

# ANDREA DEZSÖ: I WONDER

20 Jan - 10 Apr 2016



NEWCOMB

ART MUSEUM of Tulane



**Andrea Dezső**, *Krewe of Intergalactic Women Travelers Reach a Cave in Outer Space* (detail), 2016, gator board, wood support, theatrical gels, laser cut Bristol paper, acrylic spray paint, fabric, florescent lights

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Transylvania-born Andrea Dezsö (1968-) works at the intersection of art, design, and craft. Her multi-dimensional oeuvre includes embroidery, illustration, ceramics, pencil and marker drawings, and books. Revisiting traditional “female” applied arts in an often irreverent and humorous manner, she makes them relevant to the contemporary art world.

Many of Dezsö’s works shed light on her childhood in Communist Romania where families—unable to travel and without access to television—had limited connection to the outside world. The extreme confinement of her physical environment thus led to an expansion of her imagination. “I sometimes work with an imaginary landscape populated by a cast of imaginary characters...girls who never had a chance to live a leisurely childhood—free of struggles and danger,” she explains.

Dezsö also draws from her dreams, superstitions, and subconscious to create otherworldly works that are tender yet incisive and witty. For example, her *Lessons From My Mother* embroidery series subverts the tradition of the “sampler,” a piece of embroidery offering a religious or moral

aphorism. Dezsö’s interpretations, delightful perversions of this historically demure female craft, conjure a darkly antiquated notion of womanhood.

Similarly, Dezsö’s books are introspective works with detailed, colorful drawings that expose the emotional tapestry of transitional female forms in a seductive and revelatory manner. Recalling Victorian Era pastimes, her carousel, pop-up, and tunnel books—the last of which inspires the exhibition’s site-specific diorama—present miniature worlds full of wonder.



**Andrea Dezsö**, *Girls in Night Garden*, from *Night Drawings*, 2013, graphite on mylar. In conjunction with Pucker Gallery of Boston

# Andrea Dezsö:

## An Interview

Conducted by Monica Ramirez-Montagut  
Director, Newcomb Art Museum &  
Exhibition Curator  
February 2016

**MRM:** As you know, the Newcomb Art Museum honors the legacy of the Newcomb arts and crafts enterprise (1895-1940) at Newcomb College, the first degree-granting coordinate college for women in the U.S. The enterprise included ceramics, metalwork, bookbinding, textiles, and embroidery; women produced handmade items that gave them professional training and income toward financial self-sufficiency. Curating your exhibition, I looked to honor the spirit of the Newcomb artists given you also work with traditionally female crafts but in the twenty-first century and within the realm of contemporary art. Do you feel your work is art or craft? Or both?

**AD:** I see my work as art. I make things: drawings, paintings, sculptures, prints and installations and also embroideries, cut paper works, ceramics, animations, and artists books. Some of the media, materials, and processes I use have been traditionally seen as belonging to craft, but I think today those lines are blurred. If I feel that a medium fits a project I will use it whether it comes from craft, design, industry, the home. It's important that my personal life and art practice are completely integrated, each feeding the other. For example, my studio

has always been at my house—I like to eat and sleep close to where I work, to have constant access to my work. My work is inspired and informed by my life although not necessarily in clear or explicit ways. I'm not trying to send messages about my life, but that's where ideas originally come from. I have lived in a number of different places and travel extensively so I appreciate that some of my work is portable and I always have easy access to it. I can draw in my lap on a train, a bus, a waiting room, a park bench, or on a beach; sketchbooks travel well. I can always do embroidery—in fact, there is an embroidery I am working on right here in my bag!

Some of the work I do is large-scale public art, which has to be fabricated by professional teams at mosaic studios or metal fabrication plants. I love factories and fabrication, assembly sequences and work performed by many people in large spaces with big machines, but I also need to have this ongoing intimate relationship with my work, being alone in the studio, absorbed to the point of disappearing in the work.

**MRM:** I find that your conviction in your chosen materials is interesting because, for example, you could try to explore other materials for your embroidery, but you don't: they are needle and thread on cotton fabric. You stay with what you're comfortable with. Hence you are making us change our perception about what we understand as contemporary art. Because you stick to



**Andrea Dezsö**, *We Were Pioneers*, 2009, pop-up book, mixed media construction. In conjunction with Pucker Gallery of Boston

embroidery and make tunnel books, we, in turn, broaden our understanding and appreciation for these formats as art.

