

## 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.



Arthur Braun (1906–1977) *Madonna in the Ruins*

Text by Dr David Milnes. *Maria en den Ruinen* was painted at the prisoner of war camp in Castleford, Yorkshire in 1946 by Arthur Braun, a captured German soldier. Before the war Braun had trained in the *neue Sachlichkeit* ('new objectivity') style and in the camp he painted with bitumen and powder paints mixed with linseed oil, his canvas being a bed-sheet from the local convent. The painting reflects a tragic period in the artist's life. Traumatized by his experiences fighting on the Russian front and then being taken prisoner during the allied invasion of France, he was transported to America where he received the news of his wife's death during the bombing of Freiburg. The diary of a fellow prisoner of war in America describes him as being in a 'state of shock'.

Mental imagery is associated with both post-traumatic shock and grief. The face of this Madonna bears a striking resemblance to his wife, the mountains and ruins to the remains of his home city of Freiburg. The careful composition, mixing and laying down of pigment would have acted as a form of graded exposure to haunting memories. Deprived of a body and funeral ceremony Braun was able to sublimate his grief through the symbolic act of laying her image to rest upon a bed sheet, the artistic process acting as the catalyst for his emotions. Painting owned by Dr David Milnes.