

## JAN ALLDRITT-MILLER

I have drawn and painted all my life. In the late 60s I developed intolerances to many foods and my beloved oil paints.

I envisaged an easy transfer to watercolour. This beautiful, but elusive medium proved immensely frustrating, but the struggle led me on a fascinating experimental journey using acrylics as watercolours. I felt like a pioneer, as at that time I could find no one else in New Zealand who was using them in this way. Acrylics allow me to glaze over under the layers underneath, whilst still achieving the wet-in-wet techniques of traditional watercolour.

I use only eight tubes of paint; no white, no black, and adore the three 'graining' colours: burnt umber, ultramarine and alizarin – and the exciting nuances of colours achieved by mixing them.

My style of painting is representational. I love painting and recording nostalgic vignettes of life – discarded rural memorabilia, forgotten buildings, deserted rail tracks and stations, hidden garden corners, personal moments. Textures inspire me, too – rusty metal, lichen-covered wood, stones, soft flower petals and foliage.

I work from a gallery/studio at Sandspit, near Warkworth and love travelling around the country conducting intensive two-day painting workshops.



Above: *Granny*, 2006, 36 x 26 cm

I drew this woman, the mother-in-law of a dear friend six weeks after she'd had a mastectomy at the age of 95. Knitting, without glasses, she confided she had no energy for digging her veggie garden at present! She bought up a family on a farm, in dense bush country with no road access. A once-yearly event was to travel by paddle steamer down the Whanganui River to the city.



Above: *Crinolines*, 1999, 65 x 90 cm

Unhappy with this work, I left it sitting for several weeks on my studio table. Then I spilt some dark paint on the top portion – that was the answer! I reworked the darks behind the flowers to push them forward.



Left: *Retired*, Horopito, 2006, 59 x 41 cm  
Horopito is one of my favourite places – an artist's paradise, where the movie *Smash Palace* was filmed and where there are acres and acres of rusting, lichen-covered vehicles and their skeletons. The more treasured ones had made it into sheds. When last I visited this shed had collapsed on the car.

Above: *Changing Perspective*, Aramoho, 2005, 75 x 56 cm  
I had hoped one day to live in Wanganui. Sadly, circumstances changed and the dream faded. As I sat at the abandoned Aramoho station, struggling to draw the changing perspective of the track, it seemed a metaphor for my life which I must also now view with a 'changing perspective'.

Opposite page: *Playshells*, Waiheke Island, 1998, 75 x 56 cm

This work was developed from an on-site sketch of my daughter Wendy. She was an adult before I finally did the painting.

