

# LIFE IN OSCEOLA

## Artist of the Month | Bobbi Mastrangelo

Bobbi Mastrangelo has been selected the artist of the month for March at the Osceola Center for the Arts in Kissimmee. Her work will be displayed March 1-31.

**What is your medium?** Because I love experimentation and texture, I work in several mediums. Presently they include works on my handmade paper, fiber art and light-weight foam-based sculptures.

**Describe your style:** My work is rendered realistically. The sculpture-relief works look like I had lifted a piece off the street and mounted it on the wall. Art critics call that look *trompe l'oeil*, which means "fool the eye." In fact one viewer of my "Borough of Manhattan" sculpture was convinced that it was real. "That lady ought to be arrested for stealing manhole covers!" she declared.

**What art training or influences have you had?** My high school art teacher, Bill Little, provided many challenging art assignments. My bachelor's degree in elementary education and teaching experience helped me to enrich the education of our own children. But when I was a stay-at-home mom, I missed art stimulation. To be able to take undergraduate art courses, I shared baby-sitting with another mother. When my children attended elementary school, I took more art classes. Through my studies, I moved beyond impressionism and explored different techniques. Professor Lawrence Alloway noticed a propensity for circles in my work. In 1979, I came across photos of manhole covers and decided they would be my theme.

**How long have you been an artist?** I was always interested in the pursuit of art, but I never called myself an artist until I gained a considerable track record in the 1990s.

**When I am not creating art:** I like walking and exercise, reading, studying a foreign language, writing short stories, composing poetry and singing. One of my short stories, "Memories of T. Edward Ellis," was published in the book *From the Heart: Stories of Love and Friendship*. And a novel group book club is one of my favorite activities. I also enjoy singing soprano in The Guys and Dolls Community Chorus.

**If you could be any famous artist, who would it be and why?** I admired Pablo Picasso's energy and ingenuity. The target paintings of pop artist Jasper Johns commanded



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Bobbi Mastrangelo says that in 1979, she found photos of manhole covers and decided use that theme. She shows '3 Sewer Hitter' and 'Water Cover.' Her art will be at the Osceola Center for the Arts in March.

millions of dollars in the 1980s. My Dad's advice was "Believe in yourself. Be yourself." Now after 27 years of "Grate Experiences" with Manhole Art, I am content to be me!

**Creating art can take a lot of energy. What do you do to rejuvenate yourself?** I walk or exercise, work in the garden, socialize with other artists, read *Art News* magazine, see an excellent art exhibit and take rejuvenating naps.

**Does artistic talent run in your family?** My mother, Martha Betschen, planned her meals to be a colorful as well as appetizing presentation. We played color games at the supper table. Mom taught me and my siblings to notice details. My father, Herman Betschen, was a self-taught draftsman with Bell Aircraft for part of his career. He created several inventions and in the 1940s built a huge freezer to preserve our food. His inventiveness and engineering skills impressed

me. Some of my larger installations and interactive sculptures are due to his influence. In addition, my sister, Judie Pufpaff, is a talented impressionist landscape painter.

**If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be, and why?** My husband and I are happy right here in the friendly, vibrant community of Solivita. We fly north to visit relatives and friends and enjoy traveling in our country and abroad.

**Where can people see your work?** My work will be on exhibit at the Osceola Center for the Arts during the month of March and the Toho Square "Downtown in Kowtown" Celebration on March 24.

The Center for the Arts is at 2411 E. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway (U.S. 192). For more information, call the Center for the Arts box office at 407-846-6257 or visit [www.ocfta.com](http://www.ocfta.com).

— SARA SHECKLER  
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