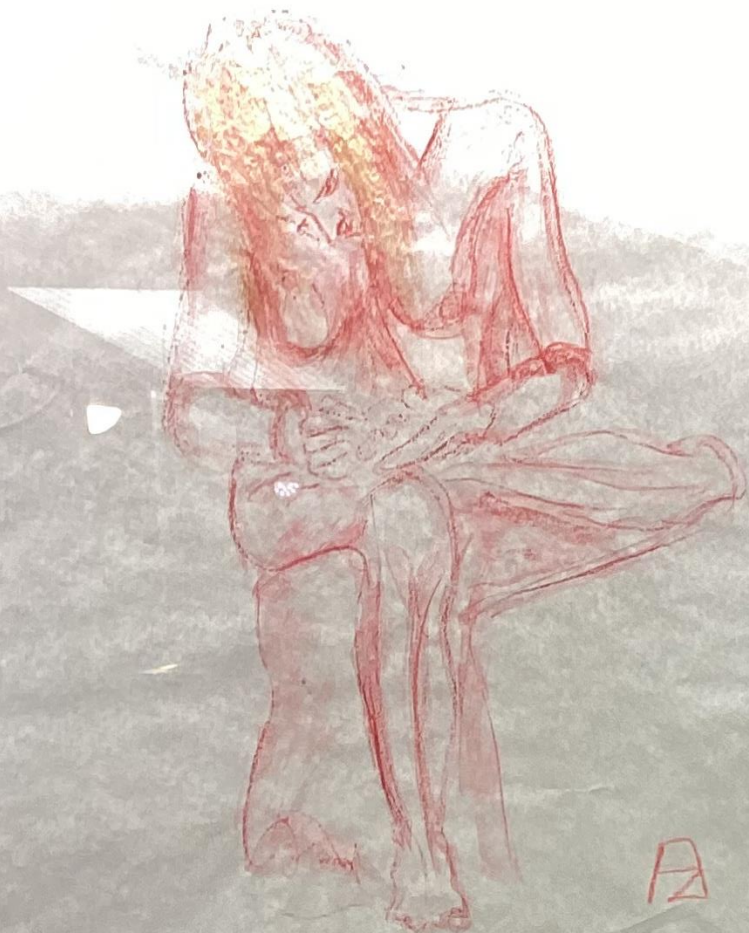


SPINARIA

At

UCD Classical Museum

1 February -13 March 2025



Curated by
Zsuzsanna Ardó
Sasha Smith
Jo Day

Zsuzsanna Ardó is human by inclination, humorous, curious and creative by nature – and an award-winning visual artist and writer by profession. Her work has received awards and been awarded artist residencies by various organisations, including Arts Council England, High Arctic Expedition, AL New York, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Il Bisonte Florence, Britten Pears Arts, Tyrone Guthrie Centre, European Artists, UNESCO. Jury-selected to represent the UK in UNESCO's creative residency, with exhibitions in Andorra, Portugal, and at UNESCO Head Quarters in Paris. Her work has been exhibited internationally in mainstream and alternative spaces, from the British Film Academy, Westminster Palace, Institute of Contemporary Arts, European Commission, European Parliament to the Arctic and the Antarctic.

As of January 2025, she has been appointed an Adjunct Lecturer in UCD.



Image | Zsuzsanna Ardó - Atelier A

UCD Classical Museum is the only museum in Ireland dedicated to the display of artefacts from the Classical World. Our collection includes material from Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Italy and Roman-era Britain. Ceramics and coins are our most common type of artefact, and there is also a good collection of Greek and Latin inscriptions, some items of glass, metal and stone, papyrus documents from Egypt, and terracotta figurines. We have a small number of replicas too, in particular of Aegean Bronze age material, some from the famed Gilliéron workshop.

The Museum was established by Professor Henry Browne, S.J., and Professor of Greek early in the twentieth century as a teaching museum.

Teaching is still one of the core objectives of the Museum, and hundreds of primary and secondary level students visit each year, complementing the various UCD Schools that embed our resources in their teaching and learning.