**AD:** Right. When I first came to New York in 1997, I was making one-of-a-kind artists books and I learned that they can live in two different realms—either in spaces, events, and collections devoted to rare books, artists books, and fine prints or in contemporary art galleries. Upon investigating both, I felt contemporary art galleries offered a bigger and more diverse scene. Moreover, the most interesting galleries were open to all kinds of experimental works that fell in the in-between places between genres and media

and thus might show a range of works from paintings to artists books to assemblages to strange little animations. Later, as I started to work with other kinds of media, it became more evident that they, too, could be shown in the realm of contemporary art galleries. I have heard people refer to me as a fiber artist, a book artist, a ceramic artist. I see myself as a visual artist who works freely with the media and materials that inspire me. When you look at a longer time-frame, not just five years but maybe thirty, forty, or fifty years of an artist's output, certain themes and motifs re-emerge and thread through the various media. It all holds together as a life's work; at least that's my hope.



**Andrea Dezső**, *Sketchbook Plates* 2009, cast vitreous china, cobalt stain, glaze created in Arts/Industry, a program of the John-Michael Kohler Arts Center

**MRM:** Can you tell me a little about the ceramics on display in the exhibition? These were the result of your artist residency at the Kohler factory, the one that produces sinks and toilets. They appear to be traditional white and blue china, but they are far from that.

**AD:** These series of plates were made with the materials available at the Kohler factory at the time I was a resident artist

there. One thing I liked about working in a factory as an artist is that there was a constrained set of elements to use. At the Kohler factory, my work went into the kiln with the toilets the factory produced, so I couldn't use just any kind of material. If one of my works exploded as a result of using an incompatible slip or glaze, destroying the toilets around it, that would have been a serious problem. The cobalt blue paint and the transparent glaze were available at the

factory, and they were considered harmless to the toilets so I used them on my plates. I made the prototype of the plates by hand-carving a disk of plaster with a metal knife. Then I made a plaster mold (negative) from this prototype and slip-cast all the plates from this mold using industrial porcelain slip. All the plates were cast from the same mold because I was interested in the idea of industrial production: the endless replication of a sculptural yet fully functional form. The factory had this deeply satisfying, perfectly calibrated rhythm of producing seemingly endless rows of beautiful toilets every day, a process I wished to replicate on a smaller scale with the production of my plates. The plates were made from the same material as the toilets and went through the same casting, drying, glazing, and firing process.

**MRM:** Full circle.

**AD:** Yes! The plates as the children of the toilets; the cycle of energy that fuels people from food to waste but in reverse; I was playing with those ideas. As for the surface of the plates, I treated them as pages in a sketchbook, drawing and writing on them. When I use my sketchbook, whatever is on my mind, I pour it out on the page, then turn to the next page and continue. It was the same process except I was painting on porcelain plates using a cobalt blue wash.

**MRM:** Yes, they appear to have a diarist quality to them where you tell a story of what was loosely taking place at the moment.

**AD:** I recorded on them what was happening. For example, that's the Kohler factory; the sky was very unusual that day. And others show little observations I would usually jot down in my notebooks, simple things. Sometimes I look at my notebooks or sketchbooks and think, "That image or that line is interesting, there is something there, that could be the beginning of a piece," but they just go back in the drawer. I realized if the same sketches or observations are put on porcelain, which is glazed and fired, it's a different thing. It suddenly becomes more concrete, an object with a distinct shape and weight that bears and proclaims the image and the text, which are centered and composed to fit the space. Since they are fairly laconic—starting a thought but not necessarily completing it—they can also serve as springboards for the imagination.

**MRM:** You've brought this up in other interviews explaining you want your work to be a gateway for wondering and imagining. We, as adults, don't exercise our creativity much in our everyday lives.

**AD:** Yes, that's important to me—the ability to imagine. I'm interested in providing not full stories but just beginnings, and an invitation to dive freely into one's imagination.

**MRM:** I think that invitation is very clear in the series *Night Drawings* (2013). The pencil drawings have a specific order in which they need to be hung indicating a narrative sequence. Each drawing functions

like an environment—a stage set of some sort where something is about to happen or is happening—but they are purposefully left open for interpretation. Why the use of Mylar polyester sheets for this body of work?

