

ADELA ANDEA

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*Lux, Lumens and Candelas*

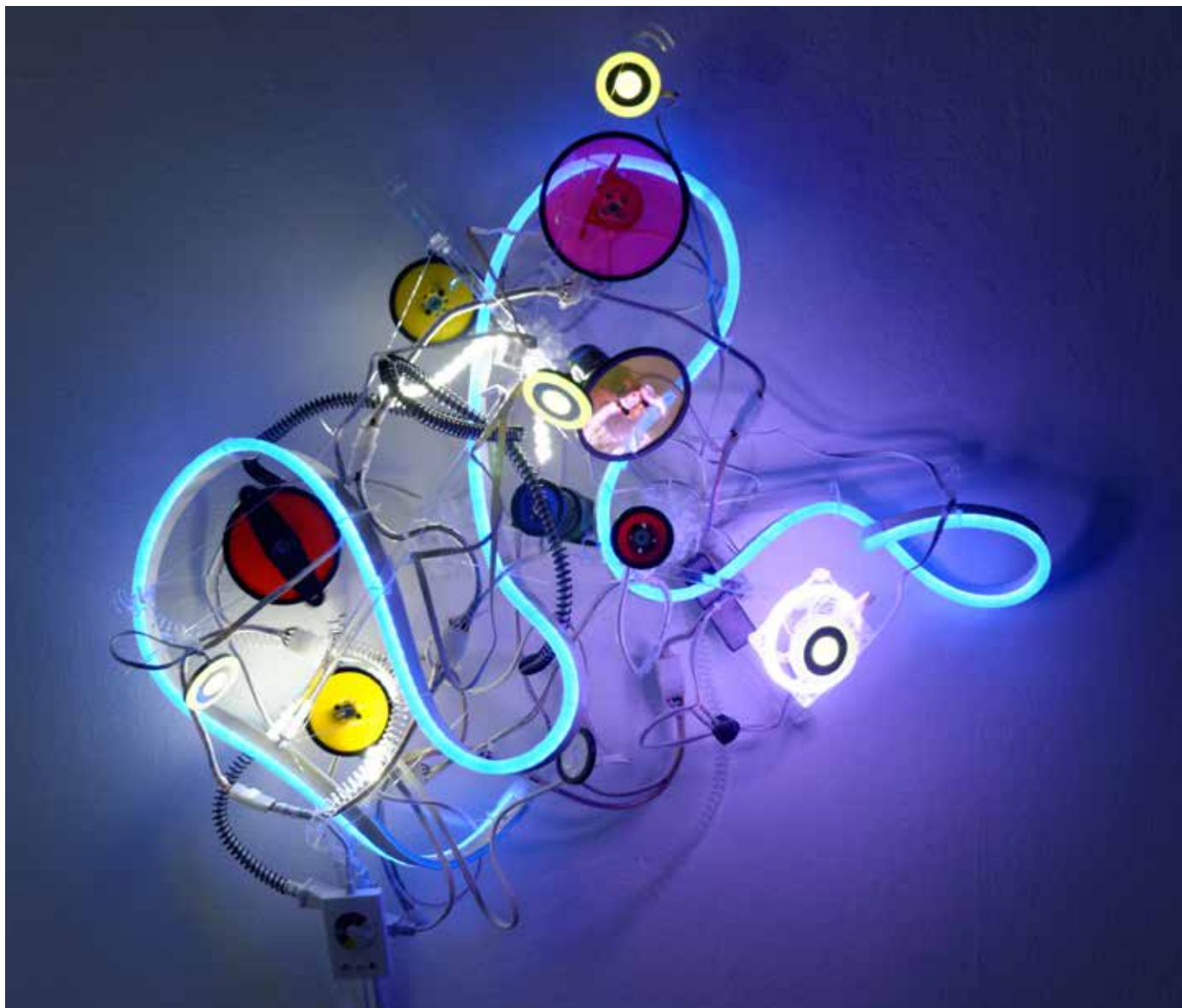


WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 20, 2014

AUSTIN, TEXAS



*Sonoluminescence*, gear motors, colored acrylic precision disks, flex neon, LED modules, Plexiglas, 32 x 32 x 14 inches, 2013.

Cover Panel: *Lux, Lumens & Candelas*, Gallery View, LED with remotes, magnifying plastics, 15 x 15 x 10 feet, 2014.

## ADELA ANDEA AS GYNOLUX:

### *The Power of Woman as Light Artist*

The work of Adela Andea is unique in many ways. She uses an array of everyday materials—neon lights and LEDs, various grades and colors of plastic, fish tank filters, gurgling water, light-fused filament, and lenticulars—thwarting their intended functions for the sake of art. She sways these parts from planned purpose to glittering statement, recombining them as networks of electrically charged, seemingly living entities of light art.

