

Fairytale Summer

Family fun

Attention all fairies, sprites, pixies and goblins! Families can sprinkle some magic on their summer with a visit to Watts Gallery's Artists' Village.

The Compton gallery hosts a clutch of events inspired by the Victorian fascination with fairies and fantasy.

The Fairy King and Queen invite you to the Watts Fairy Fair on Saturday, 11th July, from 11am to 4pm. Visitors aged 16 years and under can make the most of free entry to make woodland wands, design wings and hear stories from the Fairy King and Queen. Create willow fairy houses with willow artist Louise Arthur and hunt for fairies in the Watts Gallery woodland.

Until November, Watts hosts *The Art of Bedlam: Richard Dadd*. This is the first major exhibition in more than 40 years to explore the life and career of Richard Dadd (1817–86), one of the most fascinating artists of the Victorian era remembered for his depictions of fairies and other supernatural subjects, rendered with minute detail. Returning from a tour of the Middle East in the 1840s, Dadd succumbed to a psychotic illness which resulted in him being retained in Bethlem and Broadmoor asylums for the rest of his life. Dadd would never cease to work as

an artist and it was during this time that he created some of his most extraordinary and celebrated paintings. But as a "criminal lunatic", and with an audience consisting primarily of his doctors and attendants, Dadd only received the acclaim his work merited after his death.

This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to see the artist's two most celebrated paintings, *Contradiction: Oberon and Titania*, 1854–8 (private collection) and *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke*, c.1855–64 (Tate), displayed together. A series of tours and talks accompany the exhibition.

Also make a date to watch *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, filmed in 1935, on Wednesday, 5th August (7.30-9.30pm, £7.50/£6.50 concessions) and a Make! event to create an animated fairyland, July 28th-31st.

● Visit www.wattsgallery.org.uk or call **01483 810235** to book and for more information about these and other fairy highlights!



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