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# New exhibition seeks to explain trauma through art

Trauma: Built to Break is on display at the Science Gallery in Dublin from Friday

Thu, Nov 19, 2015, 17:00

Dick Ahlstrom



Jennifer Lorigan, mediator at the Science Gallery in Dublin, with a display by artist Katharine Dowson titled Memory of a Brain Malformation. Photograph: Brenda Fitzsimons/The Irish Times

A woman who was stalked for 25 years turned this [trauma](#) into healing by depicting it through art, according to a new exhibition.

The terrible impact of physical and psychological trauma is explored in a new show on display from Friday at the [Science Gallery](#) at [Trinity College Dublin](#).

“People were reflecting on their own traumas but also talk about their recovery. What the exhibition is really about is resilience and recovery,” said gallery director [Lynn Scarff](#).

Trauma: Built to Break is the name selected for the exhibition, which includes the input of artists, engineers, neuroscientists and humanities scholars.

“Its themes lie at the boundary between brain and body, pain and survival, individual and collective,” Ms Scarff said.

The exhibition shows how trauma can occur in many forms and also demonstrates that it can be overcome.

The organisers are aware of the significance of the timing of the show, which opens only a week after the atrocities in Paris.

“We are cognisant of that in terms of the exhibition,” Ms Scarff said.

No one seeks trauma but it can find you, as illustrated by one display, a beautiful piece of glass that depicts the presence of a tumour in the brain of artist Katharine Dowson’s cousin.

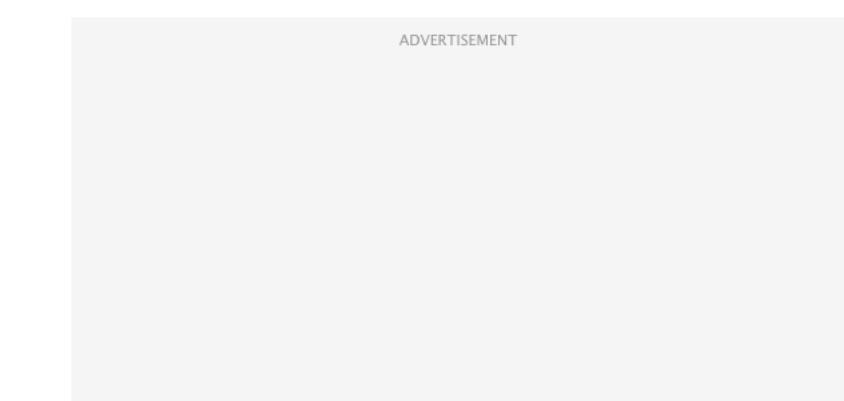
A laser was used to engrave an accurate depiction of the brain into the centre of a heavy block of glass for the piece, which is called Memory of a Brain Malformation.

The severe trauma induced by torture is explored by Trinity College Dublin neuroscientist Shane O’Mara, in an exhibit called Brain Under Stress.

O’Mara has just completed a book on why torture doesn’t work despite its widespread use across the world.

He mapped out the torture schedule of Guantanamo detainee number 063 over a 50-day period, as catalogued by his torturers.

## Project Syria



A must-see at the exhibition is a virtual reality exhibit called [Project Syria](#), developed by Nonny de la Peña, CEO of the Emblematic Group.

It was used at the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2013 to help the assembled leaders understand the traumatic events taking place in Syria.

Visitors are asked to don virtual reality goggles that immediately put you onto a street in Damascus.

Children are playing on the streets and people are browsing the fruit markets when a rocket hits.

The explosion leaves everything shrouded in dust as injured people cry for help.

Another powerful exhibit is Sightlines, Principals and Supernumerary by [David Cotterrell](#), a collection of powerful photographs shot in a battlefield operating theatre as injured soldiers are brought in for treatment.

The work references painters famous for their use of dark and light contrasts, as viewers are transfixed by the wounds arising from combat.

Cotterrell later followed up on each doctor and soldier, photographing them in order to create a continuum from initial trauma through to eventual rehabilitation and healing.

Trauma: Built to Break opens on Friday and runs until February 21st, 2016.

More information is available [online](#).


Topics: [David Cotterrell](#) [Katharine Dowson](#) [Lynn Scarff](#) [Shane O Mara](#)

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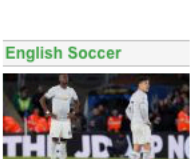
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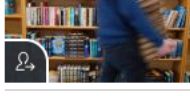


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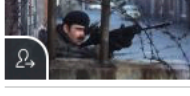
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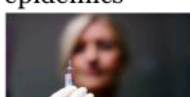
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