Most unique though of all Andea's qualities is her gender.

Andea is gynolux, a woman using electricity and light as material in art. More precisely, she practices in the hybrid field of art and electronic media, otherwise known as media art, which has been historically dominated by men. In the broad sense of the term, media art includes anything using light, electricity, and suggestive of movement. This would include photography, film, kinetic art, Op Art painting, early computer and information art, and digital art and gaming in the present. Forebears of the field include Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Gyorgy Kepes, George Rickey, Mary Corse, Helen Pashgian, Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, and Stelarc. As with other fields of art practice prior to Second Wave Feminism that emerged in the 1960s, there are few female names present.

So what does it mean when a woman uses electricity as a medium? Does being a female artist using electricity mean anything special? Does it distinguish her from other female artists using graphite, paint, clay, wood, or bronze? The quick answer to these questions is no. Any female artist successfully practicing is a feminist at some level, witting and

unwitting. She is a strong female role model guiding younger women along the way. The slower, more deliberative response to these questions is, simply put, yes. It makes Andea a creator not of natural life, not of human offspring, but of artificial life. As a maker of artificial life, Andea recalibrates how we think of “woman” and “gender.” She untethers gender from gender stereotypes, such as men are naturally macho and paternal while women are naturally nurturing and maternal.

Like a de-gendered cyborg, Andea is at once woman and other, working between fantasy and science. Think here of Dr. Frankenstein who brought life to his monster from electricity, two characters notably fabricated by woman writer Mary Shelley, and Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta, two eighteenth-century scientists whose experiments queried the relationship between organic life and electricity. Andea does not so much play god in the act of creating art-as-life but scientist. She continues to hew an expanded space for art first opened by the many figures listed above, where electrical engineer meets biologist meets classical artist-impresario.

The work in *Adela Andea: Lux, Lumen, and Candelas* at *Women & Their Work* occupies space as though organic form. Like adaptive species, the individual works take corners, inhabit walls, hover below ceilings, and dangle above the floor, spreading across gallery space as though viral bacteria or spongiform marine life. In its use of fluid media, both electricity and water, this work mimics life and in many ways seems to come to life. Carefully crafted conglomerations of plastic with light and water coursing through them, the works feel like they are alive, thereby questioning the boundaries between the non-living and living.

In tapping this fault line, Andea sets off a series of urgent ethical and ecological questions. If life is medically assisted and biologically created, do we have a duty to medically terminate and biologically destroy life when and if necessary? Who decides when and where to turn the switches? What is the value of the living in the age of viable cloning? What are the effects of life on life and the non-living on life? Like a meteor blasting into the earth, is humankind the cause of what some scientists are calling the “sixth great extinction?”



*Left to right:  
Gallery View with  
Techno Alchemy,  
Hybrid Auto, and  
White Crystalline.*



*Lux, Lumens & Candelas*, Gallery View, LED with remotes, magnifying plastics, 15 x 15 x 10 feet, 2014.

If we were to bear down on her materials, breaking down light, the key element of Andea's work, to its most symbolic and catalytic element, we would look to heat. And just as much as electricity is living or life-like, heat is destructive, part of the carbonic breakdown of living matter. Here, Andea plays out entropy, a concept of energy and information flow, balance and imbalance, and the steady creep towards universal chaos, which motivated earthwork artist Robert Smithson. In layman's terms, entropy explains the wearing down of all matter—cars, bones, houses, etc.—into disarray. Order turning to disorder: this is entropy.

Andea's layered and woven light pieces are not in any way chaotic in terms of the broader time of entropy. It is not art about the imminent heat death of the universe. Rather, more intricate and subtle, the temperature and suggestive heat of the lights plays out the dynamic moment of entropy in which we live now. These are works of art that capture the process of entropy something like snapshots in three-

dimensional form. They tell of living matter acting on living matter: humans foraging the earth for vital elements that are transformable into energy producing materials, such as petroleum, natural gas, and all grades of metal. We break down and create in repeated instances of what Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter described as "creative destruction."

In her latest body of work, Andea has been inspired by first-person experience of this dynamic: her experience of climate change's sublimities along the opposite end of the spectrum from our own. Think here declining tundra rather than rising desert. In a recent trip to Alaska, she witnessed the closest rings of destruction emanating out from melting polar icecaps. Giant chunks of ice fell from the tips of magnificent glaciers, making splashes below and inspiring Andea to capture language with light form, i.e. to bring home her experiences in art form to Texas. In response, Andea developed a set of themes including crystals, shoots, and

systems out of wack. In homage to the native people of Alaska, Andea gave that series of work Inuit names, such as *Navcaq*, meaning "neurotic snow," *Kaneq*, meaning "frost," and *Nevluk*, meaning "clinging debris."

