



## **MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF i-ITALY**

(December 24, 2008)



Since 2000, folklorist Joseph Sciorra, aka Joey Skee, one of our most active bloggers, has been building an original presepio in his Brooklyn kitchen... With his permission, we're using this year's "Presepio in the South Bronx" to tell all our readers and contributors Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

This year, Joseph's presepio was featured in [The New York Times](#) [2]. Here is the article.



"For the past few weeks, Joseph Sciorra has been painstakingly putting together a tabletop tableau of the South Bronx circa 1975. Subway cars slathered with graffiti are set against bombed-out tenements and empty lots. An empty lot is covered with broken bricks and a battered mattress, and a charred car is abandoned by the curb. He added the final touch this week:

Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

This is not an exclamation, but a partial roster.

They are joined by the Three Kings, some stable creatures, shepherds and angels on high.

The broken-down Boogie Down is Mr. Sciorra's latest take on the Italian presepio tradition, Nativity scenes with personal and modern touches. One year it was on a Caribbean beach. Last year it was Baghdad (with a parachuting angel). And now the Three Kings from the East will turn left somewhere by Crotona Avenue and trek south.

"The South Bronx always seemed to me to be another landscape suited to the Nativity narrative," said Mr. Sciorra, a folklorist who has long studied Italian-American religious expression. "God is being born in a humble situation, right? What's more humble than the South Bronx in 1975? And with the current economic situation playing out today, another narrative is inscribed into this after the fact."

[Read more from "Away in a Manger in the South Bronx".](#) [2]

[by David Gonzalez, The New York Times](#) [2]

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[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/presepio600-red1230127560.jpg>

[2] <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/12/17/away-in-a-manger-in-the-south-bronx/>

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