



**ART AT HOME** This artist's rendering offers a glimpse of the proposed Tannery Artist Lofts for low-income artists.

# Read, Set ... Create

It's groundbreaking time for the Tannery Arts Center

BY CHRISTA MARTIN

Tanneries

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**W**e've been waiting a while now for the Tannery Arts Center to get some legs and start growing. And it's about time. At 3 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16 at the Salz Tannery site, a groundbreaking celebration kicks off the enormous arts project. The first project: the Tannery Artist Lofts.

Expect dancers and musicians to entertain visitors at the dirt-swirling site, where in 2009 the vast undertaking will be completed. This task is being projected to become an artists' haven and one of Santa Cruz's most impressive attractions—located at the north end of River Street, across from the MichaelAngelo Gallery. In addition to offering numerous work studios and luxurious performance space, the project will offer housing for low-income artists.

The lofts are being erected by way of a savvy non-profit group called Artspace, based in Minneapolis. Artspace offers a twist in the real estate game. The company makes dreamy arts complexes a reality. In addition, Artspace has teamed up with the city of Santa Cruz, the Community Foundation, Devcon Construction, Inc. and other groups to move the project forward.

Cathryn Vanderbrink, who works in the properties division of Artspace, says that Santa Cruzans are already perking up and inquiring about how to score a pad in the new housing complex. Why the buzz? They sound like sweet joints. And if you're a poor, starving artist, or maybe just a low-income, hungry artist, you've got a shot at living in clean, spacious, new digs—at

an affordable rate (a deal which can be tough to land in Santa Cruz).

Eligible tenants must make 30, 40, or 50 percent of this area's median income in order to qualify for residency. The lofts are slated for opening in February, 2009, and the application process will begin one year from now, in September, 2008. Interested parties can get on Vanderbrink's e-mail list (see contact info below). However, be aware, there is no waiting list. Getting on her e-mail blast will only keep you apprised of the latest and greatest having to do with the center and the lofts.

Lofts range in size from 300-square-feet up to 2,000-square-feet and rents are based on income. The units also come in studios and one, two and three bedroom options. However, don't look for anything that's pimped out. These units, while boasting high ceilings and a flexible floor plan, are simply designed, without frills like granite counter tops, carpeting, or dishwashers. Likewise, the architectural design of the lofts is that of space conservation—there are no hallways and everything opens on to a main room. Tenants are allowed to design the units as they please, and make any revisions as long as they are code compliant.

"There's this mythology out there that artists are these lone, single hermits," Vanderbrink says. "Artists are like everyone else. They have families, partners and different occupations. ... I've heard so many artists say that they feel valued by their community because this is happening."

The Tannery Arts Center will hold its "Groundbreaking Celebration" at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16. at 1040 River St. Admission is free. For more information visit [artspaceusa.org](http://artspaceusa.org).