



museum of arts and design

ANDREA DEZSÖ
Slash: Paper Under the Knife



Andrea Dezsö, Self Portrait, 2009; Photo credit: Péter Hapák



Andrea Dezsö, Installation *Slash: Paper Under the Knife*; Photo credit: Péter Hapák

Materials List:

90lb white watercolor paper (cold press)*

*Paper: Please pre-cut papers in the following way:

Each student should have 1 sheet of 90lb white watercolor paper pre-cut to 18 X 8 inches and 8 smaller sheets cut to 8X8 inches each.

For younger students the watercolor paper can be interchanged with black or grey construction paper for the outside (accordion) of the tunnel books, and substitute the smaller sheets of watercolor paper for white drawing paper (inner layers). Instead of watercolor paint use colored pencils or markers.

- double sided adhesive tape or glue/rubber cement
- art tape
- scissors
- X-acto knife (for High School/College if possible) otherwise use scissors
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Cutting board
- For collage: various colored papers and/or photographs, colored pencils, markers or paint.

Step 1:

Measure 1" off of each side of the 8" paper. Fold and score along the 1" mark

Repeat for all 8" x 8" papers

Step 2:

Measure 6" across and mark each across the length of the 18" paper.

Score and fold at the 6" markings (this will be your frame/ box for your layers)

Step 3:

Sketch out drawing for your tunnel box and divide drawing into layers. Layout drawing so it can be cut in a subtractive manner.

Step 4:

Draw first layer of drawing on 8"x 8" scored paper.

Step 5 :

Cut out drawing leaving a frame around the edge of paper.

Step 6:

Hold up 1st cut out layer to 2nd uncut layer to see what is visible from 1st to 2nd layer.

(You are creating your piece from front to back)

Step 7:

Layout and then cut out 2nd layer

Step 8:

Hold up 1st and 2nd layer with 3rd uncut layer to layout and then cutout 3rd layer.

*Repeat this step for as many layers as you desire for your tunnel book

*Keep in mind you can always work additively

Step 9: Paint/Color layers

Step 10:

After you have all of your layers use the 1" tabs on either side of your cut out layers to attach them to the walls of your tunnel box. Attach layers one side at a time from the back to the front using the tabs to measure the distance between the layers. Be sure whatever distance you use on the first side you use on the 2nd side to insure proper installation.

Precision here is key.

You can use rubber cement or double sided tape to attach.

Your Tunnel book could have as many layers as you would like the materials provide for 8 layers.

Suggested Themes for activities:

Grade levels: 3rd – college level

Memories, Dreams and Fantasy

Communities and Change

Andrea Dezsö

www.andreadezso.com

Memories, Dreams and Fantasy

Andrea Dezsö, "**Four from a series of thirty tunnel books**"

Discuss with students how dreams, memory and reality intersect or collide; see the discussion questions on page (3) for the Andrea Dezsö lesson for inquiry based questions to guide the discussion.

- Ask students to use their imagination to think about their dreams or fantasies (embellishing where necessary)
- What types of characters, animals or plant life inhabit these fictional spaces?

Communities and Change

Béatrice Coron, "**Heavens**" and "**Hells**"

Discuss with students the social and environmental issues that exist in our communities as well as how we perceive these issues on both positive (ex: Our "Heavens") and negative levels (ex: Our "Hells") as in the work of Béatrice Coron. <http://www.beatricecoron.com/HH.html> (see website for images of "Heavens" and "Hells")

Using the work of **Andrea Dezsö and Béatrice Coron as a point of departure:**

- Have students create their own tunnel books that communicate critical issues about what they feel is problematic in their environment (e.g. pollution, traffic, fighting).
- Their books could also communicate how they might solve these issues (e.g. recycling, building communities, and planting trees).

Throughout the process of creating the tunnel books, students will learned how to work with positive and negative

space, foreground, middle ground and background, depth and perception, and how to create a 3-dimensional art object from 2-dimensional paper.

Inquiry-based questions to guide discussion:

Andrea Dezsö

A Pair of Female Legs Resting in a Forest, 2009

Them Before Us, 2009

Alien Child with Hanging Meat, 2009

Self Portrait with Inside View, 2009

Four from a series of thirty tunnel books

Hand-cut paper, thread, acrylic paint, mixed media

Each: 7 x 5 x 6 in. (17.8 x 12.7 x 15.2 cm)

“Working in a wide range of media including drawing, sculpture, animation, artists books, cut paper and embroidery I weave together themes psychological, historical, narrative and ornamental, often including childhood memories of growing up in communist Romania. My work transports me from where I am to where I want to be; my images and visual narratives range from the mystical to the absurd and I often use traditional techniques to explore non-traditional or subversive subjects.” —Andrea Dezsö

Dezsö’s artwork contains thirty multi-layered painted and illuminated paper theaters. In her ‘tunnel books’, “cut-paper scenes are arranged in expandable layers, creating a miniature theatre stage for presenting the narratives inside. My tunnel books reveal imagined worlds; scenarios arising from the subconscious, based on my personal experience—physical, psychological, spiritual, and the strange in-between; living in my body, in my mind, dreams, memories, and anxieties, hopes, obsessions.”

- Describe what kinds of images and characters are living inside the artwork. Where would you find these images and characters?
- What are the characters doing? How are they interacting with each other?
- Imagine that this artwork is “speaking” to you. What kinds of sounds would you hear? What would the characters be saying to each other? What would the environmental surroundings sound like?
- Dezsö describes this work as “small self-contained worlds.” How does her work support this description?
- What do you think is the mood of this piece (*dark, humorous, cryptic, etc*)? Explain.
- What kinds of materials and tools were used to create this artwork? How do you think Dezsö put her artwork together?
- What does the physical construction of this work remind you of? (*Puppet theatre, tunnel book*).
- Describe the kinds of colors, patterns, shapes, and details that you see in the artwork.
- How does color and light play a significant role in this artwork? What is it communicating about the mood of this work?
- Locate where the foreground (*front; sheet of paper closest to you*), middle ground (*middle sheet*) and background (*sheet of paper furthest from you*) are present in this work. How has Dezsö created depth in her work through using flat paper? Is this artwork a drawing, a sculpture, or both?

Dezsö finds inspiration in “folk and outsider art, carnivals, puppet theater, informational charts, space exploration imagery and eastern orthodox iconography.” Many of her works contain images of “ruined cities,

concrete buildings, factories and assembly lines, often the setting of my work, represent an oppressive reality, while fantastic gardens populated by people-insects are places of refuge and dream.”

- After reading the above contextual information, which imagery in the artwork do you think represents Dezső’s dreams, fantasy and refuge? Which ones do you think represent her reality? Do you think that her reality and dreams are personal, social, and/or both?
- Are there moments in the artwork where Dezső’s images of dreams and reality interact with each other? Describe.
- Where is Dezső’s self-portrait (*image of herself*)? What mood is she portraying? Do you think that she is portraying herself as her reality, her dreams, or both? Explain.
- Dezső says that her work refers “back to my childhood, which never entirely went away.” Describe some of the images that you think Dezső is referring to as childhood memories. What are these images communicating to you about Dezső’s childhood and background?
- Do you think this artwork is inspired by other memories besides childhood, such as adolescence and/ or adulthood? Describe some of the images that support your answer.

For more lesson suggestions, please visit the Teacher’s Lounge page on the museum website:

<http://www.madmuseum.org/Home/LEARN/teachers.aspx>