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Cover picture

Psychopathic Ward (c. 1939).
 Robert Riggs (1896–1969).

Around 1940, the pharmaceutical company Smith, Kline and French commissioned Riggs, a well-known lithographer and eminent commercial artist, to make a set of four lithographs on the theme of contemporary medical practice and the care of the insane. The sponsor intended these to be sold as reproductions to physicians, presumably to hang in their offices. But Riggs's grim representation of bodies distorted by the violence of their mental anguish would not seem to lend itself to interior decoration. Are we observing a macabre ballet rehearsal, or a dungeon scene from a gothic fantasy? Interestingly, the composition is almost a mirror-image of that in Goya's *The Madhouse* (see February 2008 *British Journal of Psychiatry*) and was certainly a composite derived from many observations on the wards, rather than a literal representation. Text by Andrew Morris. Image courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



We are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the *Journal* and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk