STATEN ISLAND SEEN traces this borough's unique history and changing landscape from the 17th century to the present. These works are made in a broad range of styles and materials, from ink drawing to anaglyph 3-D video. In the past, artists were attracted to Staten Island for its varied landscape: The shoreline, inland hills, ponds, valleys, waterways, and forests all provided inspiration. Contemporary artists depict these natural features as well as the way we live today, including parking lots, strip malls, tract houses, and other aspects of our suburban landscape.

In this exhibit you will see artists’ responses to the changes that have occurred to Staten Island’s landscape since the 1930s, including the construction of the commuter bridges (Bayonne, Goethals, Outerbridge, and Verrazano-Narrows), urban-style high-rise housing, tract housing, new communities, and shopping centers.

Some of these developments have occurred in floodplain communities – many established as summer vacation retreats decades ago – that were severely damaged or destroyed by Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Staten Island is the most rural New York City borough, where you can hike for miles within dense woods, explore wetlands, and climb steep terrain, yet be only a bus and ferry ride away from Manhattan's skyscrapers. These natural aspects are part of what has made Staten Island so attractive to new residents, and led to its rapid development. But while the population density has greatly increased, more than one-third of the island is protected parkland, including the Greenbelt and more than 170 parks. Beaches, wetlands, hills, and little-known places of tranquility are adjacent to bustling commercial strips and residential communities.

Staten Island continues a balancing act between the urban and rural aspects of its character; this contrast is explored in Staten Island SEEN.

**Featured Artists:**

Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno  
Nancy Bonior  
Brian Brooks  
Paul Caranicas  
Rackstraw Downes  
Nicholas Evans-Cato  
Richard Estes  
Ned Gannon  
Diana Horowitz  
Amer Kobaslija  
Andrew Lenaghan  
Ginger Levant  
Stanley Lewis  
Cynthia Mailman  
Ron Milewicz  
Bill Murphy  
Lenora Paglia  
Stephanie Pierce  
Morgan Taylor  
Peter Van Dyck  
Sarah Yuster  
Louis George Bouché  
John Bradley  
Ferdinand Busing  
James Edward Buttersworth  
Alfred DeGioiagio Crimi  
Jasper Francis Cropsey  
Jasper Dankaerts  
Mauritz Frederik De Haas  
Mabel Dwight  
Johan Peter Eggers  
Hermann Feuchsel  
Victor Joseph Gatto  
Frederick Kost  
Percy Leason  
William Rickarby Miller  
Edward Moran  
John A. Noble  
Archibald Robertson  
Charles Schabelitz  
Henry Ernest Schnakenberg  
John French Sloan  
Anthony Toney  
Norman Turner  
Robert Wallis  
Otto Charles Wigand  
C. Winter
Select Highlights from: *Staten Island SEEN*
On view September 18, 2015 - September 1, 2016 at the Staten Island Museum at Snug Harbor, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Bldg A

The Bay

![View of the land on the southerly and southwesterly sides of the great bay between the Neversincks and Long Island...](image)

**View of the land on the southerly and southwesterly sides of the great bay between the Neversincks and Long Island...**
Jasper Danckaerts (Dutch, 1639- ca. 1703)
Ink on paper, 1679
Facsimile of original in the Brooklyn Historical Society

This sketch is the earliest existing image that includes Staten Island. It may be the very sketch Jasper Danckaerts reports having made in his *Journal of a Voyage to New York and Tour in Several of the American Colonies, in 1679-80*: The Dutch inscription on the top of the drawing says: “View of the land on the southerly and southwesterly sides of the great bay between the Neversincks and Long Island...” Letters of the alphabet indicate the principal landmarks in the sketch:

A. Coney Island (today’s Bay Ridge)
B. The Gate to enter (the Narrows, now occupied by the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge)
C. Sandy Hook (in the far distance)
D. Rensselaer’s Hook (today’s Fort Wadsworth)
E. Some trees serving as a landmark (site unknown)
F. Kill van Kol

Spouting whales and dolphin are notable in the bay, giving some idea of the plentiful sea life that must have populated the unpolluted waters. Also featured are a few small sail ships.

