



Charities condemn gallery over show on 'repugnant' child abuser

AN ART gallery came under fire last night for staging a major exhibition about an artist who abused his two daughters and slept with his sister.

The retrospective of Eric Gill's work includes explicit drawings, prints and sculptures of his daughters, Elizabeth and Petra. Gill died in 1940, aged 58, and it later emerged that the girls had suffered years of sexual abuse at his hands. He also had an incestuous relationship with

his younger sister Gladys, and conducted sexual experiments on his dog.

The show, which opened yesterday at the Ditchling Museum Of Art And Craft in East Sussex, features a nude drawing of Elizabeth from 1927 and a woodblock showing a naked Petra from 1921.

Rape charities called the show 'repugnant'. Fay Maxted, chief executive of the Survivors Trust, said: 'The gallery is showing a real lack of understanding of the impact of sexual abuse on children and the responsibility we have not to

promote it or normalise it. If you add the financial element, it becomes even more distasteful.'

Some residents in Ditchling, where Gill lived between 1906 and 1924, also criticised the museum. Jazz musician Herbie Flowers, 79, said: 'They might as well put a Rolf Harris exhibition on the week after and a Jimmy Savile and Gary Glitter one after that.'

Museum director Nathaniel Hepburn said: 'We have spoken to some of those in the village who raised concerns and once they have heard more about the exhibition then they have been supportive of our approach, even if they still object to Gill.'

EXPLICIT:
Artist Eric Gill

