

# Audrey Guttman, Making Arrangements with Lockdown

In 2020, the artist created collages using a book about ikebana, before publishing them in the form of a journal to express her gratitude.

19.02.2021

Words: Rebecca Zissmann



When the world shut itself away during the COVID-19 pandemic, **Audrey Guttman** was at her sister's home in Belgium. Far from her studio and her collection of cut-out images, she dipped into a Japanese floral art book to create her collages. A few months later she realised that, after such a challenging year, she wanted to offer this series to those who had supported her, and thus decided to have it printed in the form of a journal. ***Making Arrangements* is now available** to the general public.

'During lockdown, people were staging their homes, by making floral arrangements or placing candles in a line. It reminded me of ikebana, which is a way of finding order in the midst of chaos', the artist explains.

After studying political science and pursuing a research degree in art history, Audrey Guttman turned her attention towards producing visual art. She has always created collages, but has only been displaying these works since 2017. In 2020, she exhibited a series about African masks, having collected images of them and then affixing these seamlessly to bodies found in magazines to create a piece of work designed to be a feminist critique of fashion. Audrey Guttman is also passionate about Japan, and has produced **numerous collages inspired by her travels around the country**.

## Shaking up ikebana

*flower arrangements – a land of still life,  
sheltering in space*

*an architecture like the cosmos  
tiny and vast*

– Extract from the second poem

In *Making Arrangements*, Audrey Guttman combines collages and poems she has written. This is the first time that she has brought the two mediums together. One exists without the other, but together they are complementary. The words are supported by images that the artist takes care to leave in a state as close to their original nature as possible. Swathes of bright colour act as vases for the black-and-white floral arrangements taken from the book. Audrey Guttman's arrangements work based on contrast: between untamed nature and the ordered nature of ikebana, a highly codified art that is shaken up by the artist, and between plants and humans, with plants acting as characters and human bodies adopting the whimsical nature of flowers.

The collage on the centrefold of the journal exemplifies the second of these. It shows two hands of different skin colours, interlaced, and from which, like roots, a flowering tree emerges. This is a way of celebrating the contact that was cruelly absent in 2020, as Audrey Guttman explains: ‘collage was a way for me to put the world back together.’

## **Making arrangements with reality**

*it seems all we have done this year  
is to make arrangements*

*adapting to the impossible  
composing and recomposing our selves  
putting things in order  
planning for the hereafter*

– Extract from the first poem

*Making Arrangements* is a clever semantic play on the various meanings of the word ‘arrangement.’ The title alludes to floral arrangement, of course, but also all the compromises that had to be made during lockdown, particularly between members of the same household. ‘All of a sudden, we were living on top of each other and we had to come to terms with it, make arrangements’, Audrey Guttman explains.

Indeed, it was for others that she decided to publish her compositions in a journal rather than in book format, as many artists do. Thus, the public can easily take hold of the object. The centrefold is designed like a poster, with no staples, removable and signed, with a view to being put up. 150 copies of *Making Arrangements* have been printed and the original collages are also available to buy, framed. During lockdown, Audrey Guttman also tried her hand at **creating papier mâché vases**, made from scrap materials.

*Making Arrangements* (2020), a series of collages by Audrey Guttman, is printed in a journal and available to buy from the **Librairie sans titre in Paris**, the **Librairie Peinture Fraîche in Brussels**, and on **the artist’s website**.

