

# INSPIRATION ON YOUR WALL

Designers and artists use mood boards when they want to explore new ideas and come up with creative projects. You can use them, too, to help get in touch with your intuition or remind yourself what's important in your life. Caroline Buijs talks to five artists we admire to find out their tips on how to create your own inspiration wall.

Before they get down to serious work, many graphic designers, illustrators, fashion designers, and other professional artists make a mood board. A mood board is a large collage of anything they find inspirational or useful for their work. Sometimes it's a composition of not only images, but also small objects, such as stones, shells, or feathers.

Personal coaches also often use mood boards as a tool. "The power of creating a mood board," says coach Karin Jansen-van Megen, "is found primarily in the fact that your choice of images comes from your intuition. You don't think about it – you let your feelings choose, you let your heart speak." If you're going to make a mood board, you can do it, for example, to answer a question.

"The question I often use in my practice is: what gives me energy?" says Jansen-van Megen. "Your choice of pictures is

based on what you feel. When you put the pictures together, you see connections and gain insights. Normally, you understand everything rationally, but because you choose images intuitively, you often get insights that are more reflective of your emotions."

## ANYTHING GOES

There are no rules for making your own mood board or inspiration wall. The professionals use Styrofoam as a base, or sometimes poster board, but you don't need to do it that way. Increasingly, people are doing it online via Pinterest or with other creative sites and apps. You can use a wall in your home office or your bedroom as an inspiration wall, or you can use your bathroom mirror, a notebook, or the last pages of your diary. Basically, any surface will do.

A few years ago, I was more or less addicted to making collages. At first, I just made collages of pretty things I liked to

stick up on my wall. But once, when my work was getting a bit out of hand, it helped me to focus on what I thought was really important in my life. So I pasted a photo of my husband and kids onto a sheet of paper. Then came a picture of a full bookcase, to remind me to keep reading. Then one of kids jumping about in a chaotic bedroom, because I don't always want to be a whiny mother. Then Japanese sushi on a saucer, to remind me to eat what I really like more often. And then pictures of a large country house with open patio doors leading to a lush garden, because you should always hang onto your dreams. I hung my collage beside my desk, and whenever I saw those pictures, I remembered: "Oh yeah, that's what I find important."

*Here are some ideas for how to create your own inspiration board from some of our favorite artists:*

"Anything can move me, so long as it's unusual"

## FRENCH ILLUSTRATOR, NATHALIE LÉTÉ (NATHALIE-LETE.COM):

"I have a kind of inspiration notebook in which I collect and paste pictures. I also have countless bags in which I save pictures, but I never have time to get around to sticking them into albums. Before I toss my old magazines in the trash – usually fashion and lifestyle magazines – I always cut out all the pictures I like. These pictures remind me of exactly what moved me: what made my eye fall precisely on that picture? Was it maybe the print or the color, the composition, the material? Anything can move me, so long as it's unusual."

"My advice: be open to anything when you go looking for pictures. Set no restrictions. When you have all the pictures lying on the table in front of you, then you can make up stories with them. You can sort them by color – that's the easiest way if you are a painter, like me. Sometimes, the subject or theme will ensure that the pictures come together."

"When I'm about to start something new and I don't have so many ideas, I always browse through one of my inspiration notebooks. A few pages later and the ideas come by themselves. So yeah, mood boards, or whatever you want to call them, are very helpful at the start." ➡









"Cookbooks, cuttings, and drawings of fruit are often a starting point"

**DUTCH DESIGNER, LIEKE VAN DER VORST (LIEKELAND.NL):**

"I make mood boards without even thinking: they arise from my collection of beautiful images, pictures, and found objects. Putting them together creates a story or mood that I love, and that inspires me to create new images."

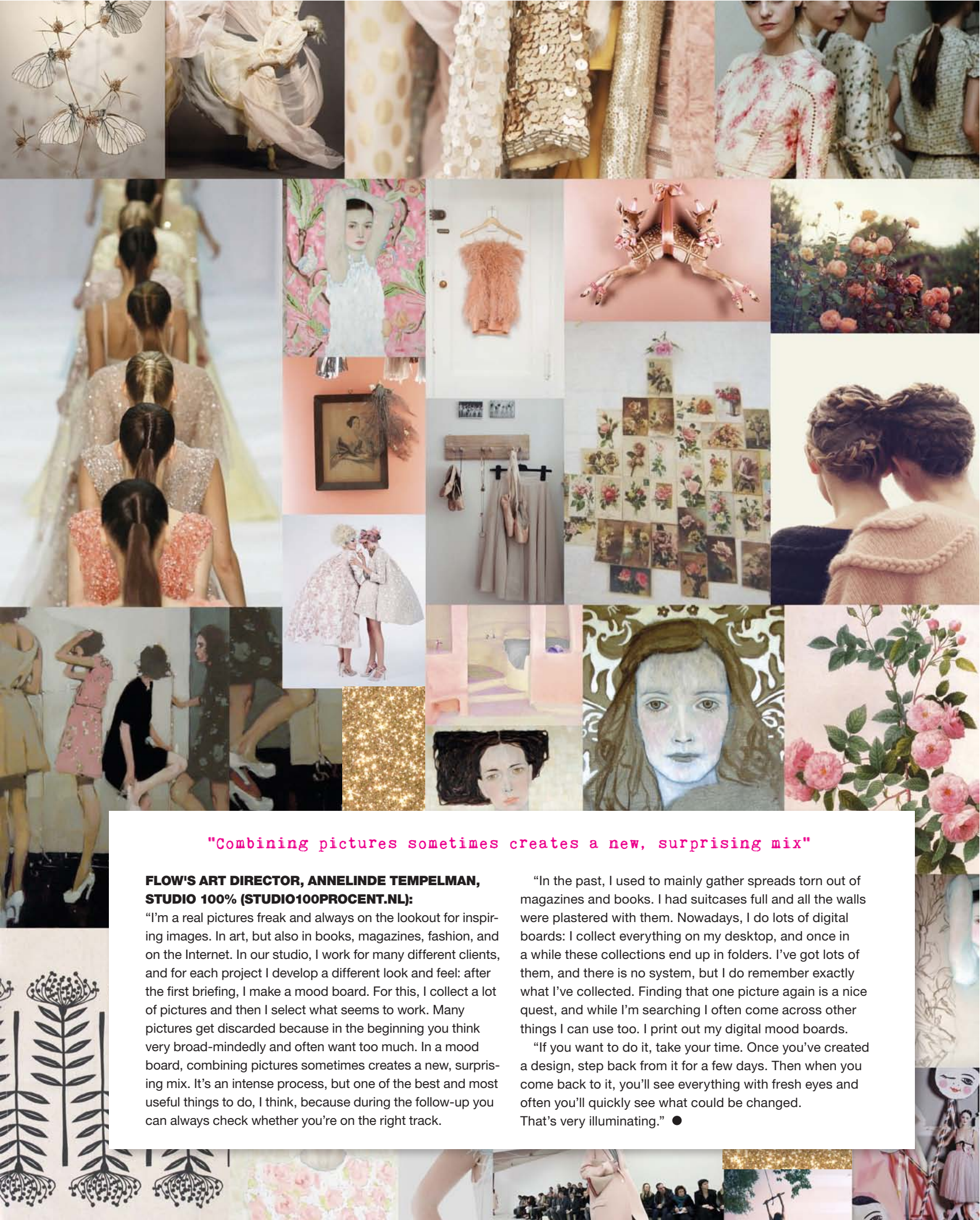
"When I find something beautiful, like a photo (mostly of my own family), a pretty leaf in the garden, or yarn in a thrift store, or when someone gives me a nice picture, I hang it up or put it on view somewhere. So my house is organized in small collections all over the place. Sometimes I add something, or I take a picture down."

"I have all kinds of books in the house in which I sketch and write, and these go into my bag. When I've made a beautiful sketch, I hang it up in one of my collections. I often start with food, because that's something that continues to inspire me. So cookbooks, cuttings, and drawings of fruit are often a starting point."

"I find even the tiny details in a picture beautiful. Also the way a plant grows and how colors change when the sun shines on them. When you hang a picture in various places in the house and on different surfaces, you can see the colors change."



TEXT CAROLINE BUIJS ASSEMBLAGES BY THE FEATURED ARTISTS



"Combining pictures sometimes creates a new, surprising mix"

**FLOW'S ART DIRECTOR, ANNELINDE TEMPELMAN, STUDIO 100% (STUDIO100PROCENT.NL):**

"I'm a real pictures freak and always on the lookout for inspiring images. In art, but also in books, magazines, fashion, and on the Internet. In our studio, I work for many different clients, and for each project I develop a different look and feel: after the first briefing, I make a mood board. For this, I collect a lot of pictures and then I select what seems to work. Many pictures get discarded because in the beginning you think very broad-mindedly and often want too much. In a mood board, combining pictures sometimes creates a new, surprising mix. It's an intense process, but one of the best and most useful things to do, I think, because during the follow-up you can always check whether you're on the right track."

"In the past, I used to mainly gather spreads torn out of magazines and books. I had suitcases full and all the walls were plastered with them. Nowadays, I do lots of digital boards: I collect everything on my desktop, and once in a while these collections end up in folders. I've got lots of them, and there is no system, but I do remember exactly what I've collected. Finding that one picture again is a nice quest, and while I'm searching I often come across other things I can use too. I print out my digital mood boards."

"If you want to do it, take your time. Once you've created a design, step back from it for a few days. Then when you come back to it, you'll see everything with fresh eyes and often you'll quickly see what could be changed. That's very illuminating." ●