

ART MOVEMENT

Jonathan Turner took an unusual direction when he commissioned contemporary artist Dave White to use his E-type as a canvas



WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY JIM PATTEN

JONATHAN TURNER has a passion for old cars and has owned some unique pieces in his time, including a genuine C-type. He's active, too, and his vintage Bentley can often be seen on various gruelling historic rallies. Most impressive, though, is when he drove the ex-Ecurrie Ecosse D-type, racing the Orient Express to Venice. He won. He also has an XK 140, Mk 2 and two E-types from Eagle. Yet he still had

a fancy for an E-type Series 1 fixedhead coupe and in 2009, at the Buxton auction, he saw the very car.

His was the top bid and he secured what appeared to be a very nice E-type in British Racing Green needing a small degree of remedial work. But the more he looked, the worse it seemed to be. The history file revealed a restoration carried out back in the Seventies, but, as we all know, a restoration is only as good

as the person carrying it out and this one proved superficial. He took it along to Jaguar specialists Hutson for a detailed opinion, and gave Andy Rayner at Hutson the go-ahead to investigate further when it became clear that the problems were extensive. Doors were popping open against the locks, handling was suspect and ominous smoke was appearing from behind the dash. There was no choice but to go for a comprehensive restoration.

The more the car was stripped, the worse it appeared. Evidence of three different wings was found. The boot floor fell out without any force at all.

Work started at the end of 2012. Every element of the car was rebuilt: engine, gearbox, IRS, brakes and suspension, with a new wiring harness, of course. BAS sorted the trim. As work progressed, a Heritage Certificate was requested and it was then that Andy found out that the original colour

was white. He mentioned it to Jonathan and simply said, "That will give you a blank canvas." And that set Jonathan thinking. Perhaps he could use it as a base for some interesting art.

Juliette Loughran hails from a motoring family and has a joint passion for cars and art. She opened the Loughran Gallery in Lancashire and then, following various pop-up exhibitions, opened another gallery in Motcomb Street in London's Belgravia.

Juliette's introduction to Jonathan Turner was through old cars and his keenness for contemporary art; she supplied him with some interesting works. They had been talking about the E-type and what direction to take when Juliette mentioned Dave White, a multi-award winning artist who was dubbed by *The Independent* as the new Andy Warhol. Jonathan not only knew of his work, but also owns some examples.

Dave is a Contemporary British Artist with

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a unique expressive application to his work. His exhibitions of his themed works (such as his Americana series in 2008) have been international, with perhaps a highlight being his showing at the People's Square Exhibition in Shanghai. Dave has also worked on various brand design projects and had an interesting collaboration with Nike and Jordan Brand, applying his work to trainers – Sneaker Art.

Jonathan felt both adventurous and brave enough to give Dave complete control over the best way to tackle this unusual commission. The E-type would represent a completely new challenge for his characteristic style, where the paints strokes appear to have been laid on heavily with excess running off. Firstly, there are the curves so loved on the E-type. Run a hand over the sumptuous form and, although it flows, it does so organically, potentially stretching and shrinking a reflection over a shape devoid of flat sections. And then there is the question of materials. To make this a lasting legacy, the artist's paint has to remain a permanent fixture to the car otherwise, as happened to Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, the paint will literally flake off. The only assured solution would be to use the same type of paint as the car was finished in, a medium that would be a first for Dave; Andy at Hutson send him some samples for experimentation.

Dave decided to depict the movement of a sparrow, where the progress of flight is charted along the side of the E-type, with two additional renditions on the bonnet. He explains, "By exploring various subject matters over the last few years, my work has been presenting endangered wildlife and species from around the world. While that journey continues on an international level, I would like to pay homage to our very own subjects and threatened creatures that we take for granted." In choosing the sparrow for the E-type, Dave is visiting the plight of the rapidly falling numbers of this once common bird.

When he was perfectly satisfied with his practise work, he travelled to Bradford to work directly on the E-type, using a spray booth as a studio.

The work was intensive, but it had to be right first time. Dave spent four long days on the project, often wearing a respirator, before he hung up his tools. Jonathan was absolutely thrilled, and Hutson applied a protective lacquer to shield the work.

Next, there was the question of fitting up the car. In preparation for Dave's work, the E-type had been devoid of all chrome, lights and external fittings. They had three weeks to get the car ready and delivered to London for the opening of the three-week exhibition at the Iris Studios on October 9, 2014, where the E-type was widely well received. Everyone admired its absolute beauty, enhanced by the unique art. Many wanted to buy the car, but were disappointed, as Jonathan has no intention of letting this Jaguar go. After the show, it was sent back to Hutson to be made ready for the road.



