

Bucharest, Romania

Andrea Dezso

(music)

DEZSO: Inspiration for this mural is nature and the richness and beauty and diversity that one can find in nature and in the imagination. It's an imaginary garden, it's called *Blueberry Garden*. Blueberries are native to Romania, they grew in Transylvania where I'm from, in the mountains. If we were lucky, we found some and they were always like little treats in the forest. And I wanted to construct this mosaic around this memory of finding something beautiful.

(music)

DEZSO: I was hoping that people who come to the consular entrance of the American embassy in Bucharest will have a very positive and uplifting first impression of their interaction with the United States, one that will be colorful and rich and diverse and beautiful.

(music)

DEZSO: It was really a thrill to come back to Romania and create this work for the US embassy. Before that, the last time I was in Bucharest was in 1988 to get my exit visa when I emigrated from Romania. And it's been a very uplifting experience, a wonderful experience to come back this way and to leave something permanent here that is I think beautiful.

(music)

DEZSO: I have worked with Stephen Miotto of Miotto Mosaics before for a project for the New York Subway. When we discussed creating a mosaic for the American embassy with Virginia Shore, I knew that I wanted Stephen Miotto to fabricate it if at all possible. I didn't even consider anybody else.

(music)

MIOTTO: Mosaic, I think, is a special form an art form because it's kind of a dual thing. It's not only artwork, it's architectural. It's kind of the marriage of commercial materials and commercial application, but having a little integrity to the artwork, you know, to the aesthetics of what the artist wants.

(music)

DEZSO, to students: When I was growing up in Romania in the 70s and 80s, I was really interested in space travel. It seemed to be very heroic and it seemed to be that even though at that time we couldn't travel, we didn't have passports or the freedom to travel, so for me the astronaut became this almost mythical figure that was able to transcend time and space and the restrictions put on you by society or political systems and was able to go freely.

(music)

STUDENT 1: We wanted to show our appreciation because you came here and you are Romanian and it's very beautiful to have artists like you in other countries and to show that this country has also good people.

DEZSO: Thank you.

STUDENT 1: That are working so hard.

DEZSO: Thank you very much.

(music)

DEZSO: Part of my work dealt with these truths that my mom, my parents, my grandparents used to raise us with which turned out that they were very regional and they were not universally true.

(music)

DEZSO, to camera: This is a combination of ceramic and glass mosaics, industrial glass as well as hand cut small pieces.

DEZSO, to students: I took colored pencil that matched exactly the color of each tile.

DEZSO, to camera: Each little sample tile he sent me, I matched to a color pencil so that when I go to make the drawing I can be certain that he's going to be able to fully reproduce that color. Look at this one, it's like egg yolk or some kind of citrus, really strong citrus. And this one is that kind of peach with cream. In a small like square foot of space, you have all of these options, like those striped Italian ice creams. I just want to stand here and lick them all (laughs), it's like candy!

DEZSO, to person: They actually look at how I draw, the direction of the drawings, so if I shade something in a circular way in the round pieces then they will put the tiles in a circular way so it really does look exactly like the drawing.

DEZSO, to camera: In a way it is like a patchwork of cultures like we are in America, really, like there's all kinds of flavors and beauty comes in every which way. And I love that when you look from afar it looks like unity, but when you look up close there's all these different local flavors and you just want to stand there and enjoy them.