

Victorian Rebel

MARIANNE NORTH 1x60 HD



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Perhaps one of the greatest female explorers of all time, Marianne North is one of only a few female scientists to travel the world during the Victorian era. Fired by a passion for painting rare plants, North formed a close relationship with Charles Darwin, discovered four plants that were named after her, met the emperor of Brazil and traveled to undiscovered territory in Borneo. Ultimately, she created an extraordinary artistic legacy of over a thousand botanical paintings at Kew Gardens in London—the only permanent solo exhibition by a female artist in Britain.

Victorian Rebel follows in Marianne North's footsteps and re-lives some of her most jaw-dropping experiences, including being caught in severe mudslides in Brazil as she trekked into the Amazon, suffering rheumatic fever in Japan and almost starving to death, smoking opium in India while stranded by floods during a cholera epidemic, suffering murderous paranoid delusions in the Seychelles and meeting the President of the United States at the White House. All these extraordinary adventures were driven by her obsession to paint plants in their natural habitats.

North's high society background resembles a Jane Austen novel; she was brought up amongst renowned artists, including Edward Lear who spent time at her family home, and was introduced to well-known scientists who inspired her desire to travel and paint. Her independent wealth and wide-ranging set of well-connected friends meant she could travel the world and stay with members of British society, including the Rajah of Sarawak and the Viceroy of India. Just like a rebellious Austen daughter, Marianne was extremely independent and begrudged "time wasted by card leaving, dressing up and missionaries."

Using Marianne's wealth of handwritten memoirs, personal letters and paintings, as well as stunning dramatic reconstructions, *Victorian Rebel* offers viewers a fascinating combination of the art, science and drama that defined and compelled the life of Marianne North—an intrepid Victorian rebel who led the life she wanted to lead.

CREDITS

Presenter: Emilia Fox

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