Villages and Farms

![Looking Oceanward from Todt Hill](image)

**Looking Oceanward from Todt Hill**
Jasper Cropsey (American, 1823-1900)
Oil on canvas, 1895
Gift of a Committee of Donors
A1946.3595

Cropsey’s sweeping panorama encompasses the hills of Staten Island, the planted fields of the Vanderbilt estate in the middle distance, and the sea beyond. Cropsey, born in Rossville, is considered one of the most important second generation Hudson River School painters (a group of artists who are known primarily for landscape paintings celebrating the American wilderness and farmland). He was particularly noted for his autumn scenes. Cropsey is still one of the most distinguished “native sons” of Staten Island. The painting was one of the Museum’s major purchases, and another artist featured in this exhibition, Percy Leason, was a major promoter of its acquisition.
Industrialization/Urbanization

**The Survivor, S.I. (Staten Island Shore)**
Mabel Dwight (American, 1876-1955)
Lithograph on paper, 1929
Museum Purchase.
A1975.20.1/2

Mabel Dwight's lithograph is a vivid reminder of a bygone era. The Greek Revival home is overwhelmed by new industrial complexes, trolley lines, automobiles, telephone poles and gas tanks. This was a timely image, made on the eve of the stock market crash that began the Great Depression.
The Cincinnati-born, New Orleans-raised artist eventually settled in Greenwich Village, then a mecca for artists and political radicals. She was critically acclaimed as one of America's foremost print makers, having studied lithography later in life in Paris. She even lived for a while on Staten Island, often representing the contrast between Staten Island's rural areas, dilapidated old houses and the growing industrial blight. Though a committed socialist, her works were never heavy-handed political propaganda.

Land Use

**Cedar Grove Beach, Staten Island Winter**
Frederick Kost (American, 1861-1923)
Oil on canvas, c. 1890
Gift of the Estate of Walter C. Schabelitz
A1960.17.6

Frederick Kost's wintry view shows the influence of George Inness' (1825-94) landscape paintings, emphasizing nature's forms fused by light and atmosphere. Kost's family moved to Staten Island in 1867, where he continued to live and work until 1900. In the 1880s he studied in Munich and Paris, where he developed a looser painting style, known as Tonalism, stressing color, brushstroke and texture rather than line. The painting was intended as a poetic evocation of a place and moment in time, rather than a literal translation of its appearance. It shows the rural character of Staten Island just before the Consolidation of 1898, when Richmond County became a part of Greater New York City.
Neighborhoods

**Stapleton Corner**  
Cecil Crosley Bell (American, 1906-1970)  
Gouache on cardboard, 1944  
Gift of Agatha Bell  
A1977.15.27

This lively winter evening street scene, showing the commercial strip near Tappen Park, Stapleton, is typical of Cecil Bell’s style. Bell and his wife, Agatha Lewis Bell, moved to Staten Island in 1942. He studied with Ashcan painter John Sloan at the Art Students League, and privately. Sloan’s urban realism inspired Bell’s style, and the two remained friends, collecting each other’s work. John Sloan’s etching Wake on the Ferry, is also featured in this exhibition.

Bridges and Connections

**Staten Island: Bridge over Dizzy Bunker**  
Paul Caranicas (Greece, b. 1946, American)  
Oil on canvas, 1987  
Lent by The West Publishing Company St. Paul, Minnesota, a division of Thomson Reuters

Caranicas’ photorealist painting presents a panoramic “fish-eye” view of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge from the Staten Island side. The foreground shows an abandoned, overgrown gun emplacement at Fort Wadsworth, a former U.S. military installation, now part of the Gateway National Recreation area, located on The Narrows just north of the bridge. Paul Caranicas’ work often focuses on the built environment, containing an implicit message of environmental decay. Ironically, the majestic Narrows, so often the focus of earlier landscapes, is not actually seen in this view. The title is a play on the popular Simon and Garfunkel song, “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” The Verrazano Narrows Bridge (opened in 1964) was engineer/designer Othmar Amman’s (born Swiss 1879-1965), last and longest suspension bridge. He also designed half of NYC’s major bridges: George Washington, Bayonne (his only arch truss bridge), Bronx Whitestone, Triborough and Throgs Neck.
Along the Arthur Kill
Bill Murphy (American, 1952)
Watercolor on paper, 2008
lent by the artist

The artist, born and living on Staten Island, wrote of this piece: “Along the Arthur Kill was conceived around 2004 and painted in 2007. The gap of three years was due to an inability to ‘finish’ the painting in my mind as a concept. I had conceived of a large aerial view, including both water and land, but had the all-too-familiar feeling of inadequacy. It wasn’t until I had decided to integrate pieces of the bridge itself that something came alive, as well the resultant desire to paint it.”

The vertigo-inducing view, made from the walkway of the Bayonne Bridge (designed by Othmar Amman, completed in 1928), reverses the ratio of sky to land/water, with just a small wedge of sky at the very top.