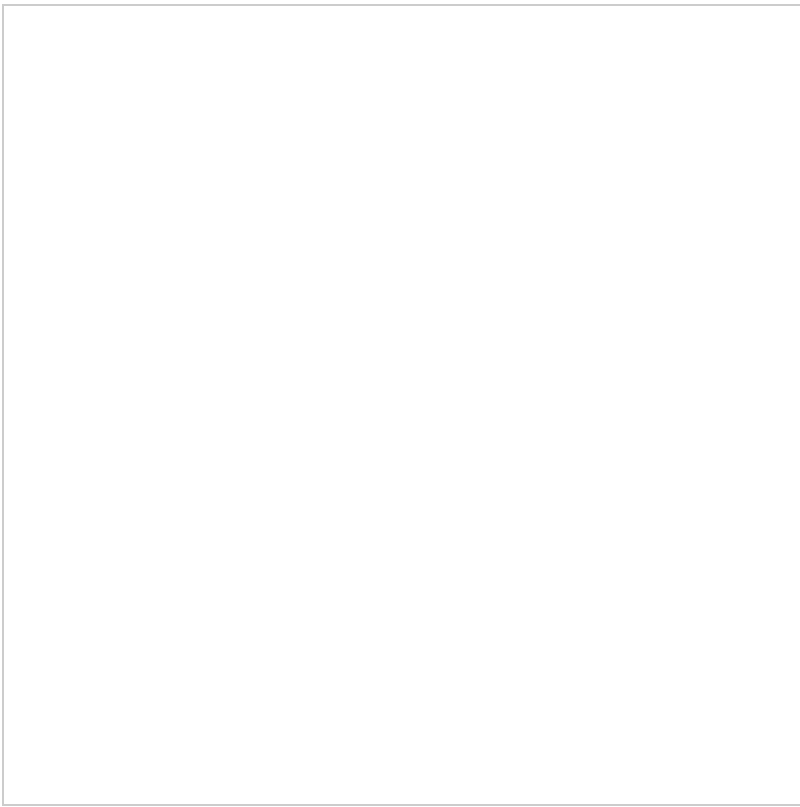
The series *Making Arrangements* will be exhibited from March 18 to March 27 2021 at the **Hangar Photo Art Center in Brussels**, where Audrey Guttman will set up a temporary collage studio.



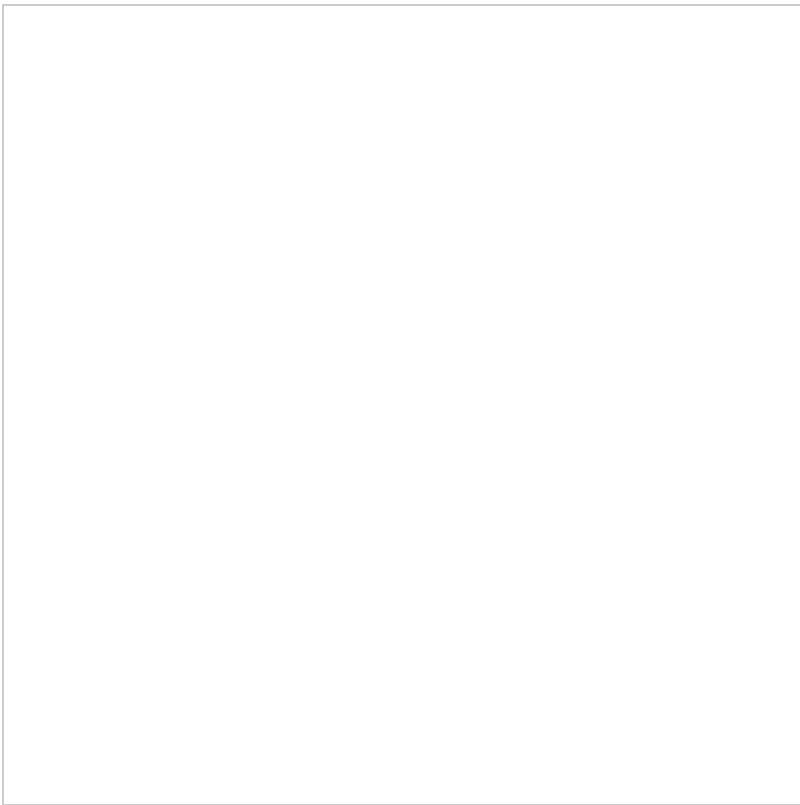
'Nature vs culture', 2020, Audrey Guttman



