

## Roslyn Hgts. photographer connects Roosevelts

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Roslyn Heights photographer Xiomaro's Theodore Roosevelt photos will be on display at Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate through Feb. 22.

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BY BILL SAN ANTONIO | 0 comments

Last year's federal sequestration and partial government shutdown prevented Roslyn Heights photographer Xiomaro from capturing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Hyde Park estate on film.

But on Monday, two selections from his 2013 series "Theodore Roosevelt – How I Love Sagamore Hill" were put up for exhibition through Feb. 22 at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum's Wallace Visitor and Education Center.

The selected images highlight Sagamore Hill's "North Room," in which Theodore Roosevelt – Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fifth cousin – spent a good deal of time, and his wife Edith's bedroom.

"When you see the two photos together, there's a nice contrast," said Xiomaro [pronounced See-oh-mar-oh]. "The 'North Room' is very manly looking and with lots of dark paneling, while Edith's room is more feminine and with a lot of color in it."

Xiomaro was commissioned by Sagamore Hill administrators in early 2012 to photograph the rooms of Roosevelt's estate that had been stripped of their furniture as part of an ongoing three-year, \$7.2 million restoration process.

The images Xiomaro selected for Hyde Park were part of a wider exhibit sent to Harvard University to accompany the new Ken Burns documentary "The Roosevelts," about the political dynasty of Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt.

At the conclusion of his Hyde Park exhibition on Feb. 22, Xiomaro will hold a photography lecture in which he will help others improve their work, entitled "Learning to Look."

"I think from the very beginning, they asked me about getting involved by doing a community workshop where Sagamore Hill exhibits would be on display at Hyde Park, but when the commission fell through they felt a bit more inclined to book something a bit quicker," said Xiomaro, whose real name is Richard Dieguez. "They definitely wanted to work with me, they were really pleased with the photography, but it's tough with their budget being what it is."

Xiomaro has lived in Roslyn Heights since 1988 and was previously an entertainment lawyer representing musicians and actors, but after beating prostate cancer in 2005 he began singing and painting under his pseudonym, which is Spanish for "Ready for Battle."

Xiomaro traveled the country, singing in coffee shops and photographing national parks he'd visit along the way, and in 2011 he was commissioned by the Julian Alden Weir estate's Artist-in-Residence program to photograph the unfurnished rooms of the Connecticut landmark as it underwent renovation.

The work was showcased at Weir Farm and throughout Connecticut and eventually caught the eye of Sagamore Hill officials.

"Theodore Roosevelt – How I Love Sagamore Hill" opened in early 2013 and ran through June 2. On July 4, an exhibition of Xiomaro's photographs of the William Floyd estate in Mastic Beach opened at the Fraunces Tavern Museum in Manhattan and ran through Dec. 1.

Selections from the Floyd exhibit, entitled "William Floyd's House of Revolution," were taken for an exhibit next month at the African Burial Ground National Monument in Manhattan that juxtaposes the Floyd family cemetery with the one in which its slaves are buried.

"A lot of African-American leaders don't really know about it and it hasn't really been photographed in a professional way, so it's interesting to draw public attention to another aspect of the park," Xiomaro said.

In addition, Xiomaro is in talks with the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England about a similar exhibition based on the Floyd cemeteries.

“The United States and England, we have a bit of a shared history regarding slavery, so there’s a lot of cross research between the countries on the topic,” Xiomaro said.

Xiomaro is currently offering a free e-book featuring high-resolution photographs from the Roosevelt exhibit through his website, [Xiomaro.com](http://Xiomaro.com).