



Richard Dadd

Beyond Bedlam

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- Victorian artist Richard Dadd constructed fairytale worlds and highly original works of art. His creativity never ceased – rather, it flourished from within the confines of Bethlem and Broadmoor
- Published to accompany an exhibition at the Royal Academy, London, from July 25th to October 25th, 2026, bringing together more than 60 works that track Dadd's life and career – art that was as radical and imaginative in his time as it is today

Richard Dadd (1817–1876) is perhaps best known for two things: his highly detailed fairy paintings and his incarceration for patricide. In 1843, as a young man, having suffered a schizophrenic attack during a tour of the Middle East, he murdered his father and fled to France, where he attacked another traveler before his arrest and confession. He spent the rest of his life in London's Bethlem Royal Hospital and then Broadmoor Hospital in Berkshire. Throughout these 40-plus years in asylums he painted constantly: he made *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke* (Tate), his most famous work, between 1855 and 1864. This new account of his life and art by the leading authority on the artist examines the legacy of one of the most fascinating figures of the Victorian era.

Nicholas Tromans, curator of this exhibition, has written widely on 19th-century British art. **Sarah Thomas** is Senior Lecturer at the School of Historical Studies, Birkbeck, University of London. **Cora Gilroy-Ware** is Associate Professor in the History of Art at St Peter's College, Oxford. **Robert Howard** is Professor of Old Age Psychiatry in the UCL Division of Psychiatry, London. **Natasha Fyffe** is Interim Assistant Curator at the Royal Academy.