Andea relays a message from nature. We are all interconnected; we are responsible for one another. Like the brightly colored filament that meanders around the wall and corner in *Kaneq*, twining and cleaving floor to walls to ceiling, the desert Southwest of our own backyard and the melting glaciers in Alaska are part of the same ecosystem. Andea uses diverse materials—a matrix of hydrogen, oxygen, luminescence, plastic, and electricity—to declare the adaptability, resilience, and simultaneous preciousness of our shared ecology. She mobilizes electricity in order to raise consciousness of the wellbeing of the earth and its diversity, making light-forms that hide their gloominess in the ebullience of bright lights and coursing energy.

Charissa N. Terranova, PhD—Author of *Automotive Prosthetic: Technological Mediation and the Car in Conceptual Art*. Terranova is a professor, writer, and critic based in Dallas.



*White Crystalline*, flex neon, CCFL, LED modules, LED fans, power supply, Plexiglas, 8 x 3 x 3 feet, 2012.

## ADELA ANDEA

### EDUCATION

- 2009-2012 Master of Fine Arts, New Media, University of North Texas, Denton, TX
- 2005-2009 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, Valedictorian, Summa cum Laude, University of Houston, TX
- 1995-1999 Law School, Dragan European University, Lugoj, Romania

### SELECTED SOLO SHOWS AND EVENTS

- Feb 2014 Women & Their Work—*Lux, Lumens and Candelas*, Austin, TX
- Jan 2014 Palm Beach Convention Center—*Art Palm Beach 2014—Entrance Installation*, Palm Beach, FL
- Jan 2014 Cris Worley Fine Arts—*Zero Degrees Celsius*, Dallas, TX
- May 2013 Art League Houston—*Cocomirle*, Houston, TX
- Jan 2013 Anya Tish Gallery—*Mandrágora: Liquescent Light*, Houston, TX
- Sept 2012 Art League Houston—*Primordial Garden*, Houston, TX
- Jan 2012 Cora Stafford—*Primordial Gardens*, Dallas, TX
- April 2011 Cris Worley Fine Arts—*E=hc*, Dallas, TX
- Jan 2011 Anya Tish Gallery—*Bioluminescence*, Houston, TX
- June 2010 Skydive—*The Space Between the Sounds*, Houston, TX
- March 2010 Julia C. Buttridge Gallery, Dougherty Arts Center—*Reclaimed Office*, Austin, TX
- Aug 2009 Lawndale Art Center—*The Green™ Cyber Web*, Houston, TX