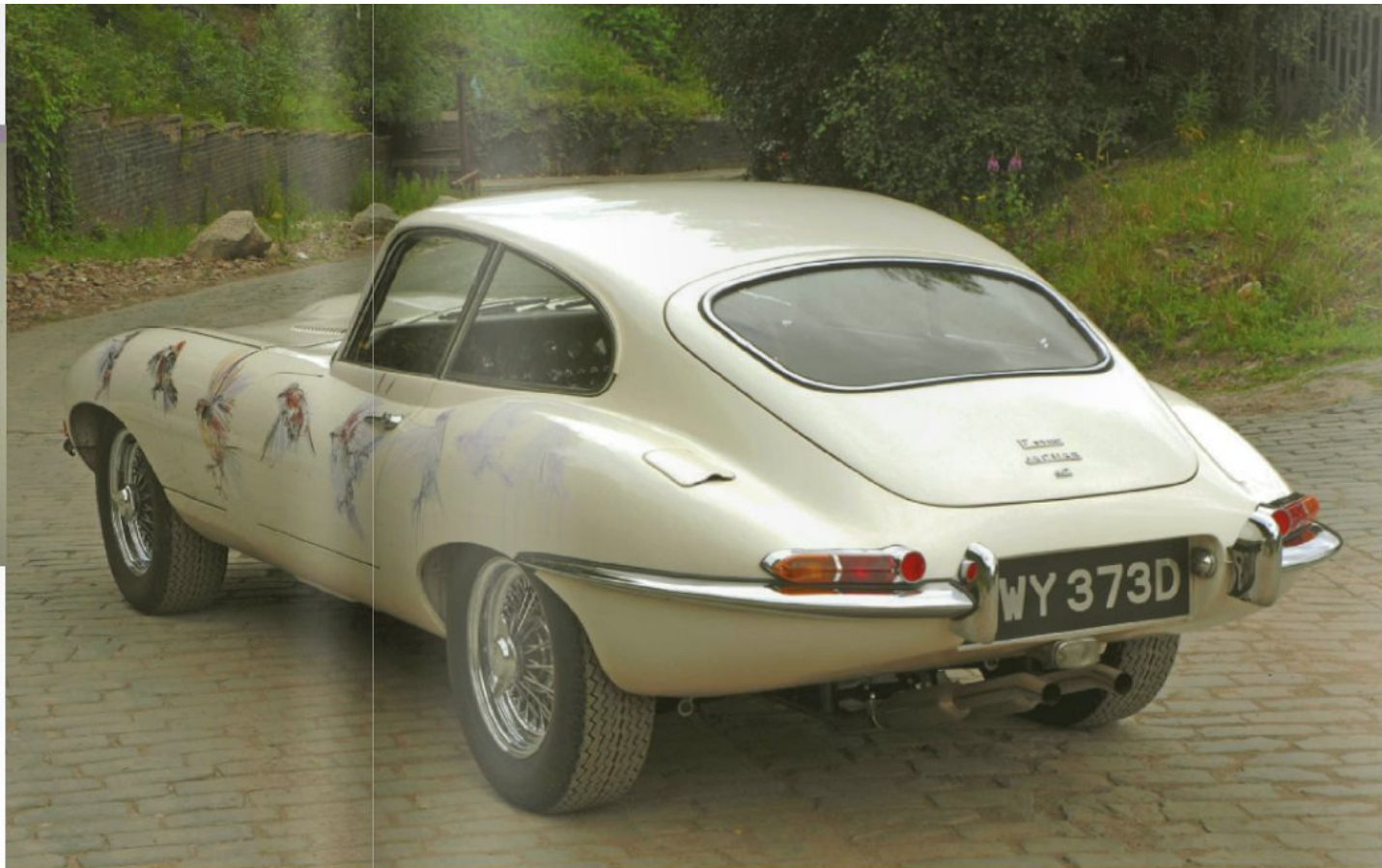
Some months later, I travelled to Bradford to view this most unusual Jaguar. I had seen images before leaving home, and the more I had researched, the more I liked what I saw. But I was determined to keep an open mind and not be swept away with the excitement of the project: I would adopt a neutral rationale. That philosophy went right out of the window the moment I saw the E-type. I was so overwhelmed that at first I couldn't even consider the quality of the restoration as I concentrated on the motion of the sparrows in flight.

There's an energy to this work, almost as though the artist were painting a live scene and anxious to keep pace, ignoring the runs and splatters (an intentional component). Everything has been left as the artist intended, even the random splash on some rubber parts.

I had to drag myself away for the art to focus more at the car. Andy had told me that the complexity of repairs was so deep it had been like an archeological dig as they waded through the various levels of older repairs and dodgy restorations. They have made a remarkable job, especially as just about everything was handled in-house (exceptions included the trim, neatly handled by BAS).

Time for a drive. Bradford isn't noted for its pretty villages or open vistas but today we are looking for something different. Having been at the heart of industry for the last 200 years-plus, many of the streets still house small engineering companies providing the services so essential to industry, and we find one or two streets that could have been unchanged for the last 100 years.

Every time we stop for photographs there is interest and a shared enthusiasm. The art is unanimously approved of and provokes ▶



Engine is stock E-type and superb



Interior remains standard

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intelligent discussion. At last, with the Nikon back in its bag, we take a drive around town – the car drives every bit as well as it looks.

Back at base I wonder how it will be received in the pages of *JW*. I hope that the flat magazine images will do Dave White's work justice and that the reader will adopt the same open mind that I did. But I appreciate that art is very personal, capable of placing two individuals at polar opposites. Leave the argument of "why do this to an E-type" to one side. There are enough versions around to allow at least one example to escape the shackles of convention and free itself from the strict boundaries of rigid conformity. In that Jonathan Turner has freed his mind and allowed the artist free reign with the confidence that he would have something totally unique.

Unique is not always tasteful, but in this case any preconceived ideas of vulgarity have been blown to pieces. It is a supreme work of art where the canvas is as beautiful as the painting it bears. ▣

• The Loughran Gallery in London's Belgravia is presenting a new exhibition by Dave White from September 4-29, called *Critical*. The theme focuses on wildlife whose existence is becoming increasingly perilous in the natural world.

THANKS TO:

The Hutson Motor Company
(www.e-typecars.co.uk)

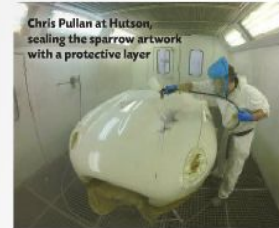
Dave White
(www.davewhiteart.com)

Loughran Gallery
(www.loughranguallery.co.uk)

Dave spent four long days on the project, often wearing a respirator, before he hung up his tools



Dave White applying his art



Chris Pullan at Hutson, sealing the sparrow artwork with a protective layer

