

Anastasia KOVALEVA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EUGENIA KOVALEVA

ANASTASIA KOVALEVA is a Polish artist whose primary medium is natural materials, in particular pressed flowers. While much of her work is abstract collage, she also creates portraits, animal imagery and landscapes. Her pieces are romantic and whimsical and a fun alternative to more traditional mediums. Each piece is exquisitely crafted with love and attention to detail. She is a repeat winner of international pressed flower art competitions in Japan, South Korea and the United States.



My technique is based on nature and everything that nature so generously gives us. I use dried plants, seeds, foliage and many other materials for creating my floral collages. My goal is to show people that something very ordinary, something they might walk by every day without noticing, can become a work of art.

I started creating floral collages about 20 years ago, when I was a little girl. I think it was the most important moment of my life when I met my teacher Irina, who opened that wonderful world for me and shared with me her love and respect for natural materials. I didn't realize that I would gain a lifelong passion and a dear friend. I have been fascinated with botanical art since early childhood and attended floral design courses as an extracurricular activity all throughout my school years. I graduated college with a degree in commerce, and then I worked as an analyst for three years. But my heart and my hands were still pulling me in a different direction.

Creativity is something that has always come naturally to me. A short time after discovering the artistic possibilities of natural art, I fully committed

my time and energy to developing my abilities. I left my corporate job, and within one year, I entered the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, Poland. I knew it was time to take the first steps toward creating my own professional opportunities. I opened my online store and started to sell pressed flower artworks. It was only the start of my business, but I was a firm believer that when you are meant to do something and work hard at it, great things will happen.

My studio plays an important role in my creative process. Everything is not only functional and organized, but all of the beautiful colors and unique textures act as a source of my creative energy. The vibrant colors give me positive energy as soon as I walk into my creative space.

My studio is a treasure trove of many different materials that I have built up over several years. In trying to find the perfect material for a particular piece, I often come across other materials that inspire me for new projects. I have hundreds of different jars, boxes and bags of natural materials, with each presenting unlimited artistic possibilities. This includes seeds, fish scales, onion husks, eggshells, various dried flowers, twigs, bark and much more. Some items may be very unusual, yet unexpectedly beautiful, and pique the curiosity of all who see them.

Botany as a science complements my floral art very well. Gaining knowledge of plant species when creating herbariums greatly expanded my horizons. My studio has recently been updated with a large number of books about the plant world, including plant encyclopedias and books about Polish vegetation. At the moment, I have more than 200 different species of plants. My material collection has developed over many years, with some materials being preserved since childhood. My mom and friends help me dry the flowers, despite living far away. The materials I receive from my family and friends abroad are truly special and make the art that they are used in even more unique. Each dried leaf requires warmth and love, and through plants, I feel connected to my family. Every client that receives one of my creations is getting not only a work of art but a collection of effort and materials that span multiple countries.

Orchids are one of my favorite flowers, and they serve as an excellent material for large collages. Drying plants is a form of art on its own. Done incorrectly, a flower can be ruined, with its color vibrancy left diminished. I believe that flowers can sense our energy and love for them. The plants that my mom dries for me always turn out perfectly. She puts a tremendous amount of love and care into her process, and the results are magnificent. I use a special press for drying my flowers and leaves but still prefer the traditional method of drying flowers between the pages of old books. The old-fashioned technique is very special, with each flower being turned by hand in the individual pages of a book. Using this method, I have to turn them often during the drying process to ensure their colors are maintained. When dry, I have to carefully transfer and store them, due to their fragility. This process can take two to three weeks, from collection to artwork, with easy steps providing fulfillment and joy.

“Every flower is a soul blossoming in nature.”

— GÉRARD DE NERVAL



My studio is located in the attic and has a large and open area. When we found this home, I immediately fell in love with the space. It used to be a library and had built-in racks around the perimeter and center of the room. I have windows on all four walls, which allow me to have excellent lighting all throughout the day. Azure-blue walls and rustic wooden floors provide for a great artistic atmosphere. The space is warm and cozy, with a pantry where I store cardboard boxes and packaging material.

