

## Live fairground rides reveal the science of thrill at the Dana Centre in London

A groundbreaking installation at the **Science Museum's Dana Centre**, London will see live fairground rides launched at the Centre to explore the science of thrill.

**Fairground: Thrill Laboratory**, launching on **Tuesday 17th October**, will include live physiological data broadcast into the Dana Centre as members of the audience are hooked up to video and audio transmitters coupled with heart rate monitors whilst on the rides.

The data will be transmitted and displayed in the Dana Centre - the Science Museum's adults-only bar and café for exploring contemporary science, medicine and technology - where it will be analysed by commentators, including a criminologist and space flight surgeon.

Each weekly event will focus on a unique aspect of thrill - pleasure, frisson and visceral delight - through three different fairground rides - the *Miami Trip*, *Ghost Train* and *Booster* - as the Dana Centre transforms itself into a fairground ride observatory and thrill laboratory.

The series promises to be an eclectic mix of psychological and sociological experimentation, cultural and historical observations, art and design, archive film, lively presentations, commentary and discussion.

*Fairground: Thrill Laboratory* is being curated by Brendan Walker, thrill aficionado and author of *The Taxonomy of Thrill*.

### **Fairground: Thrill Laboratory**

- 17<sup>th</sup> October – 1st November
- The Science Museum's Dana Centre, 165 Queens Gate, London, SW7 5HD
- Ticket price tbc. To book your tickets please register on: 020 7942 4040 or [tickets@danacentre.org.uk](mailto:tickets@danacentre.org.uk). Open to anyone over the age of 18
- Check out the website for full listings [www.danacentre.org.uk](http://www.danacentre.org.uk).

Each evening will open with an introduction from the curator, Brendan Walker, who will elaborate on three basic dimensions of thrill: pleasure, arousal and timing. He will explain how thrill is experienced when there is a sudden, rapid and large increase in arousal and/or pleasure.

He'll also delve into the five types of stimuli used to elicit thrill: the spectacular, the sensational, power and control, being valued and immortality, and will explain how these factors might be dynamically manipulated to maximise thrill.

His introduction will be followed by explorations and short talks from invited guests, including Professor Chris French, psychologist of the paranormal, and Dan Howland, editor of America's most bizarre Journal of Ride Theory.



The talks give way to experimentation where select members of the audience are invited to ride the *Miami Trip*, *Ghost Train* or *Booster* and have their physiological reactions dissected by the experts.

Kat Nilsson, Event Manager at the Dana Centre and Science Museum said: “The Thrills series at the Dana Centre really sums up our mission to look at how science is embedded in our culture and untangle the two in innovative and exciting new ways.”

**Further information, interviews and images are available from Lauren Gildersleve:**

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**Brendan Walker is available to comment** on the science behind thrill; the history of fairgrounds and thrill; the experiments taking place at the Centre and the technology used to conduct the experiments

**Kat Nilsson is available to comment** on the Dana Centre’s mission to make science relevant and exciting to everybody

**Notes to Editors:**

- 1 The Dana Centre is a collaboration between the Science Museum, the BA (British Association for the Advancement of Science) and The European Dana Alliance for the Brain (EDAB) making it unrivalled in its expertise and depth of knowledge of scientific and technological fields. The Centre is housed in the Wellcome Wolfson Building alongside the headquarters of the BA, EDAB and Science Museum offices.
- 2 The £9.8 million building has been provided by four major benefactors – the Wellcome Trust, the Wolfson Foundation, The Dana Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation.
- 3 The Science Museum exists to promote the public understanding of the history and contemporary practice of science, medicine, technology and industry. It aims to inspire, educate and involve visitors. It achieves this by building, researching and caring for the national collections; and by interpreting these collections and engaging the public in the contemporary issues they raise.
- 4 The BA is the UK's nationwide, open membership organisation dedicated to connecting science with people, so that science and its applications become accessible to all. The BA aims to promote openness about science in society and to engage and inspire people directly with science and technology and their implications.
- 5 The goal of EDAB is to inform the general public and decision makers about the importance of brain research. EDAB aims to advance knowledge about the personal and public benefits of neuroscience and to disseminate information on the brain, in health and disease, in an accessible and relevant way.
- 6 Nearest tube: Gloucester Road. There is no parking at the Dana Centre (except for disabled drivers). Residents’ parking restrictions apply until 10:00pm.
- 7 Brendan Walker runs Aerial, a design consultancy specialising in interactive electromechanical installations - [www.aerial.fm](http://www.aerial.fm). He recently ran the research project *Chromo11 – engineering the thrill*, funded by the AHRC; and the Sciart project *Punters: auto-portraits of fairground thrill*.
- 8 Irvin Leisure Entertainments Ltd is one of Britain's leading suppliers of fairground equipment for corporate events and private parties and in addition stage major public festivals. They were key organisers of the London's Fair in Hyde Park last Christmas. George Irvin, head of the company, is a 5th generation Showman, carrying on a line from the Victorian Era, and it is his imaginative approach that led fairground rides first to be introduced to corporate events, and now to scientific experiment. [www.irvinleisure.co.uk](http://www.irvinleisure.co.uk).
- 9 The Rides  

The Miami Trip: For the first time riders’ seats were turned to face spectators, creating an exhibitionist’s dream. The rides are kept up-to-date through music and artwork.

The Ghost Train: The history of ghost trains can be traced back to the spectacular 19<sup>th</sup> century travelling menageries, horrific freak-shows and fearsome Victorian ghost shows.

The Booster: Derived from the rash of post war dive-bomber rides originally developed from aircraft-pilot training apparatus.
- 10 The technical system for collecting and presenting rider data will be developed in collaboration with Equator. Equator is a six-year Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration supported by EPSRC that focuses on the integration of physical and digital interaction. [www.equator.ac.uk](http://www.equator.ac.uk).