The Museum is also actively engaged in research into the collection; recent collaborations include with the Centre for Tebtunis Papyri, Berkeley, and the University of Warwick for our Latin funerary inscriptions.

Each year, a select number of cultural events with links to the Classical world are also held in the Museum. Zsuzsanna Ardó's *Spinaria* art exhibition and performance of *In the Library of Ephesus* are an exciting way to commence our cultural programme for 2025.

Dr Jo Day



er
meets
in Dublin

Place: wherever performed

Spinaria* - iconic thorn-puller and thinker

A conversation across time and space, about Gulliver's international travel by reporting on his Four Voyages around the world, in the land of Houyhnhnms, Yahoos, and more.

SPINARIA Salve, Gulliver! I like your hat.

GULLIVER Thank you for having me, Spinaria! Where shall I hang it?

SPINARIA Just over there. Sooooo, will you tell us all, Gulliver, how do Houyhnhnms, as you call them, react to your stories about your recent experience with Yahoos?

GULLIVER Certainly, Spinaria, a good question. Well... with great appearances of uneasiness~

SPINARIA Why uneasiness?

GULLIVER Because doubting and not believing, are so little known in this
country that the inhabitants cannot tell
how to behave themselves under such circumstances.

SPINARIA Aaah, I see. Not familiar with doubting...

GULLIVER Nor with not believing.

SPINARIA Got you. Neither doubting, nor not believing. I think I'm with you, Gulliver.

Hmmm, it makes me think...!

Well, let me ask you then about this seemingly antiquated... if not virtually... eehmmm.. extinct thing I'm personally, well, if I may confess, somewhat partial to.

[pregnant silence]

How about the act of... thinking?



GULLIVER

Actually, Spinaria, funny you should ask!

I remember in frequent discourses...
concerning the nature of manhood-

SPINARIA

-and the nature of thinking?

GULLIVER

-the nature of manhood in other parts of
the world, having occasion to talk-

[interrupting each other with increasing speed and passion]

SPINARIA

-of thinking?

GULLIVER

-of lying-

SPINARIA

-and thinking?

GULLIVER

-and false representation-

SPINARIA

[hopeful]-and thinking...

GULLIVER

[firm]-of lying and false representation...
it was with much difficulty that he
comprehended what I meant, although
he had otherwise a most acute
judgment.

SPINARIA

Well, Gulliver, let me react in visual
grammar, if I may, in the Classical
Museum of your very hometown,
Dublin.

Shall we continue there on Thursday
30th January?

GULLIVER

Sounds good, count me in.

SPINARIA

And... I'll also tell you about your Fifth
Voyage (!) I bet you've never even heard
about, even though you did it.

GULLIVER

Now there's a cliffhanger if there ever was one..!

A Fifth Voyage, you say? You've got me hooked now!
Look forward to thinking about thinking together real
soon.

