

# ARTIST OF THE MONTH JUNE 2025

Artist of the month is a competition that runs in school. Each month we look at a different artist and their work, children can then respond to this artist by either creating a picture, taking a photograph, writing a story, doing some research or a different response that inspires them. Mrs Britten our Art and Design subject lead shares the artist of the month via the school art notice board. The artist of the month winner will be announced at the end of each month.

To enter you need to respond to the artist however you choose. Put your entry into the 'Artist of the Month' basket next to the art gallery display or email it to [enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk) with the title 'Artist of the Month'. Please enter by Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025

This month's artist is: **Maria Sibylla Merian**



**'Ripe Pineapple with Dido Longwing Butterfly**



**'Passionflower, with its fruit, with pupae, caterpillars and two flies' (1701-1705)**



**Meet Maria Sibylla Merian – Nature's Artist and Explorer!** A long time ago, in 1647, a girl named Maria Sibylla Merian was born in Frankfurt, Germany. From the time she was

very young, Maria loved to draw. But she didn't just draw anything—she was especially interested in insects and plants. While other people might have thought bugs were scary or strange, Maria thought they were beautiful and fascinating!

Maria used watercolours to paint amazing pictures of caterpillars, butterflies, beetles, and flowers. She looked very closely at how insects changed and grew. Back then, many people believed that butterflies just popped out of mud! But Maria discovered something very important: butterflies go through a process called metamorphosis. That means they start as eggs, turn into caterpillars, then become chrysalises, and finally transform into butterflies.

When Maria grew up, she did something very brave. She travelled all the way to a country called Suriname in South America to study tropical insects and plants. This was a huge adventure—especially for a woman at that time! She drew everything she saw and made books full of her beautiful and accurate pictures.

Maria's work helped scientists understand nature better, and her art is still admired today. She showed how insects live, grow, and depend on plants. Even though women weren't allowed to go to university back then, Maria became one of the first people to study how living things are connected. That makes her one of the first ecologists!

Maria Sibylla Merian showed the world that science and art can go hand in hand—and that being curious and brave can lead to amazing discoveries.

**Find out more about Maria Sibylla Merian by following the link below to take you to a YouTube video produced by The Royal Society to find out more about the life and art of the artist.**

**The incredible life of Maria Sibylla Merian | The Royal Society**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WiwkWl8uY>

Or scan the QR code to take you to the website.



**Or watch a short video of paintings by Maria Sibylla Merian accompanied by classical music.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EPNeSa1hP0>



## **Your turn**

Here are some fun and creative **Maria Sibylla Merian-inspired art activities** that children can try at home, combining nature, observation, and imagination—just like Maria did!



### **I. Butterfly Life Cycle Painting**

- **What to do:** Draw or paint the four stages of a butterfly's life—egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly—on one page.
- **Materials:** Paper, pencils, watercolours or crayons.
- **Inspiration:** Maria's detailed life cycle illustrations.



## 2. Nature Observation Drawing

- **What to do:** Go outside and find a plant or insect. Look closely and draw what you see, just like Maria did.
- **Materials:** Sketchbook or paper, pencils, coloured pencils or paints.
- **Tip:** Try to include as much detail as possible—look at the shapes, colours, and patterns.



## 3. Insect and Plant Collage

- **What to do:** Cut out pictures of insects and plants from magazines or print them out. Arrange them on a page to show how they might live together.
- **Materials:** Scissors, glue, paper, magazines or printed images.
- **Inspiration:** Maria's paintings often showed insects on the plants they feed on.

## 4. Watercolour Garden Scene

- **What to do:** Create a garden scene with flowers, leaves, and insects using watercolours.
- **Materials:** Watercolour paper, paints, brushes.
- **Challenge:** Try to include at least one insect in each part of the garden!



## 5. Make Your Own Nature Book

- **What to do:** Fold paper into a small book. On each page, draw a different insect or plant and write a fun fact about it.
- **Materials:** Paper, stapler or string, drawing tools.
- **Inspiration:** Just like Maria's books that taught people about nature!