Staten Island Ferry Docking in Manhattan
Richard Estes (American, 1932)
Oil on board, 2008
Loan courtesy Marlborough Fine Arts, NY.

Estes’ painting offers a glimpse of riders seated on the covered deck, looking out at New York Harbor on a sunny summer’s day— an experience familiar to many Staten Islanders and tourists. This work is part of a larger series of Staten Island Ferry paintings by the pioneering photorealist. The series expresses the artist’s continuing interest in views of public transit in New York City, which have included subways, buses and even escalators. The sharp-focus realism, and often unexpected viewpoints, are hallmarks of his style.
Inside Out

Moon and Venus 5 a.m.
Otto Charles Wigand (American, 1856-1944)
Oil on canvas, c. 1930
Lent by Dr. Jonathan D. Wall

One feels the still air of a warm summer dawn from the window of Otto Wigand’s home in Grymes Hill, where he and his wife, fellow painter, Adeline Wigand, lived from 1916 to 1944. The view is dense with houses, and beyond with ships, and the Brooklyn shore. The frame-within-a-frame of the window gives the work a stabilizing geometry, and a deeper sense of space. Compare this work with Stephanie Pierce’s recent painting of a Staten Island attic room, which merges the outside view with the interior. The wall seems to dissolve into the wallpaper patterns and light.

Ecology/Land & Water Use

Extirpated Species/Whispering Reed Villas-Summer;
Exxon Oil-Extirpated Flora; Turn of the Century-Wetlands-Disappeared Flora-Staten Island, N.Y.
Cynthia Mailman (American, 1942)
Acrylic, gouache, gold leaf on paper, 1999-2002
Lent by the artist

Cynthia Mailman’s Extirpated Species Eco-Illuminations represent the loss of plants and animals formerly found in specific areas of the American landscape, including the sites on Staten Island shown here. The gilded borders offer accurate images of species, once common to these areas, while the inset landscapes depict the causes of their disappearance. The style of this triptych is based upon late gothic illuminated manuscripts (some examples found in the Treasure Box Gallery on the second floor). Mailman explains: “All my work is and has been an attempt to address and comment on the same subject: civilization and technology and their effects upon our natural environment. In a subtle, innocuous “pretty” picture I hope to seduce the viewer into seeing the dangers and casualties of our “progress.”
Conclusion

**New York Harbor and The Narrows**
Sarah Yuster (American, 1957)
Oil on canvas diptych, 2013
Lent by the artist, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts

The artist writes: “The sweep of our harbor has been the muse of artists for centuries. I'm attracted to the connection from these past worlds to mine. Inaccessible from a singular, public vantage point, two North Shore hillsides provided the vistas from which I noted the touch of our era.”

Yuster has chronicled much of Staten Island’s landscape over the course of her artistic career. Her pre-9/11 painting of this panorama included the iconic World Trade Center Twin Towers. This painting was also intended as homage to Jasper Cropsey’s panorama of 1895, exhibited on the first floor.

**Kissam Avenue, Oakwood Beach,**
November 15, 2012
Amer Kobaslija (born Bosnian, 1975, lives in New York City/Gettysburg, PA.)
Oil on Plexiglas, 2012
Gift in memory of Mirsad Kobaslija; Courtesy of the artist and George Adams Gallery, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts

Kobaslija’s dramatic depiction of the impact of Hurricane Sandy on Oakwood Beach, gives a sense of the scope and devastation Sandy left in its wake, which included 23 deaths. The artist escaped the Bosnian conflict as a teenager in 1993, finding asylum in the United States in 1997. His youthful experience of man-made destruction prepared him to represent the disorder that follows disaster, such as Hurricane Sandy, which left this desolate landscape on the South Shore of Staten Island. After originally making this painting as a daylight scene (the artist toured the area during the daytime), he decided to increase the poignancy of the scene by setting it at night.

**Stereographic views of Staten Island**
from the collection of the Staten Island Museum

The Stereoscope or Stereopticon, precursors of today’s 3-D movies, became popular in Victorian England. Photographers all over the world, including Staten Island, began to produce stereoscopic slides of sites and landmarks. This is just a small sampling of the many stereographic views that were made of Staten Island’s sights from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, found in the Museum’s Archives. The earliest practical stereoscope was invented in 1838, one year before Daguerre released his earliest photographic process. It was a success of the Great Exhibition (London Crystal Palace) of 1851. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. developed the Holmes Stereoscope in 1859, which became the standard, hand-held device, using stereocards or stereographs. Some of the images are by Staten Island photographer, Isaac Almstaedt (1851-1921). These vintage stereographs are from the Museum’s archives.