

A troubled TRAVELLER



Richard Dadd (1817-1886) Sketch of an Idea for Crazy Jane, 1855. Watercolour on paper 35.5 x 25.4 cm. LDBTH 209. © Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust Photograph reproduced by permission of the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust

From Caravaggio to Francis Bacon, via Gauguin and a fair few others, the life and times of the great artists have always been the source of much debate and discussion, writes Will Gore.

Victorian artist Richard Dadd, famed for his 'fairy paintings', is one whose eventful life and times have attracted plenty of attention and critical conjecture – and when looking at the details of his biography you can understand why.

Dadd was one of the most important artists of the Victorian age but spent much of his career in psychiatric hospitals, or as they were then known, lunatic asylums.

From a young age he displayed a bold imagination, creating his famed fairy paintings before a tour of the Middle East triggered the onset of a mental illness that led him to kill his father upon his return to England.

Dadd was committed to Bethlem Hospital and, subsequently, Broadmoor, where he continued to work as an artist, creating haunting images that combined bold imaginative leaps with the most delicate of miniaturist techniques.

Works from the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust, West London Mental Health NHS Trust and private collections have now been brought together for a new exhibition that charts Dadd's early career, travels to Europe and the Middle East, mental illness and work created while at Bethlem and Broadmoor Hospitals.

Dr Nicholas Tromans,

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Arts and leisure



Richard Dadd (1817-1886) Portrait of Sir Thomas Phillips in Turkish Dress, 1842/3 Watercolour on paper, 17.4 x 25.3 cm. LDBTH 774. © Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust Photograph reproduced by permission of the Bethlem Art and History Collections Trust

whose new book, Richard Dadd: The Artist and the Asylum, will be published in July, says that while Dadd's story presents "a fascinating case study in the history of psychiatry", trying to find manifestations of his illnesses in the paintings is a futile exercise.

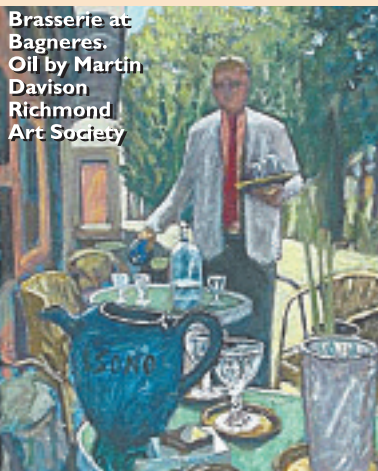
He adds: "When Dadd first became popular in the 1960s his biography gave him this romantic appeal. Yet many people have tried to interpret his illness through his work but it doesn't get them very far. His art might be eccentric

and mysterious but it is not particularly mad."

To complement the exhibition, young people with disabilities who attend the Orleans House Gallery's regular Octagon group have worked with artist Ashley Davies to create a collaborative work inspired by Dadd's famous fairy paintings.

The exhibition runs at Orleans House House Gallery from May 28 to October 2. Admission is free.

For more information, visit richmond.gov.uk/orleans_house_gallery.



Brasserie at Bagneres. Oil by Martin Davison Richmond Art Society

The Richmond Art Society's Spring Exhibition is set to be unveiled at the Vestry House in Paradise Road, Richmond, with Zac Goldsmith, MP for Richmond Park and North Kingston, formally opening the show at lunchtime on Sunday.

The exhibition will be open to the public from tomorrow and visitors will have the opportunity to see plenty of special art.

More than 200 pieces will be on display in a variety of media including paintings, drawings, sculpture and ceramics.

The works have been done by 65 of the society's 200 members, who include

Exhibitions

professional artists, talented enthusiasts, art teachers and lecturers.

Everything is for sale and at reasonable prices and visitors can vote for their favourite work – even if they don't buy it – and the artist receiving the most votes will win the Society's Spring 2011 Award.

The exhibition will run until May 30 with opening hours of 11am to 7pm (6pm on the final day).

Admission is free. To find out more visit richmondartsociety.com.



Environment versus Progress by Marcus Harvey

This week the fourth International Garden Photographer of the Year (IGPOTY) exhibition opened at Kew Gardens.

This outdoor exhibition, located next to the Pavilion Restaurant, showcases the winning images and finalists from the fourth IGPOTY competition.

They will be on show at the Royal Botanic Gardens until September 25, before travelling to other venues across the UK.

Visitors can walk among more than 90 enlarged photographs which have been divided into seven categories, including People in the Garden, Wildflowers and Trees.

Visit igpoty.com.