

FRAN. ALLEGRETTE Jan '93

Photo by Shane French



• Artist James Paris with Allegretta brothers (l-r) Jack and Frank.

# Artists given space

by FRAN JOHNSTON

THE desperate lack of affordable studio space for artists in Fremantle has been eased by the creation of a new studio complex.

Up to 58 studios are planned for a Pakenham Street building, making it the largest collection of studios in the state. Twenty eight studios have already been constructed.

And there isn't a government funding application in sight.

Western Australian Ship Supplies, who lease the building at 22 Pakenham Street, have turned the majority of available floorspace over to artists of all disciplines and are footing the bill for the conversion.

"We want to turn Fremantle into the Paris of Australia," said Frank Allegretta, one of three brothers involved with the company. "Being Fremantle born and bred, we thought we'd pay something back." That something is Allegretta Arts Studio.

The project began at the suggestion of Allan Brown, an artist who had previously leased space from the Allegrettas. After two months discussion, it has taken less than a month to get the studios near to completion.

When the Herald spoke to the private patrons last week, it was expected 28 studios would be completely ready by this week.

James Paris, an artist who has already leased a studio in the building, explained the benefits of the project.

"They're providing studio space for artists at affordable rates, which there's a great lack of," he said. The average cost of space at the Allegretta Arts Studio is \$30 per week, including electricity, which buys approximately 30 square metres of studio.

ing on the demand for space. Constructed using volunteer labour, the studios may not seem particularly glamorous, but any excess funds from the rentals will be ploughed back into the building.

There are no pre-requisites for artists hoping to move into the building. "We're not saying you have to have five degrees to get in here," commented Mr Paris. He said the aim of the studio is to encourage a broad cross-section of arts practice. Writers, painters, photographers,

**"...studio space for artists at affordable rates.."**

Mr Paris said security of tenure is also a problem for many artists, who often find themselves leasing on a month-by-month basis. WA Ship Supplies has a six year lease on 22 Pakenham Street.

Artists will have 24-hour access to the building and it is hoped to eventually open the Studio to the public, conduct classes and hold exhibitions.

The upstairs portion of the building has been converted into 28 studios, and the downstairs area will be converted depend-

weavers - all artists are encouraged to apply for space if they find it to their liking.

Frank, Alex and Jack Allegretta have gone about the whole task quickly and with the minimum of fuss.

If things go according to plan, the Allegretta Arts Studio will become a vibrant community in Fremantle, the Paris of Australia.

If you would like to know more about leasing space, phone the Studio on 430 6696.