

# Andrea Bowers' chandelier for Ruinart will debut at Frieze LA

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## Andrea Bowers' sculptural chandelier for Ruinart reflects a shared commitment to environmental conservation

Andrea Bowers has partnered with Ruinart to create a work to be unveiled at Frieze LA, before it finds a permanent home at Maison Ruinart's HQ in Reims



Left, artist Andrea Bowers photographed in January 2024 in her studio in Highland Park, California. Right, glass leaves for her artwork for Ruinart, shot on a light box so you can see all the colours clearly, at glassmaker Judson Studios

(Image credit: Molly Matalon)

Art is an aesthetic expression of activism for Andrea Bowers, whose large-scale works have sprung from injustices concerning environmental, immigration and women's rights. The LA-based artist first became immersed in environmental activism after joining forest defence protests, including, notably, with activist John Quigley, with whom she campaigned to save a 400-year-old oak tree. She documented the experience in the 2009 video, *Nonviolent Civil Disobedience Training—Tree Sitting Forest Defense*. Later, she was arrested alongside other activists while protesting to save a vast oak forest in Arcadia, California, from destruction by Los Angeles County officials.

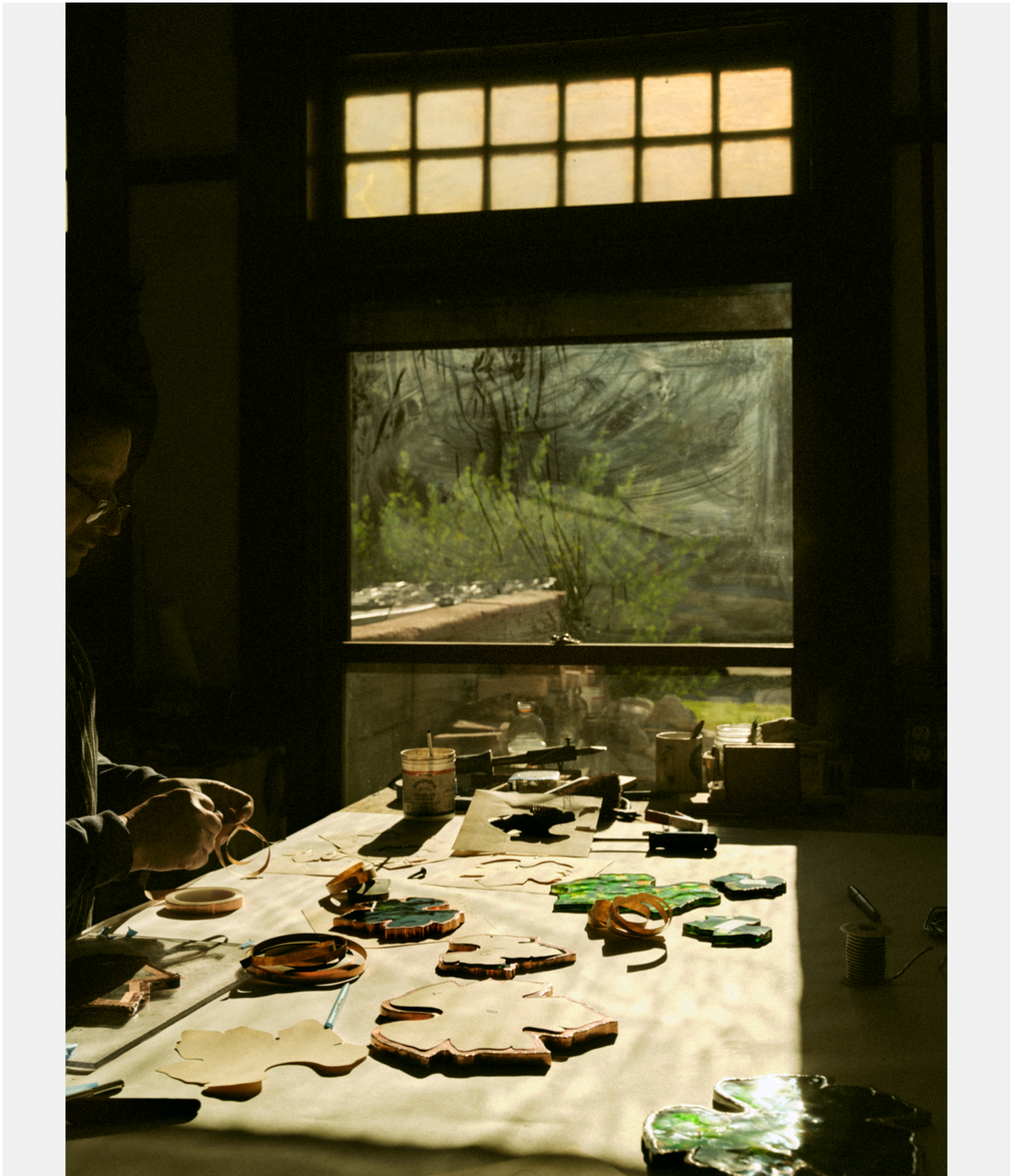
It is this emotionally charged ecological awareness that caught the eye of Maison Ruinart, which has seen environmental changes over the last 20 years reflected in the vine. With the time between flowering and harvest reduced by two weeks, berries take on a sweeter piquancy, creating a need for a new champagne that is sustainable yet still recognisably Ruinart, a challenge addressed in its 2023 cuvée Blanc Singulier.

