

## Blog about Staten Island - Kirsten Bengtson by Kirsten Bengtson-Lykoudis

Although it's one of New York's city boroughs, Staten Island remains a mystery to visitors and city residents alike who've ferried across the harbor but never ventured beyond the terminal. A former beach resort for the Vanderbilts and other wealthy families who built spacious 19<sup>th</sup> c. "cottages" or summered in its columned beachfront hotels, the island is a hilly tree-filled gem full of unexpected cultural treasures.

I moved to the island ten years ago to rendezvous with a towering sculptor and icon painter I'd met in Greece. After being shown a series of shoebox apartments in Brooklyn and Manhattan that fit our miniscule budget, we landed a rambling two-bedroom with a swimming pool overlooking a lane of well-groomed Tudor homes a few blocks from the ferry. Not bad. The commute to the Dumbo gallery where I worked consisted of a ferry trip followed by a quick bike ride over the Brooklyn Bridge. We eventually moved to an exposed brick apartment on the ground floor of a quaint Victorian, before renting a 2,000 sq. foot loft with a roof deck in a converted warehouse with harbor views. We've since bought and renovated a house in the nearby historic neighborhood of [Hamilton Park](#).



At nearby Snug Harbour, the [Newhouse Center for Contemporary Art](#) recently hosted HOPE-A-HOLIC, an exhibition of 19 artists curated by Patrick Grenier that explored the use of delusional optimism and senselessness through installation, drawing, painting, video, performance and interactive works. Artists included: Daniel Bejar, Douglas Boatwright, Joseph Borelli, Mike Calway-Fagen, Zoe Chan, Jinkee Choi, Tim Clifford, Johannes De Young, William Graef, Tobin Hines, Tom Hughes, James Jaxxa, Jayson Keeling, Tina La Porta, Sarah McCann, Anne McGuire, Mustafa Maluka, Tattfoo Tan and Cody Vanderkaay. An ongoing exhibition of drawings, video interviews, curator's notes and administrative ephemera by Polly Apfelbaum is currently on view.

Posted on 8/27/10