**AD:** I like the way the drawings stand out on the Mylar, the way one can build up subtle tones to create a kind of velvety nighttime environment. To me, it felt like a very luxurious surface even though it's plastic and quite affordable. It's luxurious in the way it

holds up as a drawing surface. It's also very fragile: if anything touches it, the drawing, which might have taken months to build up from small, layered pencil marks, comes right off. I couldn't figure out an inconspicuous way to apply a fixative; this material has a delicate weirdness to it. It's almost like a wing of a moth or a butterfly: just lightly brushing against it would destroy it. Like in nature where a delicate balance can collapse at any moment, I like that fragility. I appreciate it because I'm not striving for permanence.



**Andrea Dezsö**, *Lobsterman and Small Crabman*. from *Night Drawings*, 2013, graphite on mylar. In conjunction with Pucker Gallery of Boston

**MRM:** Besides fragility, another concept permeating your work is a sense of lushness, richness, and detail. Your work is incredibly and explicitly nuanced: we see each pencil mark in drawings that took months to make, trace each minute stitch of your embroidery, linger on every dot of a ten-foot-long ink and marker drawing. The viewer can only fathom the amount of time you spend making each work, but they repay that dedication by staying longer and looking more closely. I think that viewers appreciate the labor by visualizing the passing of time and reward you, the artist, with the similar amount of attention. How do you feel about that?

**AD:** I'm drawn to labor-intensive, devotional work: from the Alhambra's arabesque ornaments to Arabic calligraphy or illuminated manuscripts. Historically these monuments have been created as acts of devotion to a deity or the spiritual realm. In contemporary life I'm thinking about the lifespan of a person and the decisions of how to spend one's life, what is important, meaningful, true. Time is perhaps the one thing that never increases in a person's life; it only decreases until it runs out. There are a finite number of meals one can eat in a lifetime, a finite number of books one can read, a finite number of days one can spend caring for a loved one, so what you chose to spend your time doing becomes significant. Drawing can be a devotional act.

I'm drawn to art that renders time visible. The surface of a drawing can show the time

devoted to making it—you may see every pencil line. Embroidery also shows the time it took to make it. Detailed, deliberately crafted “slow” art.

**MRM:** While some of your female characters are loosely autobiographical, the characters that inhabit your worlds tend to be fantastical, wondrous hybrids of humans and the natural world. Would it be fair to say that there is also devotion to the imagination?

**AD:** Yes, it is about imagination and about freedom: to be free to imagine things you have never encountered and to experience things beyond what words can express. A mundane example: one day in my kitchen I grabbed a big bag of rice the wrong way so it opened in mid-air and all the rice went flying. I looked up and there was this perfect shining moment, something I have never seen before: all these grains flying upward and the sun streaming in—it was sublime! This took place in the fraction of time before the thoughts “what a mess” and “I’ll have to clean this up,” occurred. I had this feeling of wonder and awe, this sense of “wow.” It’s something that one can get totally enveloped in, an experience that is wondrous and perfect. I would love to create that feeling of wonder through my work.

**MRM:** Andrea, you have a special sensibility for finding beauty, fascination, and curiosity in the mundane. Can you share with me your other sources of inspiration? For example, I read you are attracted to teeth and bugs!



**Andrea Dezsö**, *Self Portrait with Chameleon and Red Helmet*, 2009, tunnel book, linen thread, and acrylic paint on cotton rag paper. In conjunction with Pucker Gallery of Boston

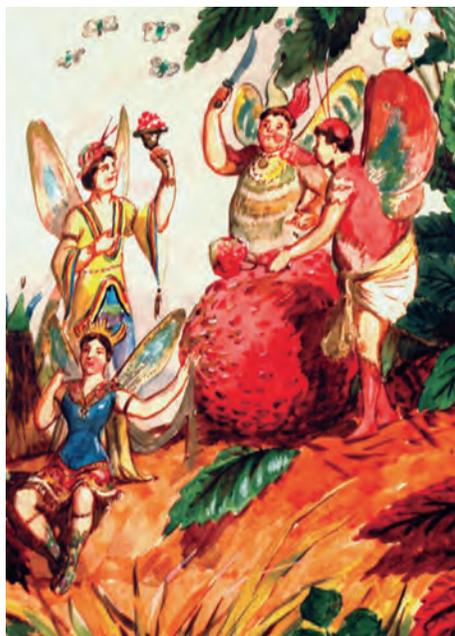
**AD:** I love nature. Before I moved to the woods of Western Massachusetts, where I now mostly reside, I always lived in cities, planned spaces with streets and squares with a people-imposed order. The woods are another world. A forest is something magical, growing organically, without need for human intervention, a sentient being and a complex live system that is potentially dangerous and mysterious since you never know what you'll find and you can easily get lost. There are other magical places beside forests—fields, mountains, lava flows, ponds. They are these places rich with possibility, from where the imagination can take off. Insects are wonderful beings that are so different from us, humans. Their skeleton is on the outside, and their parts fit together like perfect machines. They are beautiful and unimaginably weird.

