‘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. Over 3,000 visitors came to Front Square and contributed to live research experiments and joined workshops dealing with a range of topics. PROBE, a collaboration between Trinity and Science Gallery Dublin in partnership with the British Council, was part of European Researchers’ Night, taking place in cities across the continent.

The inaugural Registrar’s Civic Engagement Award, established to recognise exceptional contributions made by staff to civic engagement, was won by School of Engineering Assistant Professors, Kevin Kelly and Conor McGinn. The pair are group leaders in the Robotics and Innovation Lab (RAIL) and were recognised for their contribution to Trinity’s engagement with wider society through their teaching and research, running an Engineering Summer School for girls, and interacting with companies and not-for-profit organisations in their engineering projects. One of their projects was the design of ‘Stevie’ — an elder-care robot and navigation device for people living with intellectual disability.
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Public lectures

Hillary Rodham Clinton, the former US Secretary of State, delivered a public lecture in June in which she addressed the power of young people to shape the future, challenges to democracy and the role of women in politics. Secretary Clinton was awarded an honorary doctorate during her visit.

Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese discussed ‘Ireland-UK relations, past, present and future’ at the annual Henry Grattan lecture in conversation with RTÉ’s Northern editor, Tommie Gorman. The lecture was hosted by the Embassy of Ireland in London in association with the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy.

Prof Margaret MacMillan, Oxford Professor of International History and best-selling author, delivered the annual Trinity Long Room Hub Edmund Burke Lecture on the theme of ‘Sometimes it Matters who is in Power’ in October.

Internationally acclaimed artist Michael Craig-Martin gave a public talk the following month about the ideas that have been expressed through his artwork and teaching at an event hosted by the Trinity Irish Art Research Centre (TRIARC) in association with Trinity’s student-run Visual Arts Society.

The Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science hosted 2018’s Trinity Week with a public programme of lectures, symposia and activities around the theme Energy. Age-Friendly Trinity organised a photo exhibition on ‘Energy at Any Age’ to coincide with the week.

Irish writer Sebastian Barry was among participants in a public reading of the work of Italian author Primo Levi organised by Trinity’s Herzog Centre and Centre for Literary Translation in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture, Dublin to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Trinity.

The Trinity Centre for Asian Studies hosted a series of public lectures as part of the Dublin Chinese New Year Festival with different perspectives on the significance and years of the dog in Chinese culture.


‘Who reads poetry?’ was the provocative question explored by Ireland’s Professor of Poetry Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin at the annual Ireland Chair of Poetry lecture as part of the post’s public engagement programme.

Year Zero, a symposium celebrating the 40th anniversary of The Clash’s historic concert at Trinity took place in October. When The Clash played in Trinity they were fresh from a cancelled show and mini riot at Belfast’s Ulster Hall the night before. Bringing the white heat of UK Punk Rock to an Irish audience for the first time, the Trinity gig was a seminal moment in the Irish music scene.

Exhibitions

World class spaces for innovative public exhibitions are provided by the Old Library’s Long Room and Science Gallery Dublin. In 2017/18, Science Gallery’s three shows IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, FAKE and LIFE AT THE EDGES attracted over 374,650 visitors.

The first major Irish exhibition on Oscar Wilde, one of Trinity’s most famous alumni, featuring letters, photographs,
theatre programmes, books and memorabilia was on display in the Long Room in October. Entitled ‘From Decadence to Despair’, the exhibition and accompanying online exhibition mapped out the Anglo-Irish playwright’s meteoric rise to fame and also his dramatic fall from grace. Actor and writer Rupert Everett participated in a public interview to mark the opening.

Marking the centenary of women’s suffrage in Ireland, an inter-institutional online exhibition - Violence, ridicule and silence - curated by Trinity’s Library plotted Irish women’s road to the vote in 1918. It highlighted how it was an all-island activity and influenced by events in England; demonstrated how violence and ridicule was used to prevent women from making their voices heard; and illustrated the deep disappointment at the misogynistic 1937 Constitution which reneged on the equality ideals of the early activists.

Also marking the centenary, the Story Spinners: Irish Women and Children’s Books exhibition showed the central role that women played in Irish history, politics, and culture, including literary arts. It offered a glimpse into the wealth of material produced for young readers over several centuries and formed part of Children’s Books Ireland’s nationwide BOLD GIRLS initiative, which seeks to celebrate strong, confident, intelligent, brave women and girls in children’s books.

Precious Irish-language manuscripts were showcased at an exhibition in May including medieval Brehon law texts detailing bee-keeping laws and the Irish ‘book of genesis’. Trinity Library’s collection of over 200 medieval and early modern manuscripts written in the Irish language is ranked as one of the most important collections in the world.

Another exhibition on display in the Long Room was one of 70 handmade books written and illustrated by Dublin primary schoolchildren. It marked the culmination of the Bookmarks programme which sees pupils write and illustrate their own books over two months with the help of authors, artists and children’s book specialists from Trinity. Inspiring children to become the next generation of storytellers, artists and creatives, Bookmarks is organised by the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP) which supports students from under-represented backgrounds to progress to further education.

The ‘War and Revolution: Framing 100 years of Cultural Opposition in Ukraine’ exhibition in the Trinity Long Room Hub looked at Ukraine’s complex historical legacies, as well as various modes of cultural resistance through striking works produced by several generations of writers and artists.

The Suas 8x8 Photographic Exhibition was displayed outside the Berkeley Library as part of a development-focused arts festival organised by STAND with Suas, Amnesty and Q Soc – Trinity LGBT. With the theme ‘Identity & Discrimination’ issues surrounding LGBT rights, women’s rights, ageism, health status, immigrant rights, ethnicity, religion and poverty were explored.
Beyond the campus

Trinity called on the nation to get creative and be inspired by one of Ireland’s greatest cultural treasures, the Book of Kells, in the first Trinity Book of Kells Creative competition. A phenomenal 1,500 budding artists and writers, aged from 3 to 83 entered, representing students from 52 primary schools and 42 secondary schools, from every county in Ireland, as well as the US and UK.

A ground-breaking project, ‘Beyond 2022: Ireland’s Virtual Record Treasury’ which will digitally recreate the building and contents of the Public Record Office of Ireland, destroyed by fire at Dublin’s Four Courts at the outset of the Irish Civil War, was launched in February. The Irish Research Council funded collaboration led by Trinity with its four archival partners – The National Archives of Ireland, The National Archives (UK), The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and The Irish Manuscripts Commission - has the potential to transform how we understand Ireland’s past and will be of great interest to the Irish diaspora and anyone tracing their Irish roots.

This year Trinity partnered with The Irish Times on an exciting Citizen Science initiative. Members of the public were encouraged to contribute by answering online questionnaires around different scientific topics, with their responses then used to inform real research. A new online questionnaire appeared every few weeks, alongside an article penned by a scientist, to raise awareness of this increasingly important approach to research.
LEFT – Cara Pilbeam, aged 15, from St Vincent’s, Dundalk, Co Louth, 1st prize winner of the secondary school section in the Trinity Book of Kells Creative competition

BELOW – Members of the public enjoying LIFE AT THE EDGES exhibition at Science Gallery Dublin
→ To read the full publication, please click here