

# Just imagine... ♦ ♦ ♦

one artist, one gallery and one studio

STORY BY PATRICIA ALDERSON  
PHOTO BY PATRICK PRICE

Imagine going to work every day in your own studio which doubles as a place to sell your art. That's exactly what Janet B. Armstrong does and she loves it.

"I always dreamed about having my own art business," she says, so when the opportunity came up to rent the full space she previously shared, she knew "this is it, it's finally going to happen."

Soon she was painting the walls the rich shade of lipstick red that catches your eye at Just Imagine Art Studio Inc., her perfect space tucked around the corner in the Graham Building at First Street West and Third Avenue.

The transition from artist to gallery owner was not instant. Years of art education coupled with a wide range of artistic experience developed Armstrong's appreciation for all aspects of art. "Opening a business is best done during the second part of an artistic career," she observes.

She spent years experimenting in various techniques, carving, theatre painting, sculpting and creating murals before venturing into business for herself. Even then, she took it slowly, first working in an artist co-op, then sharing a space and finally last June, opening her full-fledged gallery and studio.



The striking walls of her eclectic space showcase vibrant oil and acrylic paintings, all created by Armstrong. Colours pop and while each piece tells a story and stands alone, her palette preference of warm reds and oranges accented by shades of cool violet make the overall experience a sensation for the eyes.

This artist loves the never-ending possibilities she finds to paint in the Cochrane area. She says, "I love nature and the country and I'm close to the mountains and forests here."

Armstrong prefers to paint images of nature or old buildings and when not busy talking to gallery visitors, sits at her large easel and does what she loves to do – paint.

A poignant moment came for Armstrong when Alice Graham, widow of Bob Graham – one of the Cochrane Art Club's founding members – invited her upstairs to see where he once lived and painted.

"There was his easel," she recalls, "directly above where my easel sat downstairs. I felt as if somehow he was saying he was glad another artist was in this space.

My art is all about colour, being positive and making people happy. I think Bob would have approved." 