

# MERVE ÖZASLAN - INTERVIEW



Merve Özasan's surreal collages are mysterious and awe-inspiring. Beautiful to marvel at, her ingenious creations contain a deeper message.

**Hi, Merve. Could you introduce yourself to our students?**

I am from Istanbul and I have been working on collage projects since 2012.

**How would you describe the art scene in Istanbul?**

Turkey's contemporary art scene is one of the liveliest in the world.

**Tell us how you first discovered your unique style of collage. What inspired it?**

I have been working on nature-based projects since 2005. This time I wanted to be more critical and my research went in this direction. Collage artists usually use nature and vintage photography but I think my unique style comes from the questions I raise about our relationship with nature. When it comes to inspiration, I like to observe. Sometimes I'm inspired by a friend with a great talent; other times I'm fascinated by a child's imagination. My head is filled with dozens of people. As you can see, my inspirations are humans and nature.

**Your collages juxtapose black-and-white photos of the manmade world with colour photos of the natural world. For you, what is the significance of this relationship?**

By using vintage photographs and photos of nature, I tried to show that we are all part of our own environment.

**What draws you to the past over the modern day?**

I think old photographs are more sensitive and natural. To tell my story properly, I had to use untouched and honest scenes.

**What are the characteristics you look for when finding new images to work with?**

I have to say, I tend to look at lots of photographs in one day. It's not easy to choose the right one. There are no certain characteristics for me but when I look at the photograph it has to stimulate the thoughts in my head.

**Being born and based in Istanbul, how do you feel your work relates to your own personal surroundings?**

It's a city of contradictions and mysteries and the connecting point of so many cultures, people, beliefs and ideas. It's also the perfect combination of sophistication and edginess. Istanbul is so inspirational and magical. I was born and raised here and I found new inspirations every day. That's what influenced me the most.

**Who or what are your greatest artistic influences?**

Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Alexander Calder, Gustav Klimt.

**What's next for you?**

I really want to extend the Natural Act series. After some more of those, I'll open an exhibition one day.