

Sandy puts her stamp on the art world

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 \$5000 and \$5500; a 30cm by 60cm work sells for about \$1600.

Sandy sells and exhibits her work all over the country including Auckland, Greytown, Queenstown, 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.

logical stories to tell new tales of old characters both Maori and Pakeha. The myths are those 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.

The 11 or so paintings in the exhibition are on canvas in water colour - her main medium - and inks. The text is pasted on and there are layers of tissue paper and shellac over more brush work. "It's layer on top of layer on top of layer," says Sandy.

"People need to get up close ... it's extremely busy."

The designs are mostly based on early Postage and Revenue stamps, which record moments in history. Kings and Queens, new inventions, natural disasters have all been documented on stamps, she says. Sandy has chosen this format as recognition that stamps have always represented a country's culture and spirit with images that are used daily by millions of people around the world.

Sandy describes the art as "mixed media with narrative ... it tells a story," she says.

However, this hasn't always been her style. She says she has progressed through many, many phases and for a long time focused on the abstract, a style that is still visible in her art today.

She says six years spent overseas between 2000 and 2006 in the Americas, Europe, Asia and India changed her perspective on art. Though she did not do a lot of painting in that time



SUPPLIED

APTLY NAMED - The exhibition's title - *Post God, Post Myth, Post Man* - was one of a few title ideas put to people and it "won by a landslide", says Sandy.

Sandy has an honours Diploma in Fine Arts, she spent two years learning traditional Maori weaving under the late artist Erenora Puketapu-Hetet, and has staged various exhibitions in New Zealand,