The highly successful Inside Trinity documentary series trended on Twitter each night it aired on RTÉ in September and October 2016. Filmed throughout the 2015/16 academic year, the series offered a fascinating glimpse of a great Irish institution at work. The cameras captured the whole gamut of life: study, teaching and learning, research, sports and much more.

On-going annual synergies with national events include Trinity welcoming the public on campus for Culture Night, Open House Dublin, and Front façade lighting up green to celebrate St Patrick’s Day, and red to welcome in the Chinese New Year in February.

‘PROBE: Research Uncovered’, a pop-up festival returned in September with a packed programme of talks, experiments, and interactive workshops showcasing the best of Irish research. In Front Square, over 3,000 visitors contributed to live research experiments and joined workshops dealing with a range of topics, from perception and intimacy to food security and global migration. PROBE, a collaboration between Trinity and Science Gallery Dublin, was part of European Researchers’ Night, taking place in cities across the continent.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engaging wider society is encapsulated in Trinity’s mission and Strategic Plan, and happens on a number of different levels including organising public lectures and events, making research available online, media coverage, social media activity, and welcoming the public on campus.
Sponsored by the Provost and unveiled in May 2015, the Trinity Creative Challenge award was established to catalyse the creative and cultural arts in Dublin city and to support the development of the creative and cultural industries.
The Centre for Women in Science & Engineering Research (WiSER) in February hosted Dr Catherine Vidal, a neurobiologist and global expert in the societal implications of sex and gender, for an intriguing public lecture which posed the question: Does the brain have a sex/gender?

To mark the centenary of the Irish Convention, Trinity hosted a two-day public symposium in July to examine the aims and legacy of the Convention. It opened with a round table discussion with two former Taoisigh, Bertie Ahern and John Bruton, as well as the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, John Larkin QC.

Looking at ‘Culture and Populism: The Crisis of the Humanities and the Crisis of Western Liberalism,’ Professor Joep Leerssen delivered the Trinity Long Room Hub’s Annual Humanities Horizons Lecture in March.

The second First Up series of lunchtime talks from creative entrepreneurs on ‘breaking through’ took place between January and May 2017. First Up is a collaboration between Science Gallery Dublin and the Trinity Long Room Hub.

Also organised by the Trinity Long Room Hub, the ‘Behind the Headlines’ discussion series offers background analyses to current issues. Among the topics in 2016/17 were: ‘Trump’s America: 60 Days In,’ ‘Abortion in Modern Ireland,’ ‘Syria: The Local and the Global’ and ‘BREXIT, Brussels and the Big Apple.’

Former Taoiseach, John Bruton spoke about the political consequences of Brexit at the annual Henry Grattan lecture in London. The lecture was hosted by the Embassy of Ireland in London in association with the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy.
BELOW – In Case of Emergency exhibition at Science Gallery Dublin
Exhibitions

The Long Room and Science Gallery Dublin provide Trinity with world class spaces for innovative public exhibitions. Four exhibitions were held in Science Gallery Dublin, curated by Trinity staff and guest curators: DESIGN AND VIOLENCE, HUMANS NEED NOT APPLY, SOUND CHECK and IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.

A digital exhibition, exploring JM Synge’s most celebrated play - The Playboy of the Western World - was launched on its 110th anniversary. It was curated by the School of English, as a collaboration between Trinity’s Library (which holds the collection of Synge’s literary manuscripts) and the Google Cultural Institute.

Trinity marked the 350th anniversary of Jonathan Swift’s birth this year with a display of books and manuscripts (including Swift’s death mask) in the Long Room, an international conference, and a collaborative online exhibition drawing on artefacts relevant to Swift from Trinity, St Patrick’s Cathedral, Marsh’s Library, and St Patrick’s Hospital. The Royal Irish Academy and the National Library also collaborated.

Marking the 50th anniversary of The Berkeley Library, a programme of events, beginning early 2017, invited the public to visit the Library and learn more of its remarkable beginnings and role at the heart of the University. The programme includes architectural tours, talks and the screening of the pioneering film ‘Building for Books’ shown in every cinema in Ireland in 1958 as part of a national fundraising campaign for the new Library at the time. Architect, Paul Koralek, who originally designed the iconic modernist building, gave a public interview.

Precious Irish manuscripts from the Dark Ages have been conserved by Trinity following a three-year programme funded by Bank of America Merrill Lynch’s global Art Conservation project. The rarely seen manuscripts from early Christianity have been repaired, analysed and digitised and went on public display together for the first time, unveiled by Trinity’s Chancellor, Dr Mary Robinson, in June. The manuscripts are the Codex Usserianus Primus, the Garland of Howth, the Book of Dimma, and the Book of Mulling. They join the Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow and the Book of Armagh to form the preeminent collection of early Irish manuscripts in the world.

An exhibition on the life and work of Ellen Hutchins, the trailblazing young woman credited with being ‘Ireland’s first female botanist,’ took place in the Old Anatomy Building, and the Ellen Hutchins Festival in Bantry, displaying Ellen’s material from the Herbarium of Trinity’s Botany department.

The Reformation quincentenary (1517-2017) was marked in February with a two day theological symposium, organised by the Lutheran Church in Ireland and the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology and a travelling exhibition, the ‘Reformation Installation’.

The Suas 8x8 Photographic Exhibition was displayed outside the Berkeley Library as part of a development-focused arts festival organised by Suas Educational Development with Suas Trinity, DU Amnesty and Trinity Global Development Society. The images focused on asylum seekers to spread awareness about their crisis.

Trinity continued its commitment to playing a leading role in helping to catalyse the creative and cultural arts in Dublin City. The Trinity Creative Challenge fosters the development of ambitious and innovative interdisciplinary projects and works. Five new innovative projects were showcased across the University campus from five awardees: Clare Lymer, Dead Centre, Genomic Gastronomy, Joe Caslin, and Adrien Tien and Richard Duckworth.

Joe Caslin’s large-scale piece of artwork, installed in Front Square, was the first of a three-part series entitled ‘The Volunteers’ which aims to highlight the importance of volunteerism in some of the most pressing issues in Irish society including drug addiction, mental health, and direct provision.

Beyond the campus

A series of short films featuring people with an intellectual disability, specifically designed for people with ID were produced by the research team from the Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (IDS-TILDA). The films depict research findings on the complex and unique health and social challenges facing Ireland’s population who are ageing with an intellectual disability, through the lens of those who directly experience the challenges.

‘Queen Medb’ was the winning entry of a competition to name the queen bee of Trinity’s newly installed campus beehive. Her name was selected from hundreds of suggestions from people in over 20 different countries in response to a social media competition. Professor of Botany, Jane Stout won the British Ecological Society’s Engagement Award as a leading ‘ecologist who has bridged the gap between ecology and the public.’ She is a leading partner in the development and implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and spearheaded Trinity’s Campus Pollinator Plan.
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