

Psychiatry in pictures

CHOSEN BY ROBERT HOWARD



Fantasie Egyptienne (1865), Richard Dadd.



Sir Thomas Phillips in Turkish Dress (1842/3), Richard Dadd.



Sir Thomas Phillips in Arab Dress (1842/3), Richard Dadd.

Three pictures by Richard Dadd have been chosen to open this column, which will continue as a monthly feature of the *Journal*. Richard Dadd (1817–86) was commissioned to accompany the Welsh lawyer Sir Thomas Phillips on a 10-month tour of Europe and the Middle East in 1842. While on a ship from Alexandria to Malta, Dadd became convinced that Phillips was the devil in disguise, playing at cards for the Captain's soul. He returned home alone, believing that he was persecuted by the devil and that his actions were controlled by Osiris. Three months later he killed his father, believing him too to be the devil in disguise. Dadd was then confined for the rest of his life, first at Bethlem and then at Broadmoor, where he continued to paint and draw. *Portrait of Sir Thomas Phillips in Turkish Dress* and *Portrait of Sir Thomas Phillips in Arab Dress* were made either during the Middle East journey or in the period between Dadd's return and the murder. The enormous gun had been purchased specially to shoot crocodiles on the Nile, but proved ineffective against their tough skins. *Fantasie Egyptienne*, painted in 1865, was presumably based on Dadd's recollections of his travels and typifies the fine brush work of his watercolours. The figure at the front of the group seems to be Phillips; the subject of Dadd's first reported psychotic symptom and apparently still an important part of his internal preoccupations. Pictures are from the collection of the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum. From 9 to 20 July these and other watercolours by Dadd, together with many other works from the Bethlem collection, will be on show in an exhibition 'Committed Art', at Peter Nahum at the Leicester Galleries, 5 Ryder Street, London SW1Y 6PY. Open Monday–Friday 10.00a.m.–5.30p.m.



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