

# RICHARD WAWRO

Scotland

1952 - 2006



Richard was born in 1952. When he was three years old his parents were told that he was moderately to severely retarded. He also showed considerable autistic behavior with the characteristic obsession for sameness, withdrawal, walking in circles, spinning objects endlessly, and a preoccupation with the piano striking a single key for hours at a time. He did not have useful language until the age of 11. He required surgery for cataracts on both eyes during childhood.

When Richard was twelve years old, Prof. Marian Bohusz-Szyszko of the Polish School of Art in London described Richard's works as an "incredible phenomenon rendered with the precision of a mechanic and the vision of a poet."

Like other savants Richard had a phenomenal memory. He remembered where he drew each picture and had each of them precisely dated in his mind. He used no models for his drawings, but drew from images seen only once, on television or in a book at one of the bookshops he loved to visit. He had perfect recall but often added his own touches, interpretations or improvisation to the images. He seemed especially fascinated, and facile, with light - its sources and its dispersion - and the tones he uses to capture lights and shadows are masterful.

Richard had his first exhibition in Edinburgh when he was 17 years old. He is now known worldwide. One of his exhibitions was opened by Margaret Thatcher when she was Minister of Education. She owns several of his pictures as did the late Pope John Paul II. A documentary by Dr. Lawrence A. Becker; "*With Eyes Wide Open*" had its world premiere in 1983. Richard died on February 22nd, 2006 after a brave fight against cancer. <http://www.wawro.net/biography.html>

*A videotape entitled A Real Rainman, Portrait of an Autistic Savant was also produced by Dr. Becker. For more information about Richard Wawro, his art and the documentary film or videotape, contact Dr. Laurence A. Becker at Creative Learning Environments, 507 Park Blvd, Austin, Texas 78751 or by email at [rbecker64@aol.com](mailto:rbecker64@aol.com). Go to [www.fierceloveparents.com](http://www.fierceloveparents.com) for information about a new documentary FIERCE LOVE and ART.*