



Artwork of the Month

Ray Murphy

Doing, kneeling

Oil on canvas

42" x 58", UCC Collection, 2002

James G. R. Cronin

James is the Visual Resources Officer in History of Art. He also co-ordinates the diploma in European Art History run by the Centre for Adult Continuing Education, UCC.

Cork has a rich tradition of representing the human figure in the visual arts. This tradition is featured in the UCC Collection by contemporary Cork painters like Suzie O'Mullane and Anthony Ruby and by Cork sculptors like Don Cronin, Annette Hennessy and Victoria Hurley. A recent acquisition has been a work by a young Cork painter whose canvases reveal, yet conceal, the figure. Ray Murphy's *Doing, kneeling*, an oil on canvas, purchased for the UCC Collection in 2002 is a work of accomplished technical skill yet with a feeling of implicit mystery.

Cork-based painter, Ray Murphy, graduated from the Crawford College of Art & Design in 2001. His influences include Islamic abstract design and the paintings of Degas, Rembrandt and Soutine. He has exhibited skyscapes and has been recently commissioned to paint portraits of Cork personalities, however, he is constantly drawn to paint the human figure. *Doing, kneeling* typifies his early treatment of this subject. This painting is most influenced by sketches made by Degas of women washing themselves. We are drawn like voyeurs to the anonymous female model, whose well lit back is turned to us. She is urgently involved in some mysterious action. The subject is skillfully executed, but there is a deliberate attempt to obscure both location and light source. Look closer and the figure appears suspended in space. You wish you could walk around the figure to find out what she is doing. Here we sense the influence of Degas, the painter, as a sculptor of ballerinas. *Doing, kneeling* reveals, and at the same time, conceals the figure.

Ray argues that his paintings are primarily concerned with the language of painting: line colour and shape. However, in *Doing, kneeling* there is an attempt to animate a static pose and to dissolve the boundaries between painting and sculpture.

For more information on Ray Murphy's work see <http://www.raymurphyart.com>

This painting hangs on the first floor of the O'Rahilly Building in the Business Information Systems Department