

COOLLAGE – A Closer Look

Interview for Adriana Bermúdez's blog
<https://adrianabermudez.com/blog/>

How did the idea for COOLLAGE – A Closer Look come about?

The idea came when my friend Bart, a printing-artist himself and a partner art teacher, realized that there was no collage-art book, that shows a diverse mix of all imaginable possibilities and applications of collage art, to use at home or at school. We decided to work out the idea for this collage artbook and see what would be necessary to make it. There was no turning back from that moment.

What was the process of selecting the artists and collages like?

We wanted the images in our book to be suitable for children, their (grand)parents but also for teachers. Therefore we were looking for collage-artists who understand the low profile character of collage-art and its expressiveness. We looked for artists who work with themes that make global issues understandable, but also for those who use interesting techniques, materials and cool images. That sounds easy but it wasn't. For over a year Bart and I swapped names and websites of artists we already knew, or looked for those that were introduced to us by other artists or even by contacts at embassy's with a network of artists. Our short-list soon became a long one. At that time we got a lot of positive feedback from all over the globe, from artists we got in contact with. We decided to try to release the book worldwide. Once in contact with a renowned artbook publisher for this, it helped we already had a lot of artists 'on board'.

The book invites us to look more closely, almost like a visual game. What did you hope to awaken in the reader with this approach?

Bart and I wanted two things. First, we wanted a stunning collage-art book with an overview of all varieties of collage-art from different collage-artists from all over the world. Second, we wanted the book to be useful at home and in school to discuss art in general, but also to introduce more specific and serious issues in a low key way. For example themes like global warming, racism or the equality of opportunities. That's why we decided to show a few details of each work, to start looking at it and recognizing certain parts of the work. The easiest way to start a discussion, about the art work itself or about the possible meanings of it. That's why we give the book its subtitle 'a closer look'.

What role do you think collage can play in art education for children and adults?

Education, and especially art-education, starts with amazement. Therefore you need inspiring (art)teachers/artists. I can't think of a more but suitable, safe, low profile and funny way to work with than with collage art. For example as an introduction of any subject at school - to test what pupils already know of this subject and learn from each other while working on it. Collage art has lots of possibilities to express, with the help from attractive materials and freestyling with color, shapes and text. Nothing can go wrong. No need for an extra study for the teacher or spend lots of money on it. Collage-art is something you can work on for 30 minutes, but also for 30 days. Therefore working on a subject with collage-art makes it very suitable for reflection every now and then, during a project at school. Even more important is the fact that with collage-art people can express themselves in an original way, without spending months training, and create something to be proud of, with their own techniques. That encourages people, in class, but also in everyday life. The power people find working on collages amazes me almost every week.

What has this project meant to you personally?

Both Bart and I were - and still are overwhelmed by how many people offered support. First of all, so many collage artists who contributed new work for the book. They did that without receiving any money and even agreed that we could use images of their work for promotion and so on. But not only artists supported our project. Professional graphic designers from our area spend a lot of time in it, and so did the director of our regional museum, who wrote an inspiring foreword. Last but not least an awful lot of people supported our crowdfund activities to get the project started in the first place. In the end the publisher got involved and the book saw the light of day. What makes me very, very happy and proud is that the artists use their copies of the book for promotional and educational purposes. It went around the globe!

Where can people buy the book, and what is the price?

The last copies of the book are still available. Send me an e-mail: rob@regentag.nl when interested. The book, hardcover, full color, 106 pages, is € 50 euro's, excl. post and package. I send the book worldwide. If you like, I make a unique one-off hand-cut collage in the back of it, for free.

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