



Kerry Deane, *Croca Non Grata*, 2021

I've always had an interest in art, but I was working full-time as a lawyer and had neither the mental space nor the time to indulge that passion. In 2015 I had a major life-changing event with a massive stroke, and I gave up my legal career. I was lucky enough to find Māpura Studios in Morningside, which is dedicated to helping disabled people in the arts. The brain's very plastic, painting can stimulate the neuroplasticity of the brain and create new pathways. My prime attraction is to abstracts. They puzzle the mind when you look at them. I like the Bauhaus paintings very much. The theme underlying this painting is the subordination of natural species within man-made environments. There are always birds and creatures in our cities, but we tend not to notice them a lot of the time. The crocodile to the left bears no relation to the duck in the centre, which symbolises the idea of the incongruity of our urban environments. It's recognising that humans and animals can coexist – not always harmoniously – but there's often a failure to see the beauty. I do think a lot of the time we are depriving ourselves of the pleasure of life by not looking at nature, not noticing it.

Kerry Deane is a former commercial lawyer who lives in Remuera, Auckland. He began painting after suffering a stroke during brain surgery.