

PRESS RELEASE

JUNE 2018

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Exhibition bringing together art and medicine to reflect on the human heart opens at RWA and Centrespace Gallery in Bristol



Images: Sofie Layton, *Rubik's Heart I*, 2018; Workshop at Great Ormond Street Hospital, *Under the Microscope*, 2015; Sofie Layton, *I feel like I am holding snow in my hands*, 2018. Photos: Stephen King

"Rich and beautiful. A celebration of medicine, technology and life!"

Exhibition visitor, Great North Museum

June 2018: On 14 July 2018 a new exhibition, *The Heart of the Matter* will open at the Royal West of England Academy (RWA) and Centrespace Gallery in Bristol. Merging art and medicine to reflect on the human heart with artworks inspired by patients with congenital heart conditions, their families and clinicians, this exhibition invites the public to discover the extraordinary nature of this complex organ. The exhibition is a collaboration between British artist Sofie Layton, bioengineer Giovanni Biglino (Senior Lecturer in Biostatistics, Bristol Heart Institute) and health psychologist Jo Wray (Senior Research Fellow in the Cardiorespiratory Division and in the Centre for Outcomes and Experience Research in Children's Health, Illness and Disability at Great Ormond Street Hospital). *The Heart of the Matter* will run 14 July to 19 August 2018 before continuing its tour to London later in the year at the V&A Digital Design Weekend and Copeland Gallery from 31 October to 11 November 2018.

The Heart of The Matter was first conceived by Sofie Layton and Giovanni Biglino in 2015. Since then they have brought together patients with heart conditions from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) in London, the Bristol Heart Institute, and the Adult Congenital & Paediatric Heart Unit of the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle, exploring the heart in workshops with patients as well as scientists, artists, students, clinicians and nurses. Conversations and stories arising from these workshops have in turn inspired artworks that offer insight into the heart's beauty, fragility and resilience, using scientific and artistic methods.

"The work with the artist allowed me to reflect on what my condition meant to me and how it impacted me growing up. This was a good way to mark the transition into being an adult patient"

A patient who took part in the workshop process

The exhibition will be curated across both the RWA and Centrespace Gallery in Bristol, exploring the heart through different lenses – medicine, technology, metaphor and storytelling. The anatomy of the heart and the medical language used are explored and reinterpreted through 3D printed heart models, printed textile diagrams and sound installations, while immersive installations and sculptural forms explore allegorical conceptions of the heart and patient experiences of cardiac care. The artworks reflect on how personal, unique and precious everybody’s heart is to them and on key elements in the journey of cardiac patients, such as the supporting role of the family, the puzzle of complex heart surgery, the sacredness and fragility of life. A large-scale animation represents patients’ narratives using the visual language of advanced medical imaging and a more intimate animation conveys a story of resilience, with an animated soldier floating within a 3D printed heart model. As such, diagnostic tools become vehicles for telling patients’ stories. Admission to the exhibition is free.

Sofie Layton, lead artist says, “The Heart of the Matter has been the most extraordinary personal and artistic journey. Working with patients, parents, scientists and clinicians in a workshop setting, I have listened to people’s metaphorical stories of their heart and in some circumstances, I have watched them discover what their own or their child’s heart looks like.”

“We gathered together the heart narratives of dozens of people, patients, parents, artists, clinicians and scientists,” continues Sofie, “all of whom have participated in a series of day-long creative workshops which explored the medical and metaphorical heart. The images, ideas and stories that emerged from these workshops are extraordinary, beautiful and thought-provoking.”

Giovanni Biglino, Senior Lecturer in Biostatistics, Bristol Heart Institute says, “Being able to take part in creative workshops and listening to other people’s stories, meeting their families and creating something together, gives a complete different connotation to scientific research – it adds an absolutely necessary dimension of humanity.”

“Technology and art can be absolutely complementary in representing the human body,” Giovanni continues. “Today we can describe in exquisite detail the path of blood flow in an artery, but we can also start to unravel the stories that are carried within it and listen to them.”

The Heart of the Matter is produced by Susannah Hall (GOSH Arts), Nicky Petto and Anna Ledgard in association with Artsadmin, and is supported by the Wellcome Trust, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, Above & Beyond, Great Ormond Street Hospital Children’s Charity, NIHR Biomedical Research Centre at University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Bristol and public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. With thanks to RapidformRCA, 3D Life Print and British Heart Foundation.

“To literally hold your own heart model in your hands, to discover its form and size, is transformative.”

Artist Sofie Layton

www.insidetheheart.org

[#heartofthematter](https://twitter.com/heartofthematter)

[View and download the images](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

EXHIBITION DATES & VENUES

14 July–19 August 2018:
RWA Queen's Road, Clifton, BS8 1PX
Tuesdays–Saturdays, 10am–5.30pm
Sundays, 11am–5pm

Centrespace Gallery
6 Leonard Lane, Bristol, BS1 1EA
Tuesdays–Saturdays, 10am–5.30pm
Sundays, 11am–5pm

Admission to the exhibition is free

TOUR DATES

22–23 September
A selection of works from The Heart of the Matter will be included in the Digital Design Weekend at the V&A Museum as part of the London Design Festival.

