

Local artist opens East St gallery



Michelle Gately | 31st Oct 2015 3:00 PM



SETTLING IN: Sandy McLean hanging works in new gallery on East Street, ahead of the official opening.

Allan Reinikka Rokagallery

ARTIST Sandy McLean is usually inspired by the vast space and natural wonders of the Australian bush.

But her latest venture was influenced by a very different space.

Sandy yesterday celebrated the official opening of her new East St gallery and studio space, The Art House.

The Marlborough artist spent time in the US earlier this year, where a selection of her striking paintings were on display at a gallery in New York from May to June.

Her work featured in the Out From Down Under and Beyond: Fine Art from Australia and New Zealand exhibition at Chelsea's Agora Gallery.

Travelling around the US, Sandy said she saw many smaller gallery and studio spaces, which got her thinking about how she could bring more creativity to Rockhampton.

"It was a bit mind blowing really because New York's so amazing and there are so many galleries there," she said.

"Seeing my work among all that other work was pretty incredible."

Sandy said an important aim of the gallery was to give regional artists a chance to exhibit their work locally.

But she is also hoping to inspire, with a range of workshops for children and adults.

Sandy won't just be focused on experienced artists either, with plans to hold arts parties for people who don't think they have the ability to paint.

She said she hoped the fun and relaxed environment would encourage them to take the first few steps into painting.

Although her gallery was inspired by the US visit, Sandy said the trip to New York also made her grateful for the variety in the Australian bush.

"It just made me realise how lucky I am to have the space, the colours, the animals and the dirt around me," she said.

When it came to choosing the East St location, Sandy said the area just felt like a good place to be, with a focus on culture in the precinct. She said it was good to see Rockhampton Regional

Council's focus on revitalising the CBD.

"The buildings are beautiful, the trees are beautiful. It's all here, it just needs a good lift. The bones are here," Sandy said.

"I really think it would be wonderful to give Rockhampton a bit of an identity."

Get creative

The Art House is open Wednesday to Sunday at 49 East St

*The***Bulletin**



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