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Scene Last Night: Chanos, Schnabel, Tomei, Philip Roth
Amanda Gordon

The drop of molasses that fell on me last night at the Domino Sugar Factory was proof of authenticity.



Creative Time, known for transformative art experiences, had brought several hundred guests to the formerly industrial shores of Williamsburg for a gala.

The narrow, long, high-ceilinged space was lit up by Anne Pasternak, Creative Time's president and artistic director, whose energy and smile could make you feel at home in a prison.

Robert Soros, Alex Tisch and Charles Rockefeller were among those seated at banquet tables decorated with overturned candlesticks. Their dinner, orchestrated by Mario Batali, included kale salad, lentils and fresh ricotta followed by a variety of pastas, all served family style.

Remarks were minimal. Julian Schnabel, the evening's honoree, gave thanks to friends and supporters.

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“Every time I am able to pay for a meal I’m surprised,” he said, as making art is “not something rational.”

Dick Cavett noted that he and Schnabel both surf. Laurie Anderson gave a beautiful performance on the violin.

The dressing-up of the building included Schnabel sculptures near the dance floor and paintings he made the day Cy Twombly died, hung near diners.

“Doesn’t it look like the whole wall is a Schnabel?” said writer Bob Colacello, looking at dark-brown streaks around one of the large canvases. Nope, it was molasses.

Ted Lee, the cookbook author, advised not getting too close to the wall, where he said a foul odor seemed strongest.

“It feels like there’s been a lot of partying here before us,” said Lauren Santo Domingo, co-founder and creative director of Moda Operandi.

“It’s a nice change of scenery,” said her husband, Andres Santo Domingo, who in fact doesn’t work too far away: “My record label, Mexican Summer, is down the street in Fort Greene.”

The testament to Creative Time’s magical powers is that no one at the party wanted to leave. Actress Marisa Tomei was among those dancing just a few feet from where I was slimed.

If dining in an old factory wasn’t completely glamorous, the first part of the evening more than made up for that. Outside the factory, guests watched the sun set over the East River with a close-up view of the Williamsburg Bridge.

“I’ve sold that bridge twice already, and I’m about to sell it a third time to an art collector,” said Jim Chanos, founder of Kynikos Associates Ltd.

Fab Five Freddy, who used to have an art studio down the street, met Jed Walentas of Two Trees Management Co.

“You’re the guy tearing this down to build luxury condos?”

“For realz,” Walentas said.

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Marisa Tomei on the dance floor. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg



Lauren Santo Domingo, co-founder and creative director of Moda Operandi, and Alex Tisch of Loews Corp. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg

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The scene inside the Domino Sugar Factory. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg



Julian Schnabel, honoree of the Creative Time gala, gazing at his pregnant fiancée, May Andersen.
Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg

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A Schnabel work hangs on a wall already "painted" with remnants of its former life as a factory. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg



Anne Pasternak, president and artistic director of Creative Time, center, greets guests outside the Domino Sugar Factory. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg

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Jim Chanos, founder of Kynikos Associates Ltd., and Crystal Connors. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg



Man-hug: art dealer Alberto Mugarbi and Andres Santo Domingo who runs Mexican Summer, an indie rock record label. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/Bloomberg

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The portable bathrooms at the gala featured a whiteboard exterior. Photographer: Amanda Gordon/
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