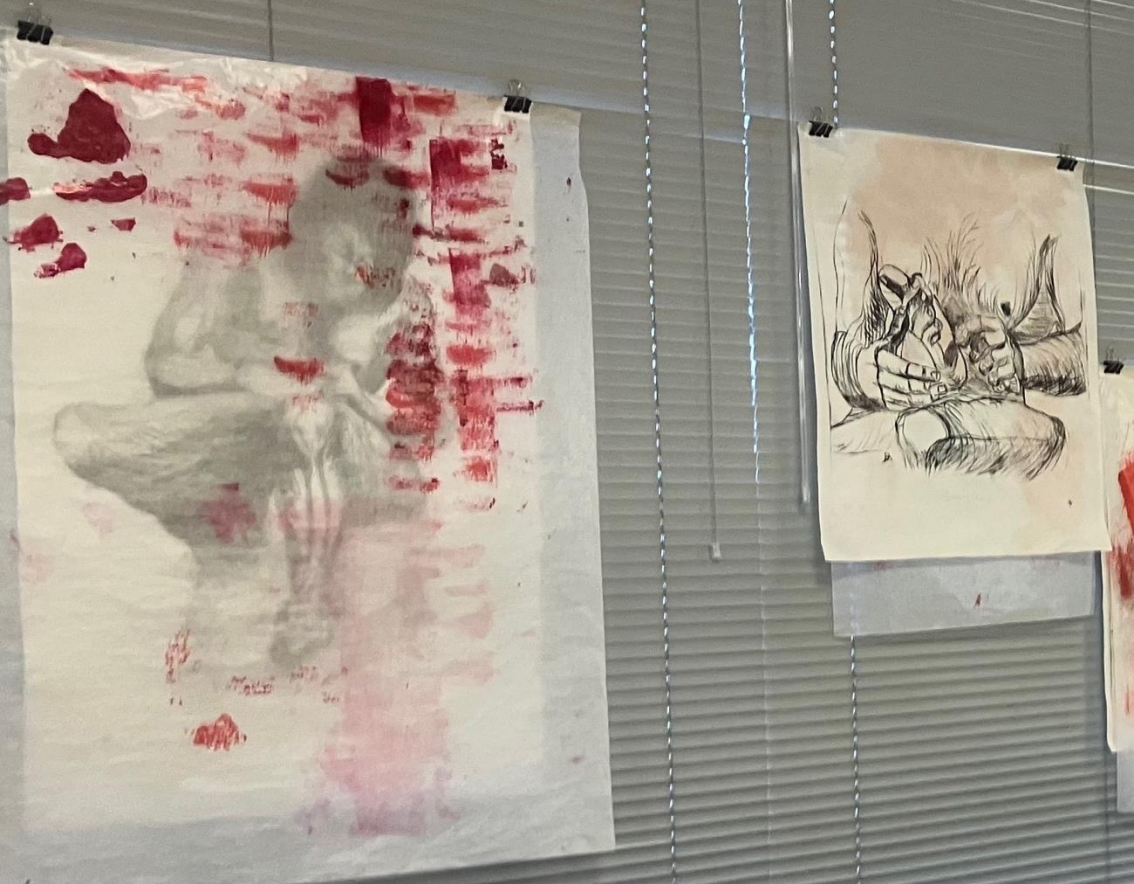
SPINARIA

Can't wait!
[handing over hat]
Here's your well-travelled hat...

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*Spinaria: from Zsuzsanna Ardó's visual art series
Spinaria, creating the first female embodiment o
the Greco-Roman Spinario.

*Gulliver: from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, 1726,
Part IV



Spinario is the iconic Hellenistic, Greek-Roman nude statue of a young boy. He is captured brilliantly in a moment of suspended time; concentrated attention; breath held in midair.

Spinario — and hence Spinaria — is fully dedicated to no less than the *dynamic act of thinking* (cf Plato's inner dialogue, or Arendt's focus on thinking rather than thoughts, and its relevance for today). Spinario embodies intense, persistent problem-solving through the active act of thinking.

The problem at hand is represented by a thorn. Be it real and/or metaphysical. Sharp and painful as unresolved problems on our mind. Spinario is trying to work out how to pull out of the sole of his foot. A primal skill for survival — walking, being on the move, getting from A to B — is seriously compromised by the problem he is intent on solving.



The intense concentration of this intimate and iconic Hellenistic statue has captivated audiences and inspired artists across time and space.

The young thorn-puller boy, determined to free himself to walk again, has been recreated in many different versions, materials and sizes, by many different artists, in different places, at different times. Variations of his statue are treasured in many museums e.g. in Florence, Rome, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid, London, and New York City.

Remarkably, no female version of this poetic yet practical thinker and problem-solver in action seems to exist.

Until now.

Spinario is about to shift his gender and age, format and style. Here comes Spinaria!

Spinaria is inspired by the timeless essence of Spinario's gesture, intimacy, attitude and vibrancy.

