

Imaginative artist brings varied works to Newcomb

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“If I keep myself open to the possibility that these wondrous or strange experiences will occur, they will keep happening,” says artist Andrea Dezsö as she explains her creative process during a lecture on Wednesday (Jan. 20) celebrating the opening of new exhibits at the Newcomb Art Museum. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Andrea Dezsö opened her lecture at Tulane University on Wednesday (Jan. 20) with a photo of herself reaching around a camel’s neck, looking up at it with a mixture of awe and wonder. She explained that wondrous, unusual experiences such as that one have defined her life as an artist and her new exhibition at the [Newcomb Art Museum](#) in particular, as she approaches her work and her subjects with a similar degree of admiration and curiosity.

This perspective has translated into projects of various scales, from embroidery to large public murals. When Dezsö first moved to the U.S. from Romania in the late 1990s, she began to

embroider advice she had heard growing up, such as her mother's warning that leaving the house with wet hair would lead to meningitis and death.

"I like to embroider things that were not supposed to be embroidered," she told the audience in the Freeman Auditorium at the Woldenberg Art Center, demonstrating how she transformed a traditional feminine craft into works of art.

Dezsö moved on to create both artist and tunnel books; the former included drawings and paintings, while the latter looked like cross between a pop-up book and a diorama, or what she calls "little worlds the viewer can look into."

She has created several large-scale versions of these tunnel books, including one at the Newcomb Art Museum, that are backlit to create a whimsical world replete with unique characters. The characters in her tunnel book at Newcomb were inspired by Mardi Gras drawings from the late 1800s.

On her public art, Dezsö said, "I always ask myself, why should this piece be in this place?" She has designed several large mosaics, including a 10-story wall in a City University of New York building that was restored after 9/11. Her mural at a Brooklyn subway station, called *Community Garden*, reflects her desire to bring bright colors and larger-than-life creatures to a gray, urban environment.

The Newcomb Art Museum [exhibits](#) by Dezsö, "I Wonder," and sculpture by Kate Clark, "Mysterious Presence," and will be on display through April 17.

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"If you can't go where you want to go, you can travel in your imagination."

Andrea Dezsö, artist