

THE VITRUVIAN: UNCOVERING THE LAYERS OF CANCER



VINCENT DEVINE (IRISH, b.1986)

“THE VITRUVIAN”

Acrylic on canvas
150 x 150 cms.
Signed and dated verso
Created in Ireland 2023

Commissioned by UCD Conway Institute, University College Dublin

The prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer is a major challenge for us as humans. In November 2022, Vincent Devine collaborated with Professor William Gallagher and other cancer researchers in UCD, along with patient partners, to explore how cancer affects patients and their families: from molecules, to cells, to tissues, to impacts on the whole human body, to personal impact. The result is a series of co-created artworks, ‘The Vitruvian: Uncovering the Layers of Cancer’, which provide a unique insight into how researchers at UCD Conway Institute study cancer through different perspectives and approaches alongside how patients experience this disease. Conversations with both cancer researchers and patient partners have been translated into a set of five paintings by Devine, which incorporate both visual scientific imagery and the human experience of cancer into their design.

THE VITRUVIAN: Main Painting Synopsis

This painting shows in an integrated fashion how researchers study cancer at a whole body, tissue, cellular and molecular level, while also illustrating the inter-twinned journey of those affected by cancer. Devine took the universally recognised image of Leonardo Da Vinci’s “Vitruvian Man” and used it as a vessel to communicate and reflect 21st century cancer research. The Vitruvian has both male and female genders overlapping, co-existing as one. This is to reflect that cancer affects both genders in different and sometimes similar ways. Moving from the head to the feet of The Vitruvian, we see the breath of cancer research work at the UCD Conway Institute symbolically represented. In the original “Vitruvian Man”, there is one circle; however, in Devine’s piece, there are two circles. This is to represent cell division, which is key for both life but can be uncontrolled in the case of cancer.

<https://www.ucd.ie/conway/engagement/publicengagementevents/thevitruvianuncoveringthelayersofcancer/>
Please follow this link for a more detailed analysis of the painting

THE VITRUVIAN: UNCOVERING THE LAYERS OF CANCER



VINCENT DEVINE (IRISH, b.1986)

“THE VITRUVIAN: WHOLE BODY

Acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cms.
Signed and dated verso
Created in Ireland 2023

Commissioned by UCD Conway Institute, University College Dublin; supported by Science Foundation Ireland

In this painting, we see The Vitruvian figure in motion. It is walking forward to symbolise action; the actions and steps the patient, surgeons and researchers must take to intervene and treat the physical body, including the tumours as they present themselves. The Vitruvian wears the patient's scars and highlighted areas indicate areas of the body that are affected symptomatically pre- and post-treatment. The Da Vinci robotic arms surround The Vitruvian, an innovative surgical instrument used to remove tumours.

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VINCENT DEVINE (IRISH, b.1986)