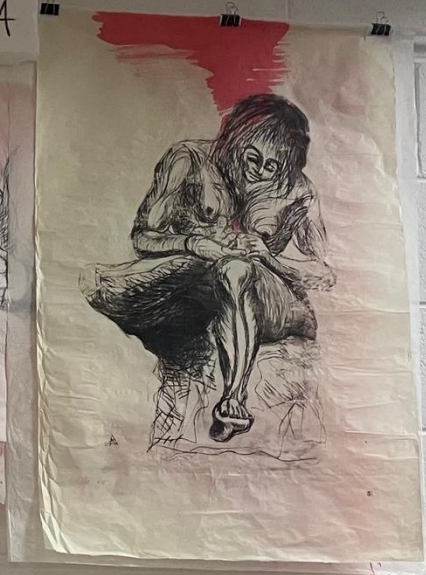
Spinario and Spinaria are both nude thorn-pullers. But Spinaria is a mature, contemporary woman, unlike Spinario, who has always been presented as a young boy of classical beauty. Spinario is mostly captured in sculptures; Spinaria comes alive in 3D by virtue of the two 2D prints are hung together in the space, but with volume of space between them. They move together as the air moves around them. They can be viewed in the round. A series of Spinarias create a larger sculptural form and patterns in the space.

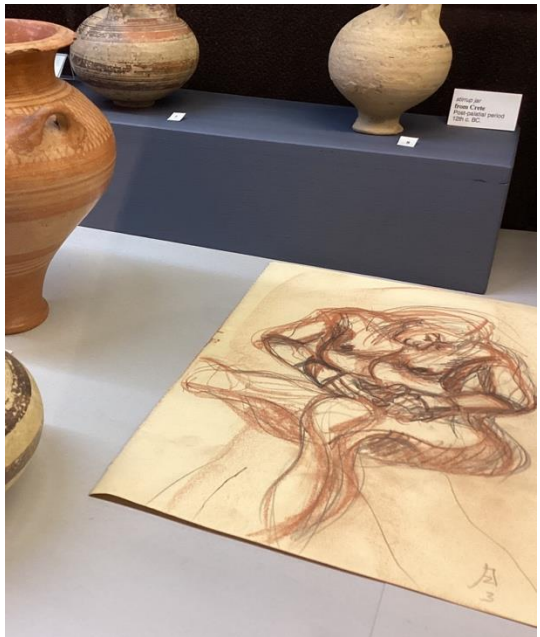
The themes embodied in my Spinaria series— mature woman (not a girl) in the act of thinking/problem solving, the resonant Hellenistic connection, the centrality of the capacity to be able/free to move around and perform in the public (and therefore political/performative) space — all echo and resonate with the performance, its context. Images from the installation/exhibition could also be inserted as a visual layer into the video recording of the performance.

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SPINARIA





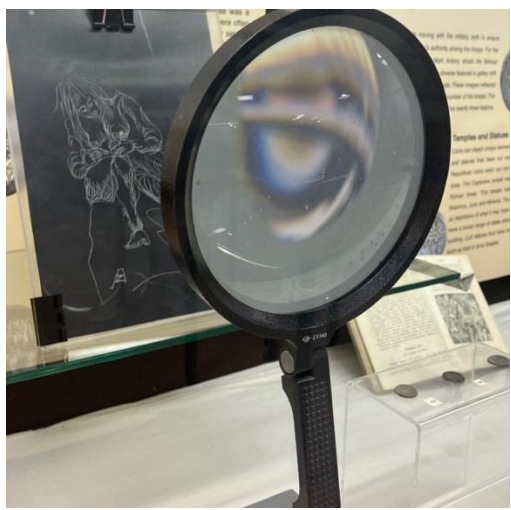




Image Credits:

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Spinaria Exhibition - Sasha Smith

Zsuzsanna Ardó - Atelier A

UCD Classical Museum - Sasha Smith

Frontispiece from Gulliver's travels and other works / by Jonathan Swift - Courtesy of
UCD Special Collections



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Brochure Design, Editor: Sasha Smith



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