



## **ANDREA DEZSÖ**

### **Bio**

Andrea Dezsö's work encompasses drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, public art, embroidery, cut paper, and artists' books. Born in Romania where travel was restricted during communism, Dezsö took to traveling through her imagination, and as an artist her work explores terrain including issues of: authoritarianism and freedom; gender; myth, superstition and wisdom; folk art and craft; and designing art for public spaces. Dezsö exhibits nationally and internationally, including exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City, the Rice University Art Gallery in Texas, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Connecticut, Museum Bellerive in Switzerland, the Fujikawa Kirie Art Museum in Japan, the Cheong ju International Craft Biennale in South Korea, Art Basel in Miami, and The Armory Show in New York. Her work was also recently included in the exhibition Dread & Delight at the Akron Art Museum alongside Ghada Amer, David Hockney, and Carrie Mae Weems, among others. Dezsö's awardwinning public art has been installed in three New York City subway stations, the United States Embassy in Bucharest, Romania, and the Borough of Manhattan Community College Fiterman Hall in New York. Dezsö has received numerous fellowships and awards, including recognition from Americans for the Arts, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, the MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, Center for Book Arts in New York, Six Point Foundation, and the Ucross Foundation; she has been awarded artist residencies at the Guanlan Original Printmaking Base in Shenzhen, China, Tamarind Institute in New Mexico, Museum of Glass in Washington, and Kamiyama AIR in Japan. Her work has been featured in Artforum, ARTNews, The New York Times, Village Voice, Wall Street Journal, NPR, New York Magazine, Print, Fiber Arts, Hand/Eye Magazine, and numerous books. Dezsö is a Professor of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence Rhode Island.

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### **Artist Statement**

Andrea Dezsö created the artworks in Companions Protectors as an antidote to the loneliness that arrived with the COVID pandemic. Dezsö found herself searching for a sense of well-being and, like many people facing intense uncertainty, longed for the comfort of community.

The artwork centers on 117 Companion Protector beings — talismanic creations who defend against danger, ward off isolation and inspire a sense of playfulness. Dezsö visualized these fierce and benevolent beings as companions on the journey through perilous times, helpers who vanquish obstacles and inspire curiosity.

As the pandemic disrupted routines, Dezsö hunkered down at home and began to cut out figures from inch-wide scraps of hand-made Japanese paper using scissors and utility knives. She set aside the offcut paper strips years earlier unsure if such beautifully made material would be available again. As Dezsö cut and painted each thumb-sized scrap it transformed into a being which belonged to a family.

Dezsö carved images of the Companion Protectors in wood to create one-of-a-kind Japanese woodblock prints (moku hanga) which she then painted with watercolors. In the process, Dezsö noticed how beautiful the inked wood blocks are and began to create wooden sculptures. She constituted families and communities of Companions Protectors at a time when travel restrictions prevented her from being with her dying mother.

Dezsö returned to the hot shop to create pyrovitreographs – one-of-a-kind monotype prints made by rolling cylinders of etched and blown molten glass to burn images onto paper. Dezsö is especially drawn to the way pyrovitreography transforms and distorts her images, how the molten glass cylinder deforms unpredictably with each successive roll adding an element of chance. The process requires letting go of tight control and creates a feeling of being in dialogue with the material. Pyrovitreographs become the basis for richly detailed watercolor paintings. These painted pyrovitreographs also lend imagery to a suite of tunnel books – painted paper sculptures of dreamlike scenes.

The artist's aim is to create a richly poetic, mythic body of work that invites viewers to imagine their own stories.