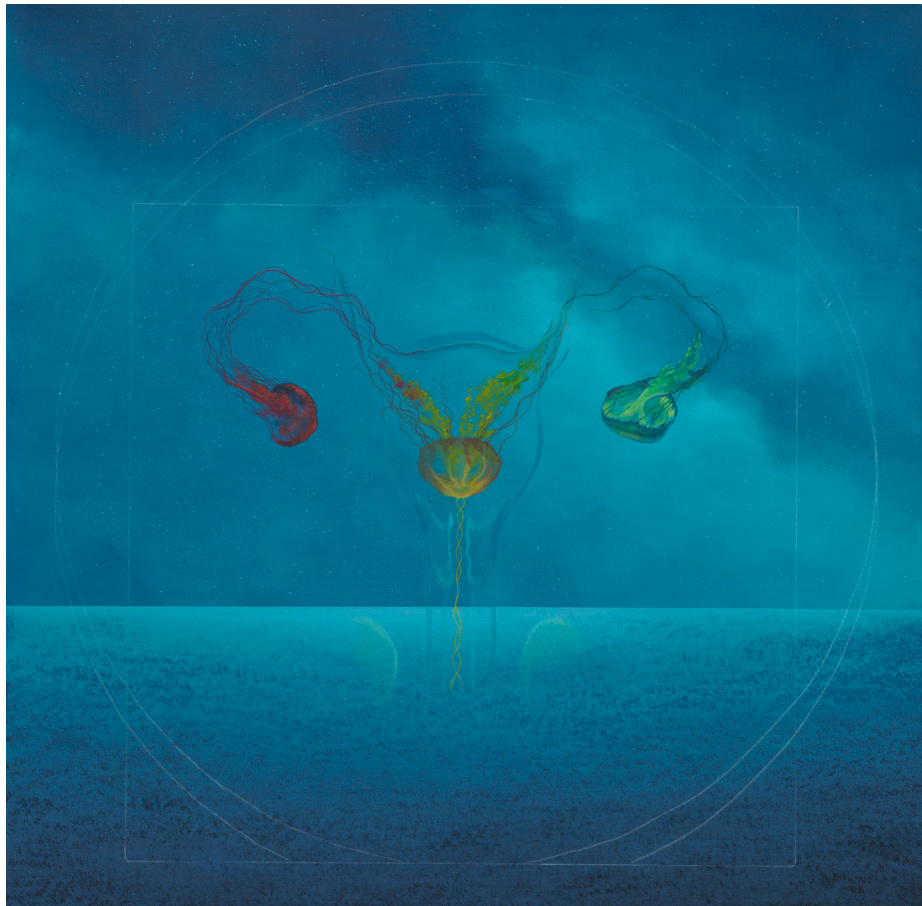
“THE VITRUVIAN: TISSUE LEVEL

Acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cms.
Signed and dated verso
Created in Ireland 2023

Commissioned by UCD Conway Institute, University College Dublin; supported by Science Foundation Ireland

Here, we see a land mass on the horizon, its shape and form emulating a breast and its anatomical structure. The botanicals are displayed in a linear fashion to show the structure and form of tissue imaging but more specifically to symbolise lobular breast cancer which grows in a linear fashion making it harder to detect. The irrigation, which begins in the land mass, has gone awry and caused a huge dysregulation in the orderly furrowing of the botanicals.

THE VITRUVIAN: UNCOVERING THE LAYERS OF CANCER



VINCENT DEVINE (IRISH, b.1986)

“THE VITRUVIAN: CELLULAR LEVEL

Acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cms.
Signed and dated verso
Created in Ireland 2023

Commissioned by UCD Conway Institute, University College Dublin; supported by Science Foundation Ireland

Here, we see the jellyfish suspended in the shapes of both male and female reproductive organs. The red jellyfish represents the spread of tumour cells in the fallopian tubes arising from ovarian cancer, whereas the green jellyfish represents other cell types (e.g. immune cells) which may intervene and treat the spread of the tumour cells. The gold jellyfish represents research that is in development to help detect prostate and ovarian cancer through urine testing. Cell signalling, which can be altered in cancer, can be seen as the jellyfishes' tentacles interact.

THE VITRUVIAN: UNCOVERING THE LAYERS OF CANCER



VINCENT DEVINE (IRISH, b.1986)

“THE VITRUVIAN: MOLECULAR LEVEL

Acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cms.
Signed and dated verso
Created in Ireland 2023

Commissioned by UCD Conway Institute, University College Dublin; supported by Science Foundation Ireland

Here, we see The Vitruvian has birthed the twins seen in the main painting. They both share a table, the biological twin doing the everyday things a child does while the digital twin wears the scars, treatments and experiences of all those children who leave a legacy of their experience with childhood cancer. With this legacy and cancer research, other children may benefit in the future from access to more precise, less harsh treatments. Devine worked with patient advocate Alan Pearson who graciously helped inform the content of this painting. His daughter Clíodhna (Beany) Pearson died in 2021 from neuroblastoma. The multitude of stars in the background set against the galaxy represents all the children including Clíodhna who have lost their lives to cancer, they provide a small guiding light to help provide research into these softer treatments in paediatric cancer.