## **Ruinart and Andrea Bowers to unveil new work at Frieze LA 2024**

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Ruinart's 2024 *Carte Blanche*, entitled *Conversations with nature*, sees a collective of six international artists create individual artworks expressing our relationship with nature, with the results set to be exhibited at art fairs around the world – in Bowers' case, the unveiling will be at Frieze LA 2024. From October 2024, these artworks will be brought together in an Artists' Garden designed as part of a new architectural project at Maison Ruinart in Reims. Exposed to the elements, they will be viewable all year round, immersed in a rich ecosystem of trees, plants and animal life. Inspired by this connection with nature, Maison Ruinart has chosen to work with artists who hold strong convictions regarding the living world, emphasising the importance of addressing climate upheaval.





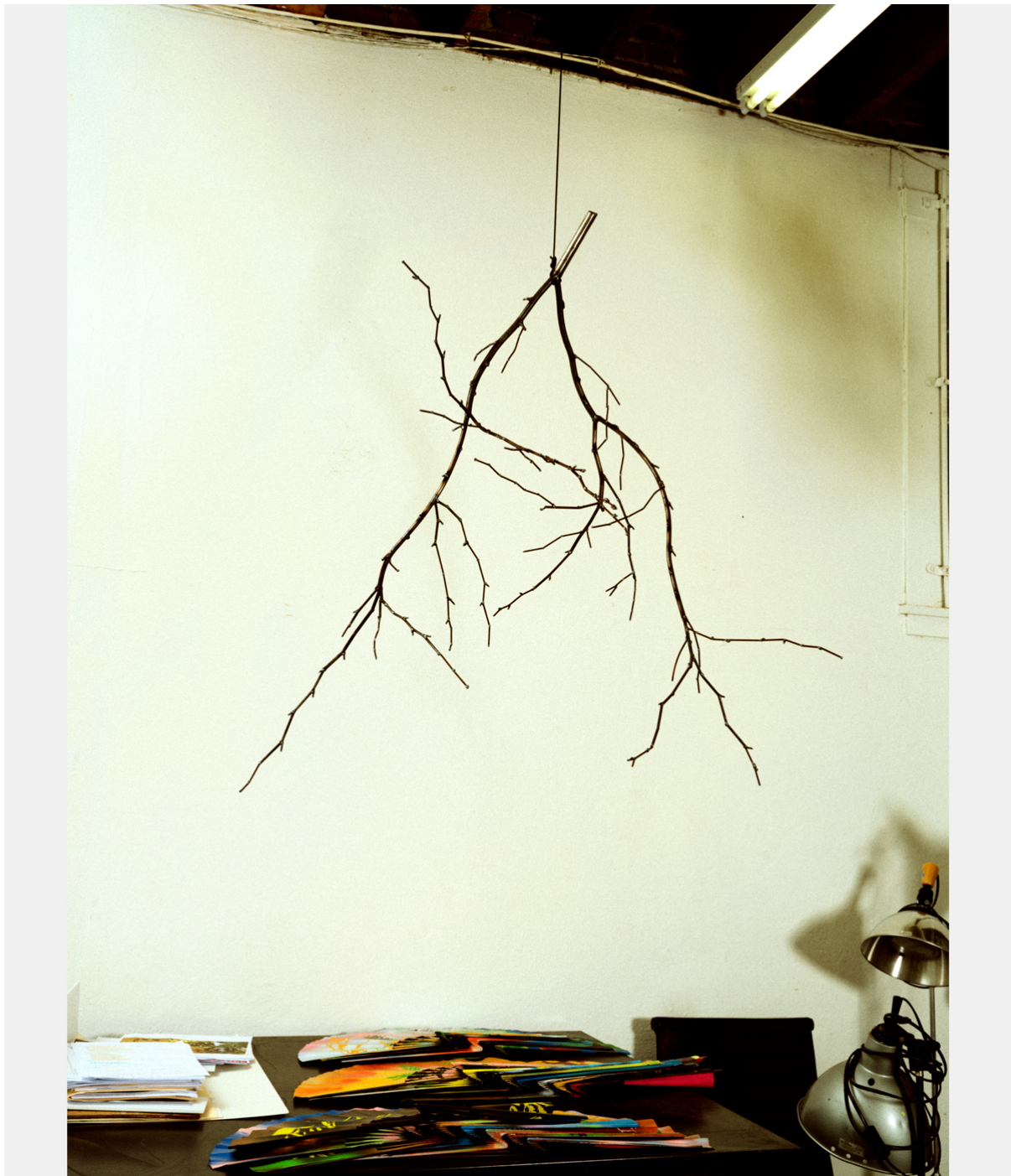
Work in progress on the glass and neon leaves  
(Image credit: Molly Matalon)

