

# Gemma Tipton's 2015: 'Charlie Hebdo' and the power of images

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Gemma Tipton



Given more recent events, the shock of the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings in January seems distant, but visiting Paris that month I learned the enormous power of images, both to stir up hatreds undoubtedly looking to be stirred but also to cause a heart-stricken pause and unite people in resolute defiance of terrorism. Newspapers and cartoonists, not least those preparing the next issue of *Charlie Hebdo*, outdid themselves in creating images to express what went way beyond words.

The awful killings also focused attention on one of the lies at the heart of political correctness: no, something is not offensive just because you choose to be offended by it, and free speech must be championed, whether we like its content or not.

In Ireland this year the thoughtful exhibition *The Untold Want*, at the RHA Gallery, taught me that one of our more modern maladies is the lack of space for desire. In a world of instant gratification, what is left, for those who have enough, is the strange discomfort of wanting to want something.

Meanwhile, at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, *What We Call Love*, running until February 2016, shows that few artists haven't dabbled with sex and its emotional wrappings at some stage in their work, but Tracey Moffatt's brilliant video *Love* should be required viewing for all those dreaming of a happy-ever-after in the new year.

Riddle of the Burial Grounds at Project, Dublin, Boolean Expressions at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork, 2039 at ArtBox, Dublin, Grace Weir at Imma (until March 2016) and everything in the Science Gallery's excellent programme this year: all show how the intersections between art and science give fascinating insights, and how the most brilliant minds are the ones that make those why-not leaps of imagination and never give up experimenting.

## My Cultural Playlist For 2015

**Dublin Ships**, by Cliona Harney, was a gentle treat throughout the year as the names of ships arriving and leaving popped up on the docks and in my Twitter feed.

Anya Gallaccio's amethyst cave, **The Light Pours Out of Me**, at Jupiter Artland in Edinburgh, is awesome. Visit when the sculpture park reopens in May.

Patricia Piccinini's **Relativity**, at Galway International Arts Festival in July, had an uncanny brilliance.

**Emma Finn**, at Edinburgh Art Festival in July, is a young Irish artist with a strong sense of the strange, and a very strong future.

**Amy Stephens**, at the Oonagh Young Gallery in Dublin, is an exciting sculptor who's definitely going places.

**Amanda Coogan**, at the RHA Gallery, Dublin. When performance art is this good, I can forgive the genre everything.

Joy Gerrard's **Protest Crowd** paintings at Peer, London, were presciently poignant images of massed crowds from the Occupy movements and the Arab Spring.

Emily St John Mandel's novel **Station Eleven** didn't come my way until this year. Brilliant, moving, haunting and gorgeous, it shows the human need for, and enduring power of, art, and I have been buying it in bulk to give to everyone I care for this Christmas.



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