31 October –11 November
Copeland Gallery, 133 Copeland Rd, London, SE15 3SN

A programme of events including seminars and workshops as well as opportunities to meet the team will run alongside the exhibition.

The exhibition has been shown at Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle (24 March – 6 May 2018).

Website: www.insidetheheart.org
Exhibition hash tag: #heartofthematter

ABOUT SOFIE LAYTON

Artist Sofie Layton's work explores the creative interface between patients and the scientific clinical landscape. Her past work includes site-specific performance, theatre, and installations. Projects include a Wellcome Trust-funded residency at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) (Under the Microscope) and an installation at

Evelina Children Hospital (Bedside Manners). She was artist in residence with Historic Royal Palaces and created The Field of Flowers at Kensington Palace (2007) where 6000 people contributed to ten 3.5-meter metal dandelions to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of the Princess of Wales. Sofie regularly collaborates with other artists, makers and musicians; collaborators include Mark Storer and Anna Ledgard, on projects such as The Barometer of My Heart (2015) and TMA Award winning For the Best (2009/10). She is an independently commissioned artist and has created work for the Blavatnik family's private collection. She is currently leading "The Heart of the Matter", a national project exploring the medical, experiential and metaphorical dimensions of the heart.

www.insidetheheart.org

www.sofielayton.co.uk

"Medical images at first appeared like kinetic abstract paintings to me. But as the eye and mind becomes focused these moving shadows transform into recognisable anatomical forms with rhythmical beats and pulses. The architecture of the body is revealed."

ABOUT GIOVANNI BIGLINO

Giovanni Biglino is a biomedical engineer. He studied at Imperial College London and obtained his PhD in cardiovascular mechanics from the Brunel Institute of Bioengineering. He has carried out research at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and University College London, with the cardiac engineering team, focusing on congenital heart disease. Now he is a Lecturer in Cardiovascular Bioinformatics and Medical Statistics at the Bristol Heart Institute. He has studied biostatistics at Harvard Medical School and has started to enthusiastically explore the world of narrative medicine at Columbia University. His current research is very collaborative, involving cardiologists, surgeons, imagers, psychologists and artists.

"Research is dialogue and this project wouldn't exist without the deep collaboration between its team members, who come from different backgrounds, and many collaborators, patients, health professionals, artists... We must continue the conversation, even when sometimes it feels like speaking different languages, or perhaps just different dialects, because ultimately we meet, somewhere in between, and there something special begins to happen."

ABOUT JO WRAY

Jo Wray is a Health Psychologist in the Cardiorespiratory division and a Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Nursing and Allied Health at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). Jo leads on psychosocial research and patient reported outcomes and experiences. She is involved in multiple research projects both at GOSH and beyond. Key areas of research include quality of life, outcomes of congenital heart disease and surgery, children's health state preferences, transition and the use of qualitative methods to elicit child and family experiences of illness and treatment.

ABOUT RWA

The Royal West of England Academy (RWA) - Bristol's first art gallery – presents local, national and international visual art by foremost artists from the present and past. By bringing contemporary and historic works together in new contexts, and through a programme of learning opportunities for all ages, the RWA aims to inspire and nurture creativity in everybody.

www.rwa.org.uk | Twitter & Instagram: @RWABristol | Facebook

ABOUT CENTRESPACE GALLERY

Centrespace is a thriving community of artists and craftspeople offering both studio space, workshops, events and a gallery space for hire. Centrespace was founded in the late 1970s and has been running as a co-operative since 1987. Centrespace continues to develop creative opportunities for the wider community in the heart of the City of Bristol. Our ethos is to show fresh and interesting work, with an emphasis on encouraging new talent and up and coming artists.

www.centrespacegallery.com | Twitter: @CentrespaceBS1 | Facebook

ABOUT GOSH ARTS

GOSH Arts is the arts programme at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Its award-winning participatory programme, art commissions and temporary exhibitions inspire creativity, create welcoming environments, and offer meaningful cultural opportunities across a variety of art forms for patients, families and staff. GOSH Arts is funded by Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity.

www.gosh.nhs.uk/about-us/our-priorities/go-create-arts-programme

@GOSH_Arts | [Instagram](#)

ABOUT ARTSADMIN

Artsadmin is a producing organisation, which enables artists to create without boundaries, connecting bold interdisciplinary work with local, national and international audiences. The advisory service supports artists at every stage of their development with free advice and opportunities. In London's East End Artsadmin has established at its base Toynbee Studios, a centre for the creation, development and presentation of new work, where, in the rehearsal, performance and meeting spaces, new talent is constantly nurtured. Anna Ledgard is an Artsadmin associate producer.

artsadmin.co.uk | Twitter @artsadm | facebook.com/artsadmin | Instagram @artsadm

ABOUT WELLCOME

Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We're a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations and spark debate.