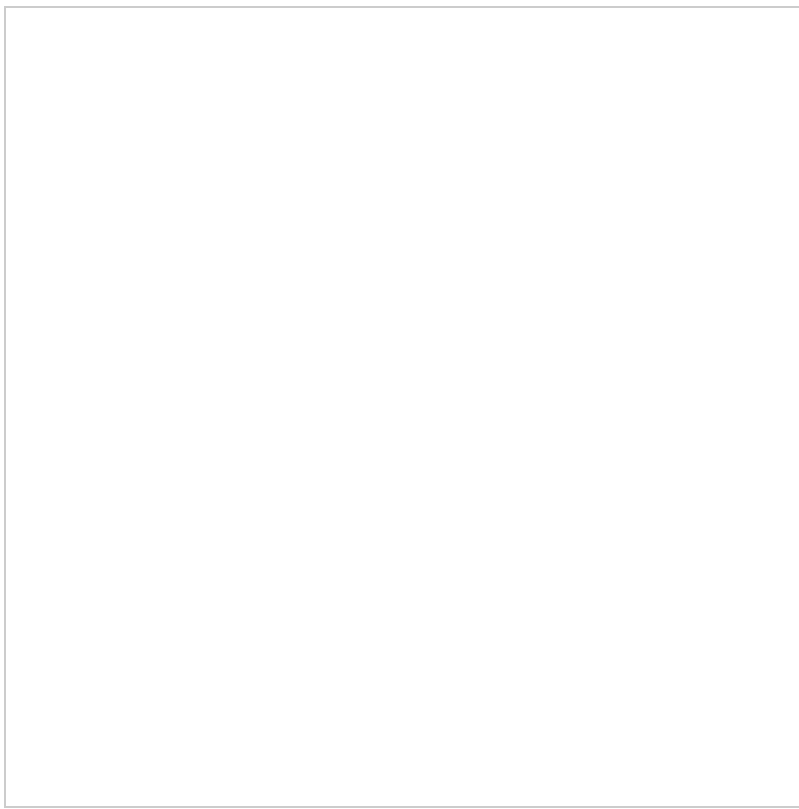
'Velvet Bunch', 2020, Audrey Guttman



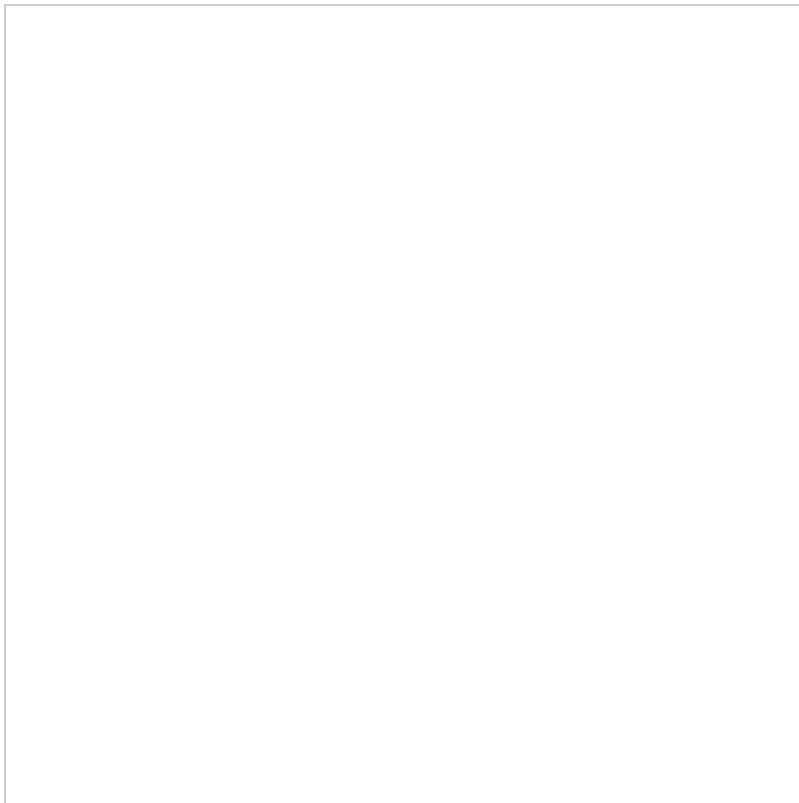
'Make Ikebana with your hands', 2020, Audrey Guttman



