments thereafter, there would be a wealth of illustrations and photographs to achieve the clients wishes. However, this particular painting required some research and creative thinking.

A solution was found by referring to an illustration of Prince Edward painted in his earlier days in the Order of the Garter robes. Using that illustration and two black & white photographs of Prince Edward VIII, the artist was able to depict the prince in ceremonial robes as the client wished and with a face more age appropriate to the time of his visit at Trawscoed in the 20's.

All of these aspects make this particular painting interesting. Perhaps even Edward himself faced this same dilemma—the lack of regalia illustrations with him as the subject. The Duke of Windsor himself had a similar portrait commissioned dressed in the Order of the Garter Robes, albeit in his later years, by artist Sir James Gunn. A photograph of the painting, the duke in his



Edward VIII mock-up photo courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces.



BELOW: oil replica of Anthony Van Dyke's Portrait of King Charles I by and courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces .



ABOVE: oil replicas of George Stubbs' 'Whistlejacket' and Diego Velazquez's 'A White Horse' in situ by and courtesy of Fabulous Masterpieces

robes and Sir James Gunn taken at The Mill ("Le Moulin de la Tuilerie", the Windsor's weekend home in France) is in THE PRIVATE WORLD OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF WINDSOR by Hugo Vickers.

Bertram talks about a further challenge in creating this painting: "Painting color oil portraits from black and white photos is a specialist job. The artist used color photos from later periods to gauge skin tone etc. The artist then prepared a face mock up for client approval prior to starting on the full size portrait."

Compounding the complexity of this painting was that it had to be sized to precise measurements in order that the final framed artwork would fit perfectly into the existing panel moulding in the Dining Room.

While finding picture-perfect artwork is a challenge for many homeowners and decorators, locating just the right pieces for an historical home can be still more difficult, with issues of size and dimension constraints along with matters of color and style all affecting the final look of a space. Fabulous Masterpieces works with highly skilled artists to produce truly custom works that capture the essence of the period and the relevance of the subject while yielding to any and every detail required by the setting of the home

itself. Those intent on restoration and decoration work for historical homes and other architectural treasures are invited to contact Fabulous Masterpieces for their own consultation and guidance on selecting and commissioning ideal pieces of art.

As the restoration project at majestic Trawscoed Mansion continues, the space is sure to benefit from beautifully executed custom canvases reflecting the many important visitors who helped distinguish the estate as one of the most important in its region. With the help of Fabulous Masterpieces, Lord and Lady Edwards along with anyone interested in accurate, exceptional bespoke artwork can give the past a new life.

Fabulous Masterpieces paints fine art reproductions of famous to lesser known oil paintings & portraits from photos ranging from cats and dogs to people and houses.

Just how good are Fabulous Masterpieces? Says Bertram:

We think they're excellent quality. Museums have commissioned our art reproductions, and owners who have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on original masterpieces from Christie's & Sotheby's have also commissioned us to paint replicas of their paintings for

insurance and security reasons. Interior designers & owners of stately and historical houses have commissioned period style art reproductions from us. Hundreds of people in fact who just want something a bit more special than a poster or print in their home have commissioned replica oil paintings and portraits from us for their blank walls or to give as gifts to loved ones.

Really, we don't proclaim to be Leonardo da Vinci, but we're very good and paint to an extremely high standard ensuring you get the highest quality portrait or art reproduction possible.

Fabulous Masterpieces, in their third year now, has gained a reputation for affordable yet high quality artwork. Perhaps one of you will commission a Windsor painting from Fabulous Masterpieces for your grand home. Prices range from \$800 for unstretched 20" x 33" painting to \$1,600 for a 40" x 66" unstretched canvas.

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