I had some dental work done a number of years ago, which made me interested in relics—bodily fragments of long-dead people cherished for their spiritual achievements. I find it repulsive yet seductive that these little fragments from a decaying corpse are dressed up and encased in precious metals and stones. I'm interested in this sensation of being repulsed by and attracted to something at the same time. There is simultaneous fear and curiosity, and the tension between the two intrigues me.

**MRM:** A year ago you visited several of our archives at Tulane University. A particular collection caught your attention and, in fact, inspired your site-specific diorama commissioned for this exhibition. The works, Mardi Gras float drawings, were done in by Carlotta Bonnezecca (the first woman Carnival designer) for the Krewe of Proteus' 1892 parade, "A Dream of the Vegetable Kingdom." What did you find so appealing in these works?

**AD:** I found them appealing given they are functional drawings, guidelines for the fabrication of floats. I can relate to them because I sometimes make drawings that people might not get to see directly as originals but only the work created based on them, especially when I make public art or installations. Even when I make illustrations, most people don't see the original drawing but only the printed reproduction in a book or newspaper. But I appreciate these functional drawings for their beauty as

well. What also appealed to me was that the drawings point to a culture of grown-ups playing in costumes. These people didn't merely spend their lives working and increasing family power, but found time to also create fanciful costumes and climb on floats, pretending to be insects, strawberries, mushrooms, or weird things like that. And what really, really appealed to me was that in New Orleans, adults are still doing it today! I wish more people in the world dressed up in costumes, pretending to be fruit or produce. These drawings are artifacts that point to a lot of different things and everything they point to—imagination, play, devotion, community, visual abundance, making, improvisation—I'm interested in.



**Carlotta Bonneau**, *Strawberries* (detail), Krewe of Proteus 1892 parade: "A Dream of the Vegetable Kingdom," watercolor on paper. On loan from the Carnival Collection, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Library, Tulane University

**MRM:** These drawings were your source of inspiration for the museum diorama *Krewe of Intergalactic Women Travelers Reach a Cave in Outer Space* (2016); however, we're not seeing the same figures. Were you inspired by the dual nature of the characters costumed as insects, plants, and vegetables?

**AD:** Yes, that's something that keeps coming back into my work, this kind of hybrid person, insect-person, plant-person, fire-person, melting-person—different kinds of characteristics you don't actually see in people. I draw these characters as silhouettes. I cut them out in paper and illuminate them from the back, which creates a kind of hazy atmosphere. You don't see where the person ends and where the plant begins, whether this is an actual hybrid plant-person or a person in a plant suit pretending to be one or a plant that someone has stuck a face on. I like that kind of uncertainty, the places where questions remain. I'm interested in using silhouettes for my illustration work as well because by not providing every single detail, silhouetted images allow more space for the imagination. With silhouettes, you imply things, but you don't explain everything: viewers are invited in to fill in the gaps with their imagination. It's like pointing to things in the shadow and not turning on a big light that shows every detail.

**MRM:** Tell me more about your illustration work. You're a renowned illustrator and have done work for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Harpers*, to name a few.



**Andrea Dezső**, (above) *Krewe of Intergalactic Women Travelers Reach a Cave in Outer Space* (detail), 2016, gator board, wood support, theatrical gels, laser cut Bristol paper, acrylic spray paint, fabric, florescent lights; (opposite) *My Mother Claimed That You Don't Know What Kind of Man*, from *Lessons from My Mother*, 2006, cotton and metallic floss embroidery on cotton fabric. In conjunction with Pucker Gallery of Boston

**AD:** I love thinking about the relationship of text and image. I see illustration as commentary on the text, an expression of an interpretation, a point of view. I'm not necessarily showing what is already in the text, but commenting on some part of the story I find important. I recently read Orhan Pamuk's magnificent novel *My Name is Red*, about fifteenth-century Turkish miniature painters, the divergent paths that Venetian and Islamic book illuminators chose around that time, and their debate whether one should paint an idealized version of the world that God sees or a specific world where everything and everyone is recognizable. That debate—what one may represent with images and why—is something I often think about.

