

Grosse Pointe News

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Grosse Pointe pair turns to Norwegian artist to complete dining room design FREE ACCESS

By Guest Writer on September 22, 2021

Berit Framnes



The English Revival home built in 1914, owned by Grosse Pointe Farms couple Derek Latka and Blair Hess, is immaculately decorated, a reflection of its owners' natural design instincts and love of entertaining. The dining room is the heart of it all, the well-staged scene for many a social occasion. But the space was missing something, a piece of art that would embody both its owners' tastes while also capturing the attention of many dinner party audiences to come.

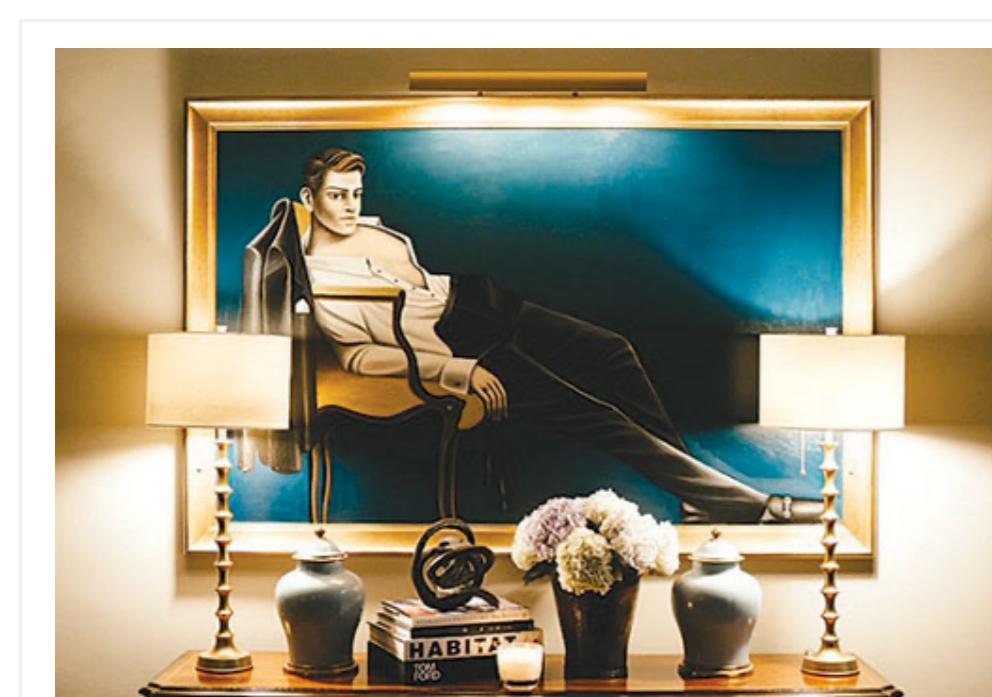
Paragon Art Collective, an art consulting business run by Grosse Pointe Park local and art lover Mary Wysocki, was up to the task, helping Latka and Hess find the right statement piece for their home. Wysocki's specialty is in listening closely to her clients, to understand their tastes, interests and wishes for the art, and then presenting a bevy of options that might suit. One artist grabbed the attention of Latka and Hess, a Norwegian woman specializing in modern twists on Renaissance-style painting, Edvarda Braanaas.



Edvarda Braanaas sketching in her studio in Oslo, Norway. Courtesy photo

“Edvarda’s style, a mix of art deco combined with warmth and a modern flair, was perfect for Derek and Blair. It was love at first sight,” Wysocki said. “The first piece that caught their eye was called ‘One to Watch,’ but the canvas was a bit too small for the wall, and so we began the process of working with Edvarda to create an original work for them.”

“The space in the dining room was a large blank canvas and we were struggling to fill it,” Latka said. “We knew we wanted something personally significant to anchor the space, but we were not having much success on what that would be. Connecting with Mary was invaluable. She spent time with us to really get to know



The completed artwork in the Farms home. Photo courtesy of Lani Martin

our tastes and style and that helped guide us to Edvarda’s work.”

Oslo-native Braanaas, who divides her time between Norway and L.A., began her career in Italy, where she says she first truly experienced beauty. For her, becoming an artist wasn’t a choice. It was a natural evolution. After completing her education in art and art history, Edvarda’s thriving career eventually led her to the U.S. in 2010, to pursue her talents. There she developed a following that propelled her into the internationally renowned artist she is today.

“‘One to Watch’ is a painting that I completed in 2009, at the height of my immersion in the Renaissance style, but that piece wasn’t quite right for Derek and Blair’s space, and so they challenged me to create a male version of it, depicting a man coming home from a party,” Braanaas said.

Braanaas describes herself as a storyteller and for this story, she worked closely with Paragon Art Collective and the Latka-Hess pair to create an entirely original piece. She drew inspiration from the mythological figure of Adonis, the designs of Tom Ford and the illustrations of J.C. Leyendecker to create the perfect story in oil for her new clients. The resulting piece is titled “Manners Maketh Man” and it has taken its rightful place as the centerpiece — and conversation starter — for all dining experiences at the Latka-Hess residence.

“Finding art is a personal process and commissioning original art is even more so,” Latka said. “Working with Edvarda has been an incredible journey for us and ‘Manners Maketh Man’ has certainly made our home more complete.”

With Wysocki’s vast network of artists of all price ranges and styles, she has had numerous successes in finding the right work to reflect the tastes and personalities of their new owners. Paragon Art Collective is ready to help you begin your own personal journey through the world of original art. Wysocki is active on Instagram [@paragonartcollective](#) or can be contacted via email at paragonartcollective@gmail.com.

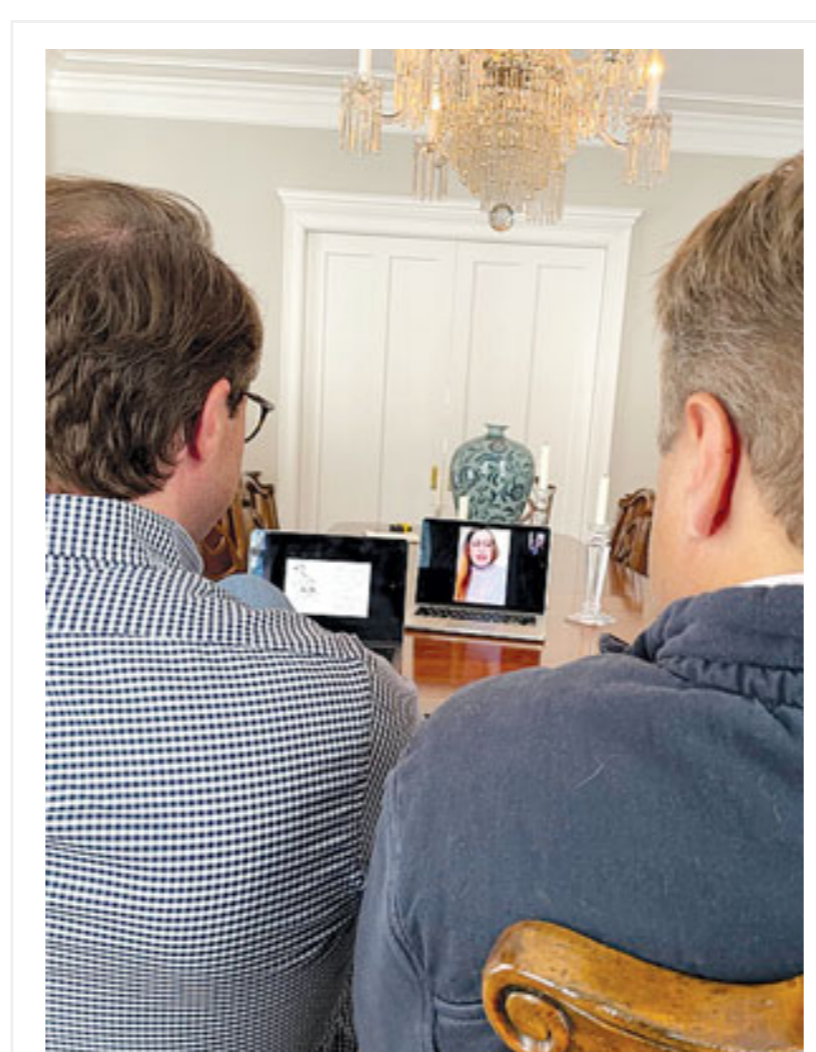


Photo courtesy of Mary Wysocki

Derek Latka and Blair Hess collaborate with artist Edvarda Braanaas via Zoom from Norway to Grosse Pointe.

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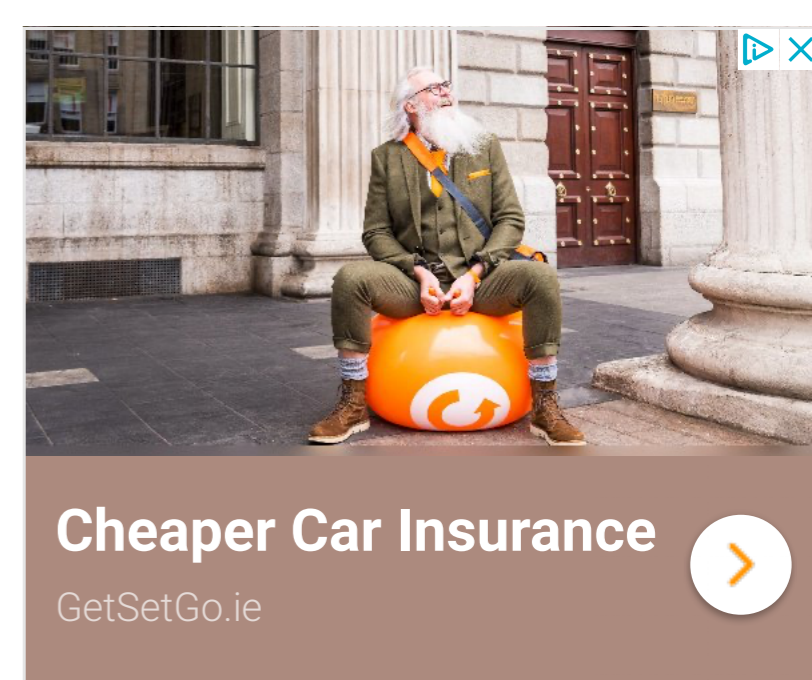
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