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EDGE is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

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## Art for art's sake in CBD

Anna Moreau

THE 'off-the-wall' art sale Art Mart, launched in the CBD last week, is a bold new concept introduced to Perth in the hope of attracting more people to art investment.

The three-week art market, located at 834 Hay Street, offers art aficionados and the merely curious a selection of recognised Australian artists at a variety of prices, with all works able to be taken home straight after the sale.

Works from names such as New South Wales artists Pro Hart and Kym Hart, and WA artist William Boissevain are on show.

According to Art Mart director and curator Randall Ismay, Art Mart is an ideal introduction to art investment, which can be a tedious and intimidating exercise for debutant investors.

"The idea is to create a new situation which is less intimidating for people. A lot of people don't go to exhibitions because they don't know the artist or they don't know art well enough," Mr Ismay said.

With most major art galleries now located in the suburbs because of the CBD's rising rent prices - Greehill Galleries' relocation from King Street to Dalkeith being the most recent - comparing the works of a range of artists has become more difficult.

"What we've got here is high-quality art from well-known artists; if you didn't know art and you were starting off an art collection you can draw comparison here. We don't mean to be a slick gallery; this is a market



ACCESS: Randall Ismay says Art Mart is aiming to bring quality art to a wider cross-section of the public. Photo: Grant Currall



OPPORTUNITY: Micromine marketing manager Ben Vorster (left) and technical manager Ivan Zelina say MasterMine could transform the industry. Photo: Grant Currall

## \$5m grant drives Micromine plans

Adam Orlando

A \$5 million grant from the AusIndustry Commercial Ready program will fuel what Perth-based mining software provider Micromine says will be the largest mining software project ever undertaken.

Micromine was awarded the maximum amount offered under the grant to help fund an \$11.4 million software development project called MasterMine.

The project will be used to develop a mining software platform Micromine says has the potential to transform the global mining software industry.

It is Micromine's third Commercial Ready grant and came just weeks before the Rudd government axed program on May 13.

Micromine founder and managing director Graeme Tudor said the grant marked a major milestone for the company, which was established in 1986.

"At an estimated total cost of more than \$11.4 million, MasterMine will

**"We don't just do exploration software, we deal in the whole mine cycle." - Ben Vorster**

be the largest ever mining software development project to be carried out," Mr Tudor said.

"This grant reflects the trust that the Australian government has placed in Micromine."

Micromine technical manager Ivan Zelina said the MasterMine project would be launched as the demand for exploration and mining software continued to grow.

"MasterMine is not a single product, it's a project we have formed in such a way that every single one of our products is going to benefit, every single product is going to have something new, with new features," Mr Zelina told *WA Business News*.

"There will be new modules put into our established products giving them new techniques and new ways of delivering functionality."

Spanning the next three years, MasterMine will form an innovative new platform the company hopes will put its five core applications at

the forefront of the mining software industry.

There will be close integration and consolidation between Micromine's principal applications: Gbis (data management system), Pitram (mine production control system), Fieldmarshall (mobile application for collecting geological field data), Dome (mine production management system) and its flagship application Micromine (mine design and modelling tool).

The company recently opened its second Australian office, in Adelaide, its 14th worldwide.

Mr Zelina said with Micromine's strong national and global position, the grant would help the company unveil the WA-made mining software to the local and global markets.

"Some of this project is very risky, though," he said.

"This is research and development, and one of the criteria to get the Commercial Ready grant is that you can't go into something that gives you a guaranteed outcome. "There has to be an element of risk and whether this technology is going to be adopted, or if [the industry] is going to love it, remains to be seen.

"But if it's successful, it is completely going to change the mining software industry, or parts of it."

Micromine marketing manager Ben Vorster said the fact that MicroMine received one of the last Commercial Ready grants validated the company's strong international presence.

"We don't just rely on Western Australia...we are a global company, which I think puts us in good stead," he said.

"The company has enjoyed success because we don't just do exploration software, we deal in the whole mine cycle, so we supply not only exploration software to the mine houses, but we do data capture and other applications too. So our diversity is quite dynamic."

Micromine has offices in 12 countries and operates in 70, giving it access to some of the most remote mine sites in the world.

The company meets the challenge of ongoing change in the resources sector by investing heavily in R&D, about 30 per cent of revenue annually.

The MasterMine project will hasten Micromine's development of its existing solutions in three distinct streams - resource data management, resource modelling, and underground mine production control.

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