**MRM:** I know you've also been inspired by Transylvanian folklore. Can you tell me more on that?

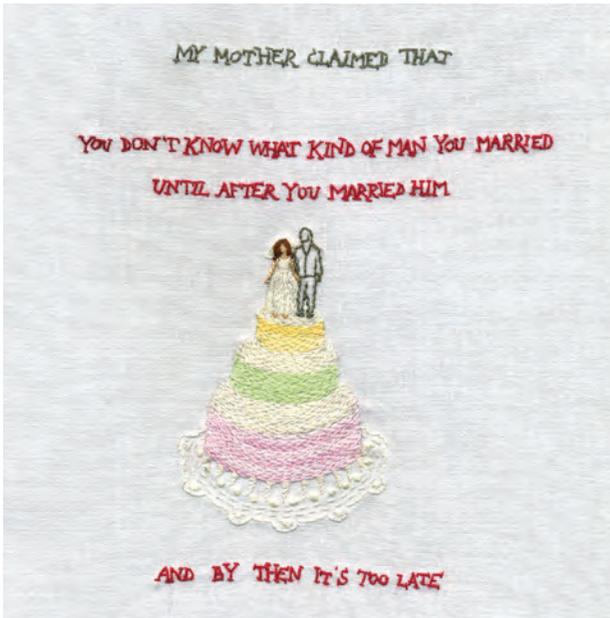
**AD:** I grew up in Transylvania and the amount of embroidery women would wear on any given Sunday in the countryside was just staggering. I don't know how they stood upright and walked under the weight of all the embroidered textiles they were wearing—it was unbelievable. All the young, unmarried girls wore hand-made, gorgeous, towering bead-encrusted ornaments on their heads from which loads of colorful embroidered ribbons cascaded. Each region had its own visual motifs. I think now of how talented the people were to come up with such intricate designs and how they

taught others—one woman taught the other—and then they had these ideas of how things could be improved. It was like an evolutionary process where the best stuff moved forward. There were no art schools and there was no art critic and there was no art scene—the scene was just *life*.

Similarly, Constantin Brancusi's columns and his modern sculptures had their basis in folk sculpture from Romania—his motifs of the infinite rope can be found on Transylvanian wooden carved gates. It's this kind of culture that I'm interested in, a fully integrated one of life and art. People didn't even think about it as art, it was just what they did. They lived in art, and they wore art. They were moving art exhibitions in a way—at least for me as an outsider coming in from the city to look at them in their beautiful costumes going from home to church on Sundays.

And in each of their houses there was a room called “the clean room” where the most beautiful of everything was kept, where everything was lovely—stenciled walls, hand-painted furniture, and carved frames around hand-tinted photographs. And in every clean room there was a bed piled to the rafters with featherbeds, hand-woven blankets, and pillows encased in densely embroidered cases—red for births, wedding nights, and celebrations and black for funerals. When I was growing up, it seemed ordinary, like this is what people do. After I moved away, saw the world, and had some distance, I started to think it was actually pretty extraordinary. So I keep returning to some of those familiar motifs, and although it doesn't feel so ordinary anymore it does feel natural.

**MRM:** It feels wondrous and wonderful to us. Thank you, Andrea. ■



## Exuberant Traditions

Employing an impressive array of media—cut paper, embroidery, ceramics, and drawing—Andrea Dezső creates intricate works steeped in folkloric traditions that are, in a word, exuberant. Her art evokes the dreamlike world of fairy tales, seen directly in her illustrations for the recent edition of the Brothers Grimm tales but evident also in her tunnel books and other drawings. She has a fascination for nature, particularly plant-life, as well as insects, fish, crustaceans, and other animals. Although skulls and skeletons frequently appear in her scenes and death is acknowledged, her art is, nevertheless, joyous, celebrating centuries of vernacular tradition and reveling in the oddities of nature itself.