Bowers' piece, a steel chandelier, will hang suspended in the middle of the garden, tracing the sculptural silhouettes of tree branches, with leaves in neon and stained glass. Along the branches will run quotes from Françoise d'Eaubonne, the French writer and mother of eco-feminism.

'Around here, a lot of people have these big old oaks and they hang chandeliers,' says Bowers, from her studio in Highland Park, California. 'It's simple, but romantic and beautiful. Sometimes my works are really heavy. It's nice to make something that is still political, but also just beautiful.'



Bowers collaborated with local glassmaker Judson Studios for the speckled leaves, created from weighty leftover glass, yet appearing to curl and undulate. Bowers references her experiences witnessing the needless destruction of trees. She says the wilful felling of the forest around her, as she clung to a remaining tree, greatly affected and frightened her. She has returned to it multiple times in her art since, including here: the glass leaves are reimaginings of the leaves she saved from the felled trees, the memories of its branches becoming the form of the chandelier. Wood chips she took from the scene also formed the basis for previous artworks. 'How can I memorialise [the devastation]? The chandeliers are symbolic because they're based on sycamores, but it's also a way to remember that devastation that I went through. It's like a memento mori.'



Distressed by the wilful destruction of trees and forests, Bowers takes inspiration from natural forms to create artworks that memorialise and symbolise the devastation  
(Image credit: Molly Matalon)



The faithfully carved casts of the leaves make a solid foil for the looping whorls of the neon, itself teased into leaf shapes. ‘There’s the art side of me that’s really interested in exploring and experimenting with neon, and pushing it in sculptural ways,’ she says. ‘I decided to make it totally 3D. I got to the chandeliers in quite a formal way because it was a technical challenge. So despite all the activism and politics and history that’s in my work, there is also an artist who loves making craft and pushing material boundaries.’

The quotes from d’Eaubonne, which run throughout, are a crucial component for her, their understated presentation carefully considered. ‘It’s a feminist history from Paris that I’m representing,’ explains Bowers, who says she prefers to leave visitors to connect the dots themselves. ‘I want to get people on board with the work. There’s a way to collaborate and find alliances and not just piss people off with the art. The chandeliers honour the history of eco-feminist poetry.’

As well as *Chandelier of Interconnectedness*, Bowers has created *Political Ribbons*, to be showcased at Frieze LA. An installation of 8ft-long coloured ribbons printed with silkscreened slogans referencing the climate emergency, it alludes to the ribbons that suffragettes emblazoned with political slogans in their own non-violent protest. The work is an immersive one – Bowers is keen for visitors to help themselves to a ribbon. ‘We want people to engage and be involved. It brings camaraderie. It brings joy.’



Work in progress on the neon leaves  
(Image credit: Molly Matalon)

Ultimately, Bowers is emphasising the environmental issues important to her, as well as to Ruinart. While visiting Reims, she was impressed by the maison’s commitment to bringing back biodiversity, with passages in the vineyards encouraging the return of certain insects, alongside natural ways to manage water.

'Making champagne is a magical process of simple things that come from the earth,' Bowers adds. 'It's really about Mother Earth, we have to protect the soil that those roots are in. And the light is phenomenal [in Reims]. It's a breathtaking setting. It's a great privilege to experience that kind of sublime landscape.'