

Psychiatry in pictures

CHOSEN BY ROBERT HOWARD



The Anger Within (1993)
Elise Pacquette (née Warriner),
b. 1968.

Elise Pacquette suffered from severe and at times life-threatening anorexia nervosa between 1986 and 1997 and painted this image during her final year at art school. 'The real element of the painting is the incredible contrast between the somewhat passive outside image of the person and its contrast with the inside which holds all the emotion'. As the title suggests, the picture is an expression of her anger during the illness, hidden within a formless bubble of a body without arms or legs and with only a line for a mouth. 'This is all of the outside or peripheral bits of me that could express emotion and which are shut down. Inside is turmoil. Everything is happening here. Emotions are bubbling up. My anger was important. It gave me energy and allowed me to do things and masked my fear, frustration and loneliness. It allowed me to express the way I was feeling in a way that I could use as a tool against other people. If I showed how lonely I was, people would come to try and get close to me, to try to change me. I didn't want that'. The anger is a hidden monstrous presence of which only the artist has awareness. 'It is all inside. Nothing of that can be seen on the outside. It is as if all the senses are on the inside'. Elise Pacquette is now completely well and working in the theatre and with the deaf. The painting is in the collection of the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum, Monks Orchard Road, Kent BR3 3BX (Telephone 020 8776 4537). Thanks to Elise Pacquette for giving permission to reproduce her picture.

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