The intricacy of Dezső's work demands intense looking. The layers and details of her tunnel books, for instance, draw the viewer into miniature worlds shaped from light, dark, and splashes of color. The silhouetted forms recall the expressive simplicity of scenes on ancient Greek vases, yet the books' multiple layers make the works far more complex. Using the same techniques on a larger scale, Dezső created in the museum the site-specific *Krewe of Intergalactic Women Travelers Reach a Cave in Outer Space*. Taking her inspiration from float drawings for the Krewe of Proteus' 1892 parade, "A Dream of the Vegetable Kingdom," the artist constructed an otherworldly realm of hybrid creatures who populate a fantastical landscape akin to *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Netherlandish artist Hieronymus



**Andrea Dezső**, *They Took the Upward Path*, 2013, Japanese hand-made Shojoshi paper, hand-cut and sewn, collapsible and multi-layered tunnel book. Courtesy of the artist

Bosch (c.1450–1516), famous for his fantastical, often monstrous figures. The seven pieces from the artist's textile series, *Lessons from My Mother* (2006) offer a folkloric blend of "old wives' tales" and traditional handicraft in the embroidered texts and images. Each one begins with the phrase "My mother claimed that..." followed by a pithy lesson, such as "...our destinies are written in our palms," or "...if you inhale the scent of lilies while you sleep, you can die." In Europe and the United States, embroidery and other textile arts have long been associated with women's work, taught to young girls by their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers. Rarely have such pieces been considered works of art, except in studies of vernacular culture. In her version of the embroidered sampler, Dezső up-ends the traditional idiom by pairing graphic illustrations of anatomy and other unusual scenes with the modern aphorisms of her mother. The result is a wonderful juxtaposition of traditional and modern, fanciful and folksy, of one generation to another.

Dezső's illustrations for *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm: The Complete First Edition*, relate closely to her tunnel books in her use of silhouetted forms and textures created with dots and lines. The technique of her ink-on-paper drawings calls to mind the woodcut prints of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), renowned for his ambitious, nuanced works where original images inhabit alluring atmospheres, and the



**Andrea Dezső**, *The Devil in the Green Coat* from *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm – The Complete First Edition*, 2014, ink on paper. Courtesy of Nancy Margolis Gallery Inc. of New York

drawings of Edward Gorey (1925–2000), an American illustrator known for his cartoons of Edwardian children coming to macabre ends and the animated credits of PBS' *Masterpiece Mystery*.

The floral motifs that recur in these illustrations, as well other Dezső works, recall the recurrent floral patterns in Early American tole painting. Tole, French for sheet iron, originally described the heavy-gauge iron trays and metalware items produced and decorated in France during the eighteenth century, though the word now has broader applications, referring more generally to painting on tin. This technique



Andrea Dezsö, *The Wild Man* from *The Original Folk & Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm – The Complete First Edition*, 2014, ink on paper. Courtesy of Nancy Margolis Gallery Inc. of New York

was traditionally used on kitchen items such as trays, coffeepots, teapots, cups, and canisters. Dezsö's motifs are also similar to the decorative floral designs in Jacobean needlework or embroidery—so named as the styles flourished during the 1603-1625 reign of King James I of England. Today the term refers to a form of crewel embroidery that emphasizes fanciful plant and animal shapes worked in a variety of stitches with two-ply wool yarn on linen or cotton. The intricately textured scenes are expressive and lively, and Dezsö's style perfectly suits the spirit of the Grimm fairy tales.

The *Sketchbook Plates* (2009) series possesses a charm similar to Dezsö's textiles.

Several of the plates pair image and text, though here the texts are more personal and perhaps biographical. While the plates are made of cast vitreous china with cobalt stain, the casting mold was irregular, lending each plate a hand-crafted appearance. The blue and white color scheme evokes sixteenth-century Italian maiolica or the Dutch Delft Blue pottery of the seventeenth century. White-glazed pottery created in all shapes and sizes during the Italian Renaissance, the former initially had restrained palettes, like blue and white, while later examples have a full array of colors. The Italian workshops turned out plates, cups, vessels, and jars with a tremendous variety of scenes from daily life as well as mythological and historical themes. Delft Blue pottery was produced in the western Netherlands using cobalt blue and white glaze. It frequently imitated Japanese and Chinese ceramics, which had become popular in the seventeenth century, providing a cheaper alternative to the exotic imports. These Italian and Dutch ceramics were filled with patterns, images, and even the occasional text. As with Dezsö's embroidered panels, the *Sketchbook Plates* bring traditional and modern together: the appearance of traditional maiolica or Delft Blue wares with the musings of a modern artist about her life as an immigrant, her dreams and challenges.

