



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Colorful cardboard cows cast whimsical shadows during the Tannery Arts-Center official grand opening celebration on Friday.

# Public gets an inside look at the new Tannery Lofts

By WALLACE BAINE

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SANTA CRUZ — They came, they saw, they wandered through the hallways in a daze.

The Artspace Tannery Lofts, at the Tannery Arts Center, celebrated its grand opening Friday on the grounds that used to house the Salz Tannery.

The huge public-housing project, developed for low- and middle-income artists, threw a party for the community with live music, food, open studios and lots of meet-and-greets with bedazzled residents.

"This is incredible," said one visitor from Soquel. "How can I live here?"

The twin buildings of the Lofts were open from 2 p.m. to late in the evening, accommodating visitors, many of them seeing the interior of the apartments for the first time.

"It's been constant," said artist Adrian Rasmussen, one of the residents. "People have been really positive."

The party exacerbated what is already a congested traffic situation at the junction of Highway 1 and River Street. And parking was limited. But once parked, many visitors were able to indulge their curiosity about the project that cost more than \$35 million and took several years to complete.



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Visitors to the Tannery Arts Center grand opening celebration enjoy the view from one of the stairways at the complex on Friday.

"People really want to know things," said artist Andrea Del Rio. "I've gotten so many questions. 'How did you get in here? How do you apply?'"

The day started with local dignitaries issuing an official thank-you to those who oversaw the construction and development of the project. Santa Cruz Mayor Cynthia Mathews and county Supervisor Neal Coonerty were among the guests, along with several of the Tannery artists.

Visitors were treated to live music outdoors, and extended jam sessions in the buildings' community rooms. The musical film "Calypso Dreams" by local filmmakers Geoffrey

Dunn and Michael Horne was screened at nightfall, outdoors adjacent to the Dead Cow Gallery, a gallery space that doubles as a recording studio.

About a third of the 100 units in the two buildings were open as artists acted as hosts to their home studios. The artists spoke of getting to know their neighbors and helping each other with their artistic pursuits.

"It's just like a dorm," said artist Scott Rasmann of the social conditions at the Tannery. "You leave the door open and that's an invitation."

The Tannery Lofts houses more than 200 people, including dozens of children.