My work area is constantly covered with boxes and bags of flowers. The more plants in my field of view, the more opportunities I have to find the perfect flower. On the one hand, it looks like a hurricane of flowers, but this look inspires me. It's a blooming garden that's always with me.

I like everything that enhances my creative energy. It can be fresh flowers, colored boxes for material, glass bottles, antique furniture, floral motifs, natural textiles and anything that catches my eye.





for my work. He always surprised me. He would bring me some driftwood or would find an unusual flower. His findings have always made it into my works of art. He always believed in me, and his moral support and faith in my success give me strength and encouragement.

After losing him this year, my son and I agreed to continue what we started as a family. I will always remember how we collected and dried flowers together, with my boys sweeping through my studio like little hurricanes. My work is more important to me now than it has ever been. I have to continue in the memory of my husband and to support my children. My art gives me hope and helps me a lot at this difficult time. More than ever before, I feel a great desire to create and learn to live in the present moment and try not to think about the past.

Being a mom of two children and a full-time artist, of course, is really difficult. I never find the perfect balance between these two as my children are still very small and need a lot of attention. I still enjoy being a mom and building my ideal career. It set me up to live a fulfilling life. I provide for my children and give them the lives they deserve.

We have a huge garden that is beautiful from early spring to late autumn that allows me to collect bouquets of fresh flowers. I enjoy the change

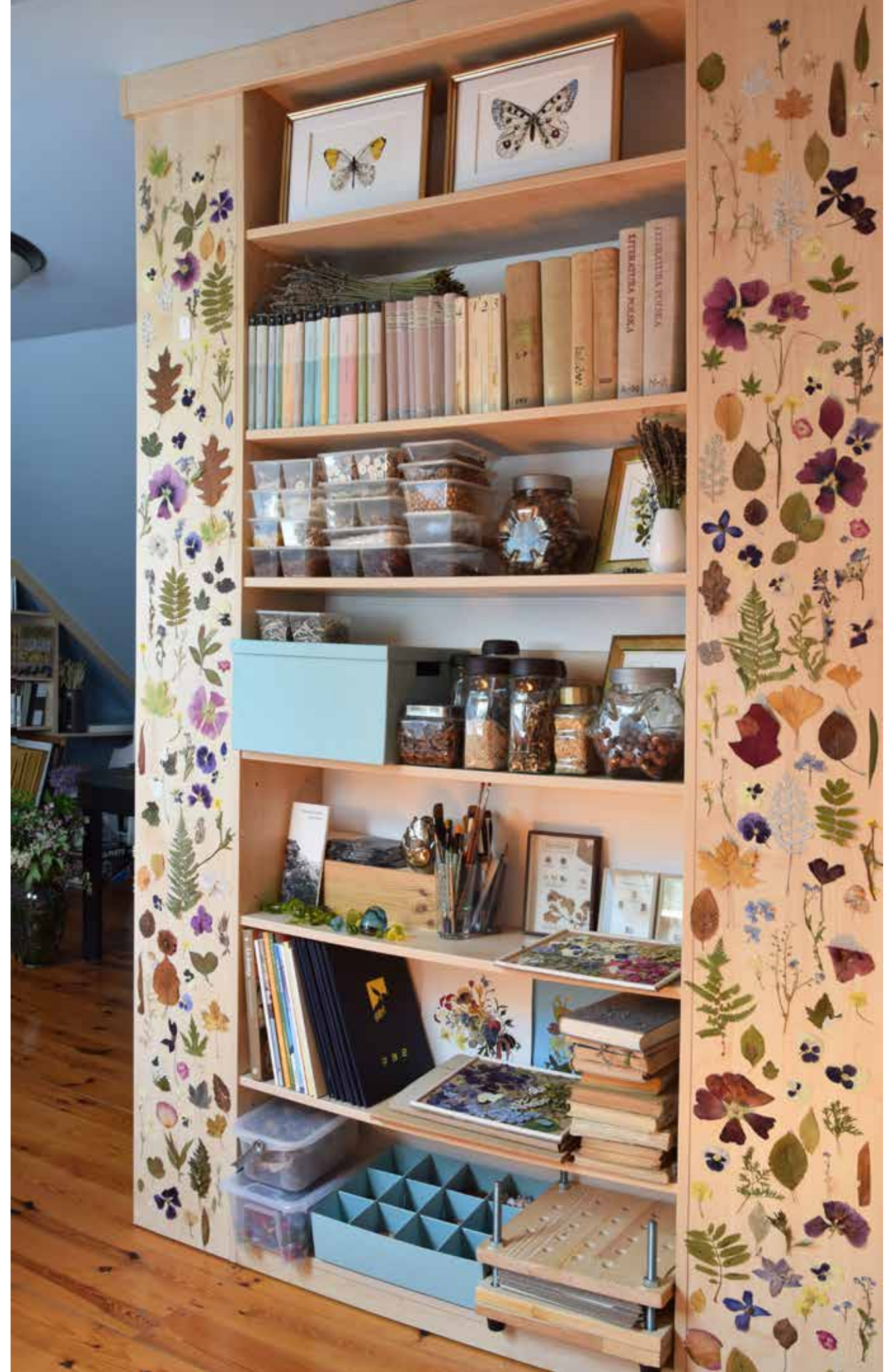
of seasons, a blooming cherry orchard, stunning color palettes, sunsets and sunrises. Even in the depths of winter, I never cease to be surprised by the ever-changing landscape. Nature is always with me — in my heart, my soul and my work. I often stop just to take a quick photo of insects, the sky or trees to provide inspiration for future projects. Pheasants, stunningly beautiful birds, often come to us, and roe deer and wild boars walk behind the fence. I never thought that wildlife could be so close, despite the fact that we live on the outskirts of a big city.

