

This weekend marks the 40th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Art Festival, which took place August 15-17, 1969 in Bethel, NY on the property of Max Yasgur's dairy farm. Official Woodstock photographer Henry Diltz and festival Producer Michael Lang held a book signing and reception August 13th at the Morrison Hotel Gallery (313 Bowery) to celebrate the historical musical event.

After the 2 hour book signing, a raffle giveaway, for which musician John Sebastian was on hand, of Diltz-signed photos was held. Post-affle, a slideshow presentation of Woodstock photos set to the voice of Walter Cronkite reporting on the event played on a big screen at the back of the gallery. After Cronkite's monologue (available on Amazon), the slideshow continued while music from the time period played over the speakers to keep the mood going. As the evening went on, Lang and Diltz mingled with guests taking in the photography of Diltz (as well as work by Jim Marshall, Baron Wolman and Lisa Law which is also on display) and continued to sign items at the front table of the gallery.

I don't normally visit art galleries. Mostly because the internet allows me to find any image I can think of from the comfort of my own home. But this was a special event that I felt I couldn't miss. I found myself completely starstruck over Michael Lang, who does not look much different than he did in the movie, so he was easy to spot. And although Henry Diltz isn't a name I was familiar with prior to last night, I'm glad attending the exhibit brought him to my attention and allowed me to appreciate his work. My passions are concerts and concert photography, so it was a thrill to be able to attend a celebration of the most historical concert to ever take place, and the work that documented it, with the men responsible in attendance.