

EXHIBIT A Sophie Gorman

# Putting down roots in south Tipperary

**T**he apple certainly didn't fall far from the tree for Austrian/Irish artist Mercedes Helnwein. The daughter of art provocateur and performance artist Gottfried Helnwein, whose controversial collaborations included works with Marilyn Manson and Sean Penn, Mercedes soon discovered creativity was flowing freely through her veins too. After initial attempts to disconnect herself from the canvas in favour of a literary future writing fiction, she

re-examined the power of the pen in terms of fine art. Borrowing from a list of influences as varied as southern blues, turn-of-the-century Russian literature, and Sixties comic book artists, Helnwein's work has a distinctive connection with Americana and it has been garnering high praise indeed from even the most inured critics. Intricate and emotional, her detailed sketches have been quickly snapped up by the elite Los Angeles art collectors.

Luckily for us, Mercedes, like her father, spends part of the year in a castle in Tipperary and the rest of her time in America. The South Tipperary Arts Centre ([www.southtipparts.com](http://www.southtipparts.com)) is currently presenting an exhibition of her drawings, Last Chapter of Dreaming, until June 24. The works on display include portraits of people she knows and idiosyncratic characters from her American travels. And, like this piece entitled Melinda, they all share a dark underbelly.