My late husband helped me a lot with the technical aspects of my work. He made a floral press for me, came up with the perfect packaging design for paintings, found unique bags for storing material, bought a variety of tools for me and made frames



“If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.”

— VINCENT VAN GOGH



“Here we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place. And if you wish to go anywhere you must run twice as fast as that.”

— LEWIS CARROLL, “ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND”

Every year, I take part in the international pressed flowers exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. Also, my artworks were represented at Art Revolution Taipei in Taiwan, the Philadelphia Flower Show in the USA and the Shanghai Botanical Garden Show. I sell worldwide through my online store. It’s also pretty cool to know that my products are being shared and adored across the globe. Also, I am planning to open a local shop here in Wrocław to organize floral art workshops for children and work as an illustrator. A big achievement was to be a finalist in the Etsy Design Awards in 2021.

Now I have my dream job, which comes with endless possibilities. I have two wonderful children and the best studio to work in. That all makes me happy, and it is very exciting to know that I can make my living doing what I love.

i **More on Anastasia**
www.FloralCollage.com
ETSY: [Etsy.com/Shop/FloralCollage](https://www.etsy.com/shop/FloralCollage)
INSTAGRAM: FloralCollage





EUGENIA KOVALEVA's journey as a professional photographer began in 2011. What started as a modeling career grew into a passion for all aspects of photo shoots and eventually love for the camera itself. Later that year, she bought her first SLR camera and started her career as an independent photographer.

Her experience as a model helped her to connect to her clients on a more personal level, understand their needs and achieve a higher level of communication. It is very important for her to make sure that the photograph reflects the way the client sees themselves, combined with her artistic touch. The photograph has to show the strength in every person without masking any flaws, and document a moment in life that can tell the story of a lifetime.



This one moment can tell so many things ... from the environment and what a person is doing to how they are feeling, a moment that can be remembered and shared with others for many years to come.

Now, more than 10 years later, she has come a long way — a lot of experience, photography competitions, photo shoots, publication in magazines — and it's just a beginning, with so much more to look forward to.

More on Eugenia
INSTAGRAM: Pro_Zhuk