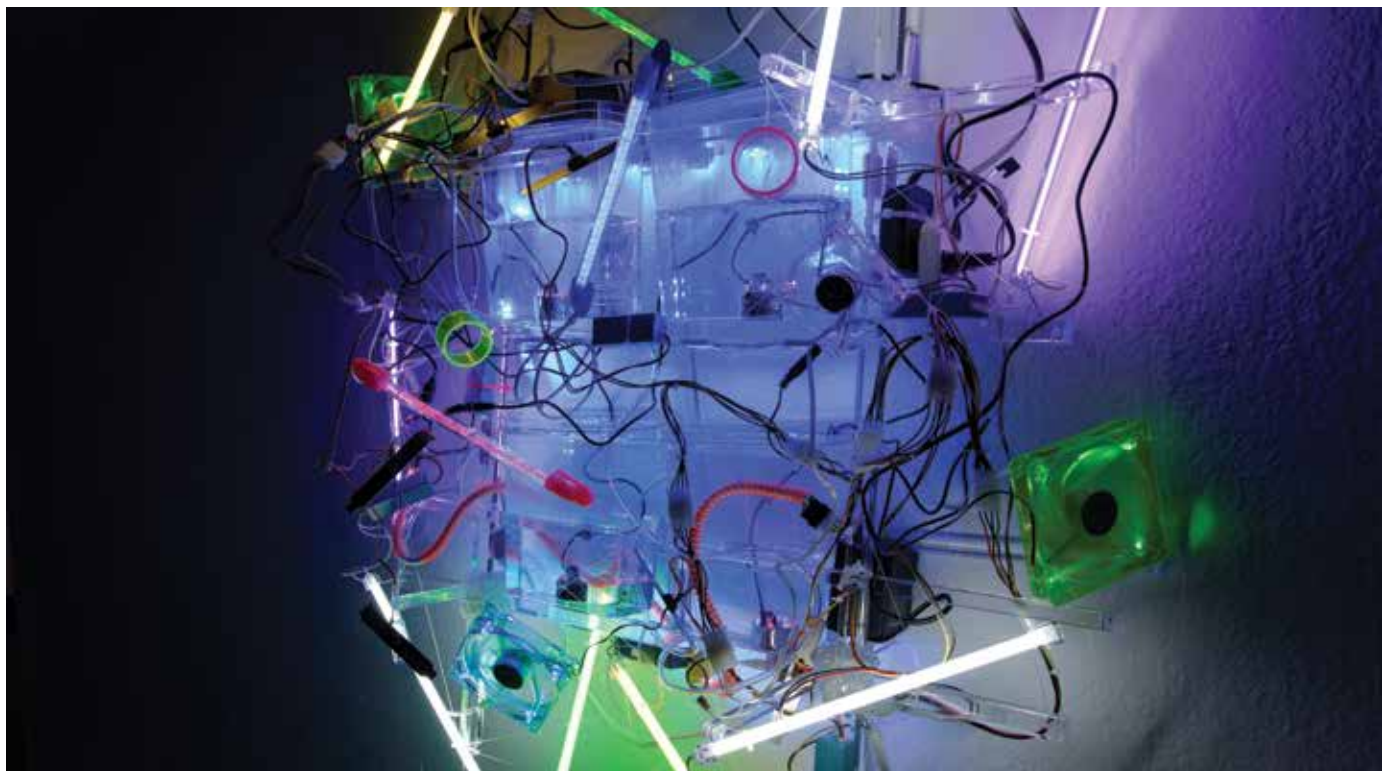
### SELECTED GROUP SHOWS AND EVENTS

- Feb 2014 The Grace Museum—*Drawn In/Drawn Out*, Abilene, TX
- Jan 2014 Art Museum of Southeast Texas—*Mirrored and Obscured: Contemporary Texas Self-Portraits*, Beaumont, TX
- Oct 2013 George R. Brown Convention Center—*Houston Fine Art Fair*, Houston, TX
- Aug 2013 Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum—*Texas Biennial TX13*, San Antonio, TX
- Dec 2012 Scope Pavilion—*SCOPE Miami 2012*, Miami, FL
- July 2012 Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts—*Luxuriant Refuse*, Houston, TX
- April 2012 Fashion Industry Gallery—*Dallas Art Fair*, Public Installation, Dallas, TX
- Feb 2012 Art Wynwood Pavilion—*Art Wynwood 2012*, Public Installation, Miami, FL
- Dec 2011 Art Miami Pavilion—*Art Miami 2011*, Miami, FL
- Oct 2011 One Arts Plaza—*Aurora 2011*, Dallas, TX

- July 2011 Museum of Geometric and MADI Art—*DERIVATIVES: Origins in Geometry*, 1<sup>st</sup> prize, Dallas, TX
- May 2011 Museum of Art and Design (MAD)—*Fluorescent Ball*, New York, NY
- April 2011 Contemporary Art Museum Houston—*2011 Annual Gala*, Houston, TX
- April 2011 McKinney Avenue Contemporary—*Starry, Starry Night*, Dallas, TX
- Jan 2011 Station Museum—*Art4Life*, Houston, TX
- Dec 2010 Cris Worley Fine Arts—*Eos Rising*, Dallas, TX
- May 2010 Anya Tish Gallery—*Syncoption*, Houston, TX
- May 2010 Wichita Falls Art Museum—*TXOK Biennial*, Wichita Falls, TX
- July 2009 Museum of Printing History—*Body Language*, Houston, TX
- July 2005 Art Car Museum—*FACE Self-Portraits*, Houston, TX



*Ice Lumens, LED, magnifying plastics, 56 x 57 x 12 inches, 2014.*



*Techno-Alchemy*, CCFL, water, ultrasonic foggers, LED fans, power source, 27 x 27 x 12 inches, 2014.

## Women & Their Work

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Known for its pioneering spirit, embrace of artistic innovation, and commitment to Texas audiences and artists, Women & Their Work is now celebrating its 36th anniversary. Presenting over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, literature, and film, the gallery features on-going exhibitions of Texas women artists and brings artists of national stature to Texas audiences. Since its founding, Women & Their Work has presented 1,875 artists in 287 visual art exhibitions, 121 music, dance and theater events, 15 film festivals, 24 literary readings and 511 workshops in programming that reflects the broad diversity of this region. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in Art in America, the New York Times, ArtForum and on National Public Radio and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from

the National Endowment for the Arts. Women & Their Work reaches over 950 school children and teachers each year through gallery tours, gallery talks with exhibiting artists, participatory workshops, in-school performances, dance master classes, and teacher workshops.



women and  
their work

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