

SARAH BIFFIN EXHIBITION AT THE HOLBURNE MUSEUM, BATH

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023



One of history's most resolute, entrepreneurial and accomplished miniature painters, Sarah Biffin (or Biffen) (1784-1850) was born with the condition "phocomelia", described on her baptism record as "born without arms and legs". She trained herself to paint despite her parents' misgivings, using her mouth or a paintbrush tied to her sleeve (as in this self portrait). She was

dubbed “the World’s Eighth Wonder”, and her live painting sessions once drew huge crowds; she showed at the Royal Academy and sold her pictures to George IV.

However, her remarkable story had been largely overlooked by historians until [the exhibition last year at Philip Mould Gallery](#), curated by Emma Rutherford and Ellie Smith. Following this, The Holburne Museum, Bath are to hold [the first major museum exhibition to examine Biffin's life and work](#). The Holburne presents an incisive and comprehensive picture of Biffin with a discussion of her work within the context of her life and times. It will include portraits, still lifes and ephemera relating to her career.

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