ANTIQUES TRADE GAZETTE

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The portal to a secret past

Portrait miniatures can pack in plenty of hidden messages says specialist ahead of a dedicated exhibition

by Stewart Cumiskey



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Her parents took the young Rutherford to Hever Castle in Kent, because she was particularly interested in Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Once the seat of the Boleyn family, the 14th century castle was hosting an exhibition which featured a loaned portrait miniature, purported to be of Anne Boleyn. In many ways, this experience sowed the seeds for what would become Rutherford's flowering vocation.

She began her career working in the Victoria and Albert Museum while completing an MA in Victorian art and architecture. She then set up the portrait miniatures department at auction house Phillips and after the amalgamation of that firm with Bonhams she became departmental director.

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Eternal fascination

It's hard not to wonder what was it

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Some historians can be very sniffy about historical fiction, but Rutherford is open to enjoying it, especially when crafted by careful hands. "So much of history is filling in the gaps that I feel as long as it's not too far-fetched I can accept it. I'm an awful companion for anything historical on TV though – I'm always complaining about Tudor teeth looking too good."



Emma Rutherford was recently interviewed for the ATG's 'Dealer's Diary'. The double-page feature explores Emma's interest in history from a young age and the current major miniatures exhibition at Compton Verney which she co-curated: 'The Reflected Self: Portrait Miniatures 1540-1850'.

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