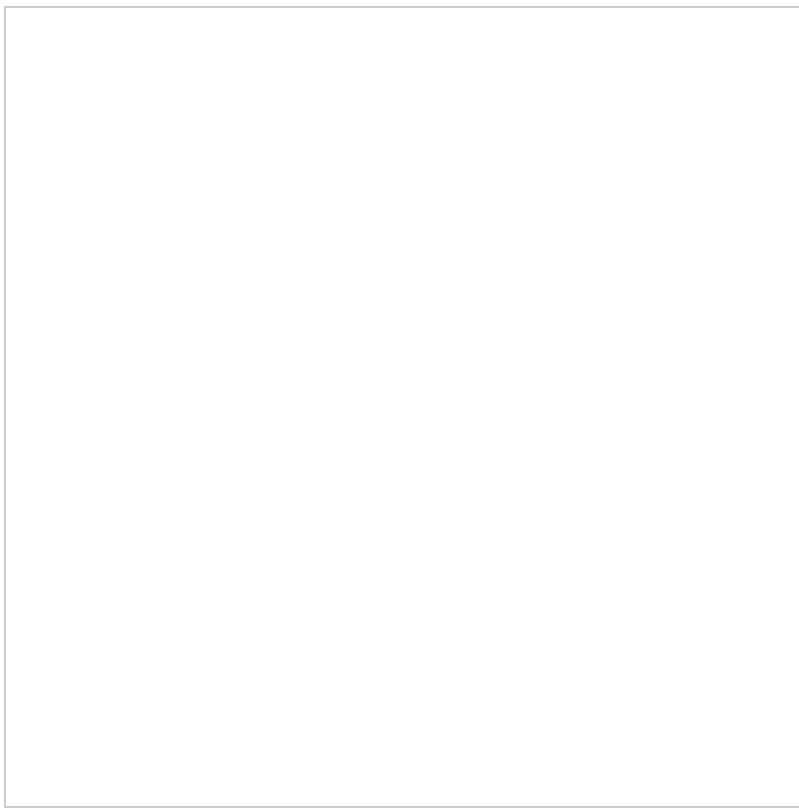
'Flower leg', 2020, Audrey Guttman



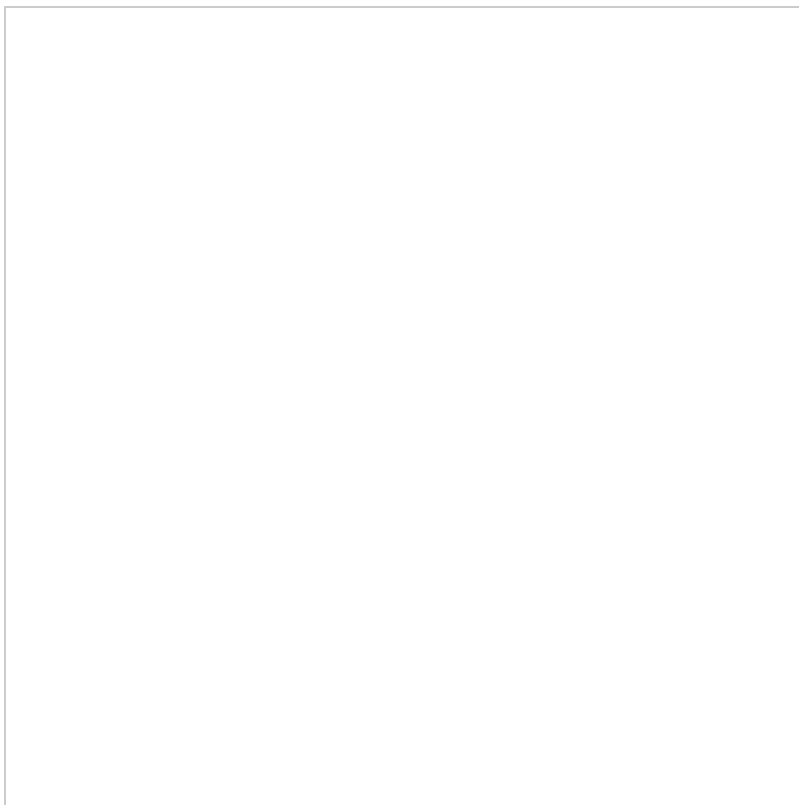
'Yarn gradient green', 2020, Audrey Guttman



