

Putting her stamp on the art world

➤ Artist inspired by history, artefacts

BY ROB OLSEN

IT'S A given that many artists have a hard road to hoe if they want to make it their life's work.

Wellington artist Sandy Rodgers is testament to that adage, but that hasn't stopped the 32-year-old from pursuing her lifetime ambition to be an artist.

Sandy has followed her heart and painted throughout her life - from a child with a crayon to today.

She says there is no point that she remembers that she started doing art. "It's something I have always done ... from childhood."

A full-time artist, Sandy lives off the proceeds of her talent. She paints 12 to 16 hours a day when coming up to a show and anywhere between eight and 10 hours a day normally. "I'm on about \$3.50 an hour," if you work out how long it takes to complete a piece in relation to the cost, she says.

A 100 centimetre by 110cm work sells for between \$5,000 and \$5,500; a 30cm by 60cm work sells for about \$1,600.

Sandy sells and exhibits her work all over the country including Auckland, Greytown, Queens-town, Dunedin, Christchurch and even Arrowtown.

"That's how you survive.

"A retail gallery might sell one painting in six months and then there are the exhibitions where you hope to sell well...50 per cent of your work or ideally a sell-out."

There's usually a 40 per cent commission at exhibitions or galleries, although Ashton Grove, where she exhibits in Wellington city, charge her 30 per cent commission, says Sandy with a smile.

Hatton Estate wines in the Hawke's Bay are also very good to her, she says.

"They provide all the wine for the whole year for all exhibitions, "which is a big deal for artists who would otherwise have to cover the costs".

And don't forget the 20 per cent



➤ **UP CLOSE:** The exhibition's title - *Post, Post Myth, Post Man* - is a play on words because it's all about post. Sandy says she put a few title ideas to people and the post theme "won by a landslide. People must get up close to see the detail and read about it and spend time with it and walk away having learned something new," she says.

that goes to the tax man, she adds.

Sandy says some people say her work is expensive but, "I'm earning \$3.50 an hour if it's selling well."

The Korokoro artist's latest exhibition - *Post God, Post Myth, Post Man* - opens next month at Ashton Grove on Wakefield Street and is the culmination of her recent research of early New Zealand history combined with Maori mythology and stamps.

Historical facts are layered beneath

mythological stories to tell new tales of old characters both Maori and Pakeha. The myths are those stories people don't know about, says Sandy, such as the battle of the birds where two shags, one from the river and the other from the seaside test each other's territories and food. There's conflict and resolution. And that's why things are the way they are - lessons and rules. It would have been told to young children, she says.

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