

## Psychiatry in pictures

EDITED BY ALLAN BEVERIDGE

Do you have an image, preferably accompanied by 100 to 200 words of explanatory text, that you think would be suitable for Psychiatry in Pictures? Submissions are very welcome and should be sent direct to Dr Allan Beveridge, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0SU, UK.



Javier Rodriguez (b. 1975). *Malinconia*. Commissioned for the Conference on 'Depression: Brain Causes, Body Consequences', in London, 2–3 April 2007, by Carmine M. Pariante. Text by Mathew Hurrell.

*Malinconia*, by Venezuelan artist Javier Rodriguez, deals with one of the most prominent mental health issues of recent times: depression. *Malinconia* is the Italian word for melancholy. Depression and melancholia can be viewed as one and the same thing.

The piece is a collage based on the Jan van Eyck painting *Portrait of a Man with a Turban*, a famous work of the Northern Renaissance. From the mouth down the picture is untouched retaining the classic Renaissance pose and stoic expression. But from the nose up the picture is a distortion: a confused jumble of images. This image of the Renaissance and all it entails – discovery, progress and a greater understanding of the universe – is juxtaposed with images of confusion and doubt, perfectly encapsulating the milieu that so often leads to melancholy: that greater knowledge leads not to greater understanding and certainty, but instead to more questions and uncertainty.

The most powerful part of the piece is the man's eyes. Slightly off-centre, they are where the face first becomes distorted. His eyes are the windows to his melancholia, their downward slant conveying his angst.

Peering from within the folds of the turban are four eyes, indicating a strong influence of the surrealist movement, who themselves were influenced by psychoanalysis.

Rodriguez's works are intricate compositions made from antique books. This mixture of old materials and modern technique perfectly encapsulates his sensibility of classic ideas in a contemporary context. Please visit <http://www.javierrodriguez.co.uk> to see his work.