

BELLA Magazine

LIFE IS BELLA!

By Jessica Licciardello

It is a special experience when viewing the work of an artist that spans their career. You can see the evolution of thought and expression that can only be realized over time, but also identify the themes that resonate through the entire body of work. I had the pleasure of viewing the exhibit “Making Faces” by artist Victoria Bellenger, an immense body of work at Staten Island’s Art on the Terrace gallery, who at 86 years old is showing us the fruits of vision, persistence, and the thought so beautifully expressed by Matisse, that “creativity takes courage.”

As many artists, she has worked in many different forms over her career, including [illustrating 17 children’s books](https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/704114.Victoria_De_Larrea)(https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/704114.Victoria_De_Larrea), sculpting in clay, and painting with ink, and watercolor. The pieces on display at the gallery are a menagerie of faces and heads that seem to morph and flow as you walk through the different stylized clusters. Each face has a seriousness and a playfulness that made me feel connected to humanity by showing our similarities as well as differences. There are also framed collages of drawings on “post-it” notes, that flowed beautifully with the sculptures. It was an inspiration to see that one can create on any surface, and it doesn’t have to be an expensive canvas, but a small office supply that we mostly take for granted.

Reading her bio, I came to learn that she had an exhibit in 1974 in which her pieces from the show were never returned to her. In true artist form it did not stop her from creating, and I would like to think it fueled the creative spark to even create more than ever.

This show can leave us all inspired to continue our paths no matter what hardships or detours we may face. Whether in art or everyday life, we are weaving a beautiful tapestry of experience that tells our story.

The show is on view through November 10 at [Art on the Terrace, 776 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island NY](http://www.SICreative.org).(<http://www.SICreative.org>)