Andrea Dezsö is an artist who revels in details and finely crafted work. She engages with traditions through her use of handicrafts and folkloric motifs. Her

work can be appreciated on many levels. I encourage you to gaze intently at her works—you'll be rewarded. ■

*Contributed by Susann Lusnia, Associate Professor of Classical Studies and Executive Director of Tulane's Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching. Dr. Lusnia teaches courses on Roman art and archaeology and a TIDES seminar, "Crafting and Community in New Orleans." TIDES, or Tulane Interdisciplinary Experience Seminars, encourage first-year students to explore academics and the city of New Orleans from multiple academic perspectives.*



**Andrea Dezső**, *Krewe of Intergalactic Women Travelers*, 2016. Site-specific installation at Tulane City Center (1725 Baronne Street). TCC serves as the Tulane School of Architecture's community design center with the mission of bringing together creative makers and doers for a better city. The mural accompanies Dezső's Newcomb Art Museum exhibition and presents an other-worldly Mardi Gras parade of intergalactic women travelers and their outer-space friends.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born and raised in Communist Romania, Andrea Dezsö (1968- ) graduated from Budapest's Hungarian University of Art & Design with a BFA in Graphic Design & Typography and an MFA in Visual Communication. Dezsö exhibits in museums and galleries around the world with twelve solo and more than twenty group shows since 2005. Her illustrations have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Time Magazine*, and *Newsweek*.

Her permanent public art has been installed in two New York City subway stations, at the United States Embassy in Bucharest, Romania and at CUNY BMCC Fiterman Hall in Lower Manhattan. Community Garden,

Dezsö's mosaic in the New York City subway, was recognized as Best American Public Art in 2007 by Americans for the Arts.

Other awards include a Jean Michael Kohler Arts/Industry residency (2009), Kamiyama Artist-in-Residence, Tokushima, Japan (2008), a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship (2007), and a Six Points Fellowship in Visual Arts (2007).

Dezsö is an Associate Professor of Art at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA and maintains studios in NYC and in Western Massachusetts. She is represented by the Nancy Margolis Gallery in New York and Pucker Gallery in Boston.



Photo by Cheryl Gerber, Tulane University

## ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane University builds on the Newcomb College legacy of education, social enterprise, and artistic experience. Presenting inspiring exhibitions and programs that engage communities both on and off campus, the museum fosters the creative exchange of ideas and cross-disciplinary collaborations around innovative art and design. The museum preserves and advances scholarship on the Newcomb and Tulane art collections.

The academic institution for which the museum is named was founded in 1886 as the first degree-granting coordinate college for women in America. The H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College was distinguished for educating women in the sciences, physical education, and, most importantly, art education. Out of its famed arts program, the Newcomb Pottery was born. In operation from 1895 until 1940, the Newcomb enterprise produced metalwork, fiber arts, and the now internationally renowned Newcomb pottery.

In 1996, the Newcomb Art Department completed an expansion and renovation of its facilities that included the addition of the Newcomb Art Museum (previously the Newcomb Art Gallery), an exhibition space dedicated to presenting contemporary and historic exhibits. Housed in the Woldenberg Art Center, the museum today presents original exhibitions and programs that

explore socially engaged art, civic dialogue, and community transformation. The museum also pays tribute to its heritage through shows that recognize the contributions of women to the fields of art and design.

As an entity of an academic institution, the Newcomb Art Museum creates exhibitions that utilize the critical frameworks of diverse disciplines in conceptualizing and interpreting art and design. By presenting issues relevant to Tulane and the greater New Orleans region, the museum also serves as a gateway between on and off campus constituencies.

*This exhibition and its public programs were supported by the Joan Mitchell Foundation and the Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University.*

*The museum would like to acknowledge David Armentor and Jordan Conway from the School of Architecture at Tulane for their assistance in the fabrication of the exhibition's diorama installation, as well as Daniel Alley from the Newcomb Art Department. Thanks also to student-worker Eunice Lee for transcribing the audio-recorded interview with Dezsö.*



**NEWCOMB**

Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University

**JOAN MITCHELL  
FOUNDATION**



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ART MUSEUM *of Tulane*

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Free and open to public, the museum is open  
Tuesday through Friday, 10 to 5; Saturday and  
Sunday 11 to 4; and by appointment.

