



'Obie'

O'Brien

By Oliver Robb

North Hobart.

A further show is planned for the Eagles Nest Gallery at Airey's Inlet in Victoria and interest has been shown from overseas.

Working on a table in his lounge room surrounded by music, after finishing his day working as an Aged-Care worker in Burnie, Obie produces original, heartwarming, humorous paintings that can only make the beholder smile. The world he portrays embodies an uplifting, child-like vision that most people can relate to and one which has an imaginative life of its own.

Working in a range of different mediums, currently oils and acrylic paints on canvas, Obie is constantly experimenting with new techniques and ideas. But there is a consistency in what he produces, an other-worldly vision that was partly inspired by the Victorian illustrator of fairy books, Ida Rintoul Outhwaite, and the rugged maritime scenery of the part of the world he lives in.

Obie's approach to his work is uncomplicated by mainstream art analysis.

Obie prefers to pursue his own unique style independently and takes the view that if other people appreciate what he produces and get enjoyment from it, as he does, so much the better. He is reluctant to become bogged down in trying to categorize or justify what he produces because it threatens the unselfconscious, naive style he has adopted. He prefers the works to speak for themselves, "In the last five years I've



got more serious about art," says Obie. "But ever since I left school, wherever I've been I've always dabbled, I've always painted. It's always been more or less a hobby. "I'd love to be able to do it full-time. That's my passion."

Colourful figures of little stick girls swirling through the night sky studded with stars. Big round moons over a buffeting sea. Bright flowers on long, thin stalks. Fantasy houses with conical roofs and multicoloured flags flying above. These are just some of the intriguing images contained in the engagingly whimsical paintings created by Tasmanian artist Mark 'Obie' O'Brien. Obie, as he likes to be known, is a 47-year-old painter based in West Ridgley, just inland from Burnie in the north-west. A self-taught artist who has been dabbling in art since his high school days, Obie has created a wide body of work that is fast gathering an enthusiastic following both in Tasmania and on the mainland at places such as Byron Bay. Last year he had a successful exhibition at the Inka Inc Gallery in Salamanca Place in Hobart and earlier this year he had another well-received exhibition at the Fig gallery in