'Blossom', 2020, Audrey Guttman



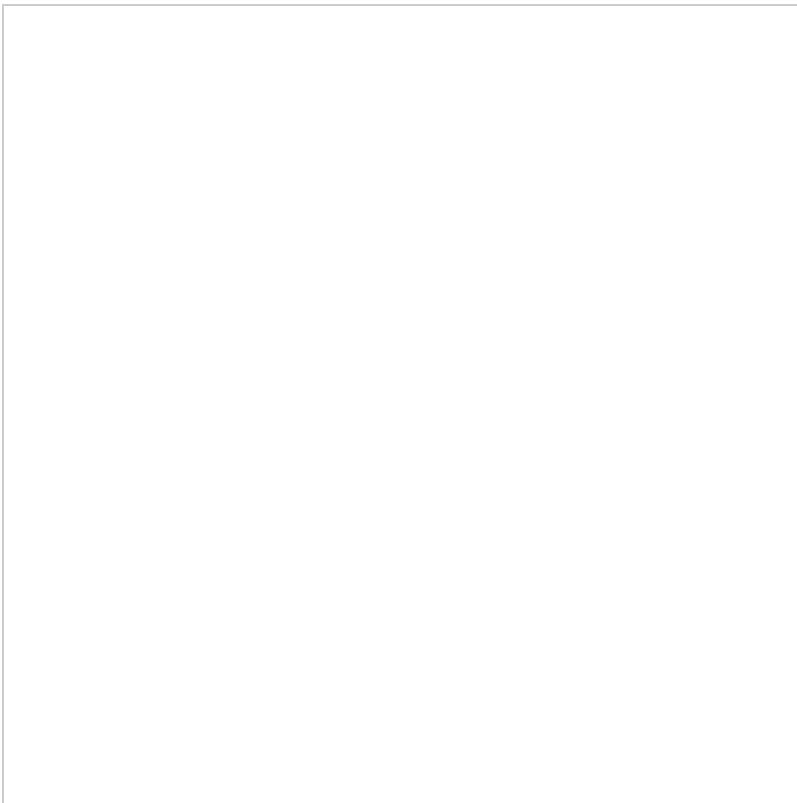
'Spring in winter', 2020, Audrey Guttman



'Red Flow', 2020, Audrey Guttman



'Order and chaos', 2020, Audrey Guttman



'Making Arrangements', 2020, Audrey Guttman

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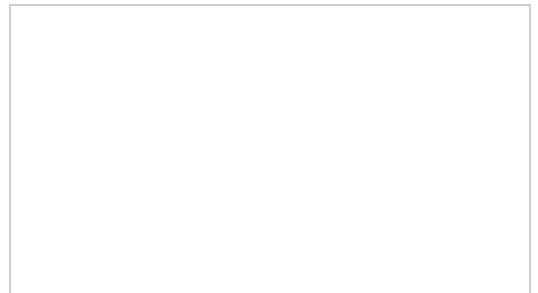


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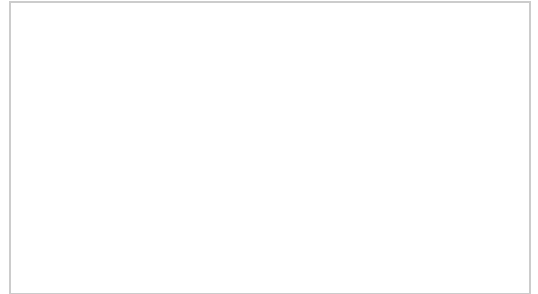
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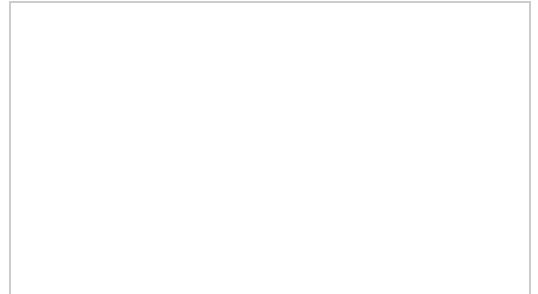
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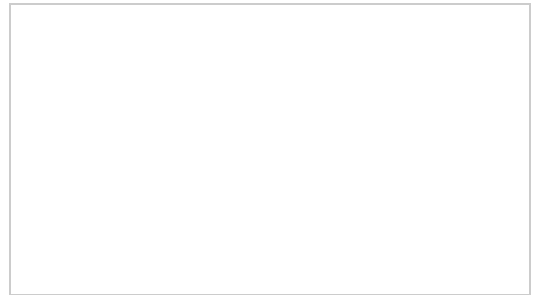
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