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New York The Jewish Week

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Tim Boxer At American Friends Of Tel Aviv Museum Of Art

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

[Tim Boxer](#) | Jewish Week Online Columnist

I was sitting with a couple of lawyers at the [American Friends of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art](#) gala the other week at the Pierre Hotel.



Artist David LaChapelle and gallery owner Jim Kempner at American Friends of Tel Aviv Museum gala.

Harvey Feuerstein, of Manhattan, proudly mentioned that his son Mark is now in his fourth year starring in "Royal Pains" on the USA network. The 40-year-old actor plays the lead role of the doctor, Hank Lawson, in this comedy series.

The other lawyer, George Roland, didn't say much. His card informed that he's president of Roland Land Investment in Encino. He came from California for the annual AFTAM dinner. He has an interest in art.

You can imagine my surprise when I saw George spring on stage to accept an award on behalf of his late parents, Anton and Susan Roland. I learned that his parents had gifted the museum with 13 magnificent paintings by masters of the 20th century, including a Francis Bacon triptych appraised at \$75 million.

"My parents were opposites," George said. His mother came from Hungary; father from the Carpathians. Dad studied in a yeshiva in Prague when the war broke out. He found his future wife on the street wearing a Jewish star. "Why are you wearing that?"

"They told me to."

"Just because they told you to do it doesn't mean you do it."

He ripped the star off her coat and took her to the underground where he was working as a forger for the resistance against the Nazis. They stayed together ever since. As for artist of the year, AFTAM chair David Genser and gala chair Lauren Etes

Schwartz paid tribute to David LaChapelle.

LaChapelle, 49, donated a limited edition print of his painting, "*First I Need Your Hand, Then Forever Can Begin*," valued at \$10,000, the proceeds of which will benefit the museum.

Among the artists who applauded were James Rosenquist, Donald Sultan, Nir Hod, Boaz Vaadia, Marylyn Dintenfass and Oded Halahmy. Also architect Preston Scott Cohen who designed the Herta and Paul Amir Building that opened last November.

LaChapelle told me that he was born in Fairfield, Conn., to Huguenot parents. His ancestors were Protestants who fled persecution in France in the 17th century to freedom in Canada.

Two decades ago LaChapelle stayed in a kibbutz and would hop on a bus to the Tel Aviv Museum. "I met Moti who was so welcoming I felt relaxed," he said of Mordechai Omer, director and chief curator.

He was so taken with the warmth of the people of Israel and "their personification of living in the moment – at the beach, in the cafes, on the scooters. The way they embraced life was so different from anything I experienced."

The 250 guests sorely missed Professor Mordechai Omer who held sway over the gala year after year. He succumbed to cancer in June 2011. In his stead came Suzanne Landau. Chief curator of fine arts at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Landau will succeed Omer in September