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ART BASEL

Actor Jeremy Piven backs out of InterContinental Miami Hotel digital unveiling, felt image of sultry dancing woman was too risqué, bad for image

Showed up fashionably late for event, despite getting five-night stay

By Hannah Sampson

The InterContinental Miami officially turned on the flashiest part of its \$30 million renovation on Thursday: an exterior 19-story "digital canvas" that features, among other moving images, a sultry dancing woman.

Photographer Patrick McMullan and artist Ultra Violet were on hand as promised, but the man who was supposed to flip the switch, Entourage actor Jeremy Piven, was absent for the ceremonial duties.

Tadd Schwartz, whose public relations and marketing firm Schwartz Media Strategies represents the downtown Miami hotel, said Piven backed out an hour before the event.



"He felt that the hotel's digital canvas was too risqué and bad for his image because there was a dancing girl on it," Schwartz said.

Piven showed up at the event, which was also a launch for an outdoor marquee showing art, LCD screens in the lobby and the restaurant Toro Toro, after the building had lit up with the dancing woman silhouette.

He blamed his absence on simple tardiness: "I walked out here, I think I was 30 seconds late." But he said he misunderstood what the building was going to portray, saying he thought it would be a reproduction of the city's skyline.

"I wasn't aware of the image," he said. "I don't know what to say, to be honest with you. I'm having a moment...It's very rare that I'm speechless." He eventually managed a statement about celebrating freedom of speech.

Piven and the hotel appeared to work out their concerns after some tension and headed back into the landmark hotel to continue the party. But Schwartz, who said Piven got a five-night stay in one of the hotel's top suites out of the deal, pointed out that the actor had been given a full explanation of how the hotel would appear once illuminated.

"Miami's a sexy town. We have a sexy building with a sexy girl on it," Schwartz said. "Jeremy Piven, Mr. Entourage, should have known what he was walking into."