

Aisling Jelinski Art Review
by Katerina Gribkoff

Aisling Jelinski's work is a focal point of the exhibition, *Tairseach/Threshold* at the Burren College of Art gallery. Small, bright paintings reside in the far corner of the space, while a massive mural, entitled *Crouching Venus*, immediately draws the eye. The hunched, androgynous figure is layered and repeated, giving the allusion of a shifting or turning movement. The outlines and silhouette reference an ancient Greek frieze, while the colours, teal and magenta, are more reminiscent of a trendy contemporary design. It has a transcendent presence, yet an equally modern and graphic flair.

From afar, Jelinski's other paintings appear like frescoes, on or *of* the wall, in sync with the classical depictions of robed figures. Large serpents have gently twisted around the enrobed bodies, like passive invaders. A typed statement by the artist describing the work references disembodiment and the uncanny as major themes. The former is most apparent, as she portrays cropped and fractured figures, dissected by abstract serpentine coils. The latter is more subtle as she juggles the familiar and the unfamiliar, present in the dichotomy between the classically rendered forms and their bright and modern colouring.

It isn't obvious why the snakes have wrapped themselves around the classical figures, intertwined with hands, arms, and robes. Perhaps the snakes themselves act as the force of disembodiment, referenced in the artist's statement: the entity that breaks a hand away from a wrist or an arm from a torso. The serpents are rendered differently than the figures, given a solid, monochrome appearance that stands in contrast with the layered, inky, muted depictions of the cropped bodies.

The inclusion of Jelinski's work in a show entitled *Tairseach/Threshold* alludes to an interior threshold versus an exterior one. Can there be different rooms or barriers within oneself through which the mind might navigate? Can a physical body cross an exterior threshold while the interior mind is left behind?

The position of the works in the gallery suggest a growth, moving from three small pieces, to a larger work on paper, to a massive mural that escapes the frame of the page. The on-the-wall painting method is very effective in Jelinski's work, befitting the style and substance of the series. The five paintings tie the space and exhibition together, matching the bold scale of other exhibiting artists, and the vibrant colour palette of other works in the room.