

*Picture yourself standing on a cliff. It is rugged, wild, but shines seductively with salty sea water. Lush trees, patches of grass and exotic flowers surround you. You look at the sky which seems to float by with a certain velocity. Looking down again, you start to get dizzy. But not scary dizzy. More like contemplative dizzy. You forget what is up and what is down. A knee desires the floor. An arm swings to jump. Your head is pulled up into the clouds. The wind soothes your skin and frees your hair. You jump up. You tumble down. You land. You stand still and you overlook. You float.*

For her first solo exhibition in Brussels and her second with Ballon Rouge Collective, Merve Iseri invites the viewer into a luscious garden of imagined delights. Working on (often unprimed) canvas and paper, she conveys a rich and sensual universe that entices, connecting dream with reality and physical manifestation with fantasized substance.

Her subtle pictorial evocations and suggestions guide us through an environment submerged in unconscious associations and vivid fantasies, to arrive at a meditative and contemplative state. Merve's self-affirmed and playful lines follow the movement of minds and bodies, of mental and physical travel.

*As a chance meeting between a cloud and a rubber stamp on a cusp of land hints at circulation, recurring cycles, and what constitutes freedom and limits. Her depicted protagonists - be they organic matter, animate objects or of human nature - seem to appear in a void. At the cusp, they become aware of each others' cadence, encountering how one's sense of freedom is subject to limits installed and operated by controlling agents. A frontier diverges routes, disrupts circulation, and juxtaposes. A body is stopped, registered and stamped. Yet, a cloud can drift further on, untouched. What is left to ask is where the mind resides. Merve's compositions leave generous blanks, left to be filled in. Her lines start a phrase, an idea, an emotion - as jumping boards from which to take off into lived memories and imagined desires. -Evelyn Simons*

*Merve İseri (b. 1992, Istanbul) is a painter working mostly on unprimed canvas, cotton, and paper. She graduated from Politecnico di Milano in Communication Design in 2014, and since then has been living between London and Istanbul. She has shown works since 2015 in group shows in Chicago, Milan, Istanbul, and London. Her first solo exhibition was with Ballon Rouge Collective in September 2017; she will show new works with B.R.C. at Art Brussels 2019. Her work has been published in The Financial Times, Harper's Bazaar Turkey, and Huffington Post, among others.*