Bug & Animal Art

Grades 1 +
Goals of the lesson plan:
- Understand the difference between abstraction and realism using the natural world for both inspiration and materials.
- Using those concepts, the student will arrange foraged materials to create abstracted versions of bugs or animals.

Discussion points:

- Look outside. Are there shapes you can identify? What sizes are they? What colors?
- What does it mean for something to be abstract? What does it mean for something to be realistic?
- Think about your favorite bug or animal: What are the shapes that make up the various parts (head, ears, tails, body)?
    - Look at the art glass and landscape images below. Frank Lloyd Wright integrated nature-inspired design and landscaping into his architecture. He used natural elements (plants, trees) on the outside of his buildings and was inspired to create abstracted natural designs inside his buildings.

Martin House Art Glass Window   Martin House Landscape

Part I

- Take a walk. Bring a bag to collect plant material you think is interesting. Make sure to pick up a variety of shapes and sizes, being sure to collect pieces that are mostly flat.

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•   Spread your findings out on a table. Notice the different shapes that make up your natural materials: Do you have shapes that are long or short, rounded or angular? Are their edges smooth or jagged?

•   Think about how you might arrange your shapes to make an abstract animal. Ask yourself if certain elements look like wings, or if a triangle might be able to serve as a pointed face. Move your elements around and try out different combinations.

- Use a paintbrush and glue to attach your elements to your piece of construction paper or cardboard. You can layer them too.
- Optional: Mix a bit of tacky glue into your water container. Brush a thin layer of glue over the entire piece so everything sticks together a bit better and lays flat.

Extra Challenge?

- If you collect a lot of natural material, consider making a whole scene for you animal or animals! Can you construct trees, buildings, or mountains?
- If you don't have any extra materials, use drawing utensils to create the scene.

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Vocabulary:

Abstract

Realism
Art Glass

Nature-inspired design

Materials:

Tacky glue/Elmer's glue

Paintbrush (useful but not required)

Construction paper/cardboard

Small container with a tiny bit of water

Natural materials such as leaves, grass, and flower petals

Drawing utensils (optional)

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