

Chris Stein photography exhibition opens

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Renowned rock photographer Bob Gruen (l) with Chris Stein (r).

Leslie Feffer

[Blondie](#) guitarist and co-founder [Chris Stein's "Blondie 4\(0\) Ever"](#) exhibit opened to the public today at the [Morrison Hotel Gallery](#) X Dream Downtown and will run through July 15. Last night, the Morrison Hotel Gallery and Dream Hotels hosted a private reception at the [Dream Downtown](#) for the rock legend's first photography exhibit in New York, part of the celebration of Blondie's 40th anniversary.

"I've been building up to it for a while," Stein said. "It's been a long time coming." Last year, the Morrison Hotel Gallery hosted a 24-print exhibit of the Flatbush, Brooklyn native's work at the Sunset Marquis Hotel in West Hollywood, California.

"Chris and I met about two years ago," Morrison Hotel Gallery co-owner Peter Blachley said. "I knew he was a photographer, so I got in touch with him and went up to his house in Woodstock. I immediately realized that he has a real talent for photography. He was kind of obsessed with it back in the day."

Before becoming a rock star, Stein was an accomplished photographer who studied at the School of Visual Arts. After meeting Deborah Harry and forming Blondie in 1974, most of the pictures he snapped were of her – and a handful of those are now on display in this show. The guitarist was an insider at the birth of the early 70s downtown rock scene and took advantage of his access to the emerging new wave and punk bands – such as Iggy Pop, Richard Hell, and the Ramones – documenting much of that era with his camera.

Of the photos on display for the next couple of months, Stein had trouble choosing a favorite and named another instead. “One that’s not here,” he said. “My favorite one is of [the late music writer] Lester Bangs on the beach.” That [print is available](#) for purchase at the Morrison Hotel Gallery.

Blachley pointed out that “many of these have never been released before as fine art music photographs” and that he wanted to make sure they are available to fans at an affordable level. The price range for prints is from \$900 to \$3,000.

A portion of the proceeds from last night will go to benefit [Rational Animal](#), a local nonprofit that helps at-risk animals.

This fall, Rizzoli will publish a book of Stein's “iconic and mostly unpublished photographs of Debbie Harry and the cool creatures of the '70s and '80s New York rock scene,” according to [Amazon](#).