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**THE MUSEUM AT BETHEL WOODS WINS  
PRESTIGIOUS MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY AWARDS**

**[July 14, 2008] BETHEL, N.Y.** – The Museum at Bethel Woods is pleased to announce it is the recipient of two 2008 MUSE awards from the American Association of Museums for outstanding achievement in museum media.

The Museum at Bethel Woods is located at the historic site of the 1969 Woodstock Music and Art Fair, and explores the unique experience of the festival, its significance as a culminating event of a transformational decade, and the ongoing legacy of the 1960s and Woodstock.

Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, the MUSE awards competition recognizes outstanding achievement in museum media. The competition is an activity of the Media and Technology Standing Professional Committee of the American Association of Museums.

“**The Festival Experience**”, produced by The Museum at Bethel Woods with Cortina Productions, received the Bronze award for Multimedia Installations, which included immersive installations featuring video walls, or installations of multimedia that do not require interactivity.

This distillation of the sights and sounds of the three-day Woodstock Music and Art Fair from the festival-goer’s perspective is an immersive experience featuring four projection screens, nine digital video projectors, synchronized theatrical lighting effects, and 5:1 surround sound. As museum guests pass the iconic yellow sound towers into “The Festival Experience”, the three-story main screen recreates the hour-by-hour experience from arrival to departure, including the musical performances, medical tents, free food kitchens, rain and mud, and communal spirit that defined the Woodstock festival. Projection scrimms to the sides and above the main screen expand the experience with first-hand stories from festival performers and attendees and visual cues to the time of day or the state of the weather.

The judges concluded, “This program used angled oversized screens (including overhead) to create an immersive film environment that was enhanced with lighting and other effects. There was a nice blend of still and moving footage, including concert footage and commentary from the festival-goers. The judges felt the piece succeeded in creating the mood at the Woodstock Festival and setting up the rest of the museum experience. A high production level was enhanced by simple, well-designed titles and captions. Ceiling projections and lighting changed depending on the time of day, with a particularly effective moment when a National Guard helicopter came in. Overall, an effectively evocative experience.”

Michael Egan, CEO Museum Development Group and Senior Director, The Museum at Bethel Woods said, "In tapping the award-winning team at Cortina Productions we were able to create an unparalleled 270 degree wraparound video and audio experience for our guests with the "The Festival Experience". The objective was to immerse visitors in what they might have experienced had they been at the Woodstock festival and to remind those who were actually there what it was like. We wanted to give our patrons the ability to travel back in time, if only for 11 minutes, and this exhibit offers a stunning visual escape that puts them in the thick of the recreated festival."

According to Joseph Cortina at Cortina Productions, "We wanted to help create a unique environment that immersed the audience in the sights and sounds of the event, using the latest multi-media technologies and techniques to transport the visitor back to three amazing days of peace, love, and music."

Additionally, "**1968: A Year That Shook America**", received an Honorable Mention in the Video category. Entries were limited to videos with no audience participation, including animations, and linear and nonlinear narratives.

"**1968: A Year That Shook America**" is a 10-minute film that tells a compelling story of a watershed year in American history, which included an escalating war in Vietnam and increasing division at home, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an increasingly militant civil rights movement and growing women's movement, campus unrest, cities in flames, and the inspirational first manned orbit of the moon.

According to Michael Egan, "In developing our approach to this film, produced by The Museum at Bethel Woods with History©, we decided to let the events of 1968 speak for themselves. Through the use of archival footage and sound-on-tape, the dramatic arc of the year is "narrated" by period television news anchors of the day, key political and social figures, on-the-scene eyewitnesses, and song lyrics. Our goal was to stimulate dialogue between the generations, giving Baby Boomers the opportunity to share the story of this dramatic year with their children, and grandchildren, helping make historical connections in younger minds."

"We are truly honored to receive a MUSE Award for **1968: A Year that Shook America**", said Dr. Libby O'Connell, co-producer and Chief Historian for History. "The chance to work on a short film about such a pivotal year is just the type of challenge we enjoy, and working with the talented team assembled at Bethel Woods made this a unique project for us."

The Judges said: "This video exploration of a single volatile year in America's history showcases incredible historical footage, deftly edited with very high production value. Through the intimacy of eye-witness storytelling, complemented with archival news and advertising clips, the full scope of 1968 is revealed and the decisive events of that year are exposed."

The MUSE Awards competition received nearly 180 applications from a wide variety of museums in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia. Entries included audio, cell phone, and interactive handheld tours, interactive kiosks and multimedia installations, podcasts, blogs, games, websites, online collection and image databases, videos, and e-mail marketing campaigns. This year MUSE Award winners were named from 10 distinct categories.

"It is an honor and privilege for AAM's Media and Technology Standing Professional Committee to host the MUSE awards, now in its nineteenth year. Once again, the quality and diversity of entries has been exceptional. The ingenuity and creativity of the people who conceptualize and build these projects, never ceases to amaze me." - Nik Honeysett, Chair of AAM's Media & Technology Committee

Thirty eight judges – museum and media professionals from across the county – were involved in the process of selecting the winners. Winning entries were expected to demonstrate outstanding achievement in content quality; interface design; functionality; production quality; visual appeal; the user's

experience; and the intent to which new directions were charted or old challenges resolved through technical innovation. A complete list of judging criteria and MUSE Award winners can be found on the Media and Technology website: <http://www.mediaandtechnology.org/>

The Museum at Bethel Woods was presented with the above MUSE Awards at the 2008 American Association of Museums Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. There to receive the award and represent The Museum at Bethel Woods was Mike Eagan as well as Wade Lawrence, Museum Director.

[For more information on The Museum at Bethel Woods, or Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, please visit [www.BethelWoodsCenter.org](http://www.BethelWoodsCenter.org).

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### **About Bethel Woods Center for the Arts:**

The mission of Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is to present compelling programs from the arts that educate, entertain and engage audiences of all ages, to institute community outreach and education and improve the quality of life and vitality of the Sullivan County region. Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is located approximately 90 minutes from New York City at the site of the original 1969 Woodstock festival in Bethel, NY. The 15,000-seat outdoor performing arts venue and the soon-to-be-opened Museum at Bethel Woods are set within 2,000 bucolic acres. The main pavilion covers 4,500 seats with another 10,000 on a natural sloping lawn while offering unique backdrops including the original festival site and the majesty of the surrounding Sullivan County countryside. The venue presents a diverse selection of popular artists, a range of orchestral performances, community events and music and arts educational opportunities. By providing artists with the opportunity to perform on one of music's most legendary grounds, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts is committed to being a world-class cultural destination. In addition, The Museum at Bethel Woods slated to open June 2, 2008 will further embed this arts campus as one of the premier sites in New York State. [www.BethelWoodsCenter.org](http://www.BethelWoodsCenter.org)