

**VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST ANDREA DEZSÖ,
EXPLORES HER RECENT EXHIBITION OF ART AFFECTED BY ILLNESS,
KICKS OFF NEW DIGITAL INITIATIVES FROM BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART**

*Relaunched web site will include new online exhibitions and virtual tours,
Upcoming live programs with artists, and an artist-designed app*

Brunswick, ME—May 20, 2020—The Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) today shared [a video interview](#) with artist Andrea Dezsö, talking about the works in her exhibition *The Visitors*. Dezsö was the Museum's 2019–2020 halley k harrisburg '90 and Michael Rosenfeld artist-in-residence. In an unusual turn of events, her experience at the College was bookended by illness: first, the artist's own bout of shingles, which manifested shortly after her arrival in Maine in the summer of 2019, and later, the coronavirus pandemic, which forced the closure of the College and the Museum in spring of 2020. Her watercolors of humanoid forms immediately evoke for the viewer a sense of internal pain and physical distress, clearly born of experience and yet also so relatable to the current moment.

The interview with Dezsö, conducted by Sean Burrus, the BCMA's Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Curatorial Fellow, and Anne Collins Goodyear, Co-Director, is part of the Museum's newly launched website and expanded range of digital exhibitions, programs, and other initiatives. Also part of the new site is the online exhibition *The Presence of The Past: Art From Central And West Africa*, developed by Professor David Gordon and the students from his course "The Powers of Central African Art." Drawn from the Museum's collection as well as the Wyvern Collection, students used the Museum's Zuckert Seminar Room to study the objects over the course of the semester. The exhibition was originally planned to be installed and open to the public, but was moved into an online format after it became clear that an on-campus installation would be impossible for the foreseeable future.

Coming to the website in the next few weeks will be: a guided virtual of the Museum's major winter exhibition *Rufus Porter's Curious World: Art and Invention in America, 1815-1860*; a digital version of the Museum's *Fast Fashion/Slow Art* exhibition, along with live programs with some of the participating artists; and an interactive artist-designed project to promote creative interaction among members of the Museum's community. Another major online initiative will be the BCMA's new Young Learners' Resource, targeting children and students ages 5 and up. The first phase of the Young Learners' section of the site will have an array of online activities centered on artworks from the collection, including jigsaw puzzles and printable coloring projects for younger audiences, as well as new, student-focused approaches to engaging with past exhibitions. Each component will also provide information about the featured artworks. In the second phase, the Museum will begin rolling out new labels for many works in the collection, written in language more accessible to younger readers. All of this will contribute to visual literacy, which has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on students' observational and critical thinking skills—and can also readily be done online.

"While in many ways we would much rather be enjoying the welcoming environment of our art museum, experiencing art together, and listening to artists speak to our students and visitors in our light-filled spaces, we welcome the opportunity for innovation that current circumstances provide. In an environment in which it is temporarily impossible or impractical to gather in person, we have a responsibility to find creative ways to bring art to our audiences through easily accessible digital platforms," said Frank Goodyear, co-director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. "In that context, we are fortunate to have content that is so relevant for this moment, as with Andrea Dezsö's watercolors, or works that lend themselves to digital sharing, in the case of many of the pieces in the *Fast Fashion/Slow Art* exhibition,"

added Anne Collins Goodyear, co-director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. “As we consider how to build new tools and create new opportunities for connection through electronic means in our new post-COVID world, we are pleased to be building a record of creative response to challenges being faced around the world. We are incredibly grateful to the members of the Museum’s ROAM (Really Open and Accessible Museum) group and our colleagues in the College’s Academic Technology team for working with us to get these new tools launched so quickly.”

These new initiatives build on the BCMA’s history of innovating new digital projects. For example in 2019, the Museum collaborated with David Francis, a member of Academic Technology & Consulting at Bowdoin, the College’s technology team to [develop *Cratylus*](#) a mobile application that “gamifies” the tagging of works in the Museum’s collection. This enables any viewer in the Museum to contribute to building metadata for a work of art on view—which helps to make the collection as a whole more searchable and accessible. Similarly, in 2014 BCMA created the digital exhibition *Fifty Years Later: The Portrayal of The Negro in American Painting* [<https://web.bowdoin.edu/art-museum/fifty-years/#0>], which commemorated the 50th anniversary of an important exhibition organized by the Museum, and which was visited at the time by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., supported by new research and a series of essays from students.

Andrea Dezsö: The Visitors

Originally scheduled to be presented February 20–May 31, 2020, [the exhibition](#) positions works of art by Dezsö alongside objects, selected by the artist, from the collections of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and the College’s Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum. Together, these pieces demonstrate the curious power of visual experience across cultures and times. They place viewers in close proximity to hybrid beings and imagined, magical, or spiritual forces that take on the guise of human figures or other lifelike forms. The abstraction and distortion reflected in these imagined creatures prompt us to consider undisclosed presences that lurk in living beings. Central to the exhibition are the series of nine works called *Shingles Paintings*, done by the artist after contracting the shingles virus in the fall of 2019. *Andrea Dezsö: The Visitors* was organized in collaboration with Zac Wilson ’20 and Jackie Brown, Marvin H. Green Jr. Assistant Professor of Art.

Propelled by a boundless curiosity, Dezsö’s practice involves a wide range of media, from mosaics and glass to paintings and prints. Among the forms her work has taken are intricate illustrations and large-scale public and site-specific installations. Born in Romania, she is now based in Amherst, Massachusetts, where she teaches at Hampshire College.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art is the cornerstone of the arts and culture at Bowdoin. One of the earliest collegiate art collections in the nation, it came into being through the 1811 bequest of James Bowdoin III of 79 European paintings and a portfolio of 140 master drawings. The collection has been expanded through the generosity of the Bowdoin family, alumni and friends, and now numbers more than 20,000 objects, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper, decorative arts and artifacts from prehistory to the present from civilizations around the world. www.bowdoin.edu

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