

## ***Creature feature***

### **Stage 1**

**Subject matter:** other living things

**Forms:** drawing, painting, sculpture or 3D form, fibre

**Duration:** 3 to 6 weeks

### **Image resources** ***Beyond the frame***

- *Mantis*, Robert Knottenbelt, image no.17

## **Outcomes and Indicators**

### **Making**

**VAS1.1 Makes artworks in a particular way about experiences of real and imaginary things.**

- explores the physical attributes, including surface texture, colours, line and shapes of insects and spiders.

**VAS1.2 Uses the forms to make artworks according to varying requirements.**

- explores the quality of various drawing media to represent line, texture and shape of spiders and insects
- thinks about how to use a variety of natural materials and different construction techniques.

### **Appreciating**

**VAS1.3 Realises what artists do, who they are and what they make.**

- talks about some of the concepts and techniques artists use in representing surface qualities
- discusses how artists use line and shape in sculpture.

**VAS1.4 Begins to interpret the meaning of artworks, acknowledging the roles of artist and audience.**

- discusses some of the processes encountered in using different forms and media
- talks and writes about how the subject in an artwork is represented.

### **Unit overview**

Students look at the physical attributes (colour, surface texture, line and shape) of insects and spiders. They draw insects and spiders experimenting with various drawing media to show qualities of line and surface texture. Students make sculptures of insects and spiders using natural materials gathered from the local environment or materials that can be found around the home. Shadows cast from the sculptures are sketched and developed into drawings or paintings. Students refer to artworks to discover how artists express their ideas and feelings through surfaces and textures of animals in sculptures.

Learning experiences	Teaching notes
<p><b><u>Learning experience 1</u></b>  <b>Looking at spiders and insects</b></p> <p>Look at specimens or photographs of insects or spiders. Consider their physical attributes. Talk about colour, texture and shape associated with spiders and insects.  <i>What types of colours can you see?</i> (reds, browns, black, natural earthy colours)</p> <p><i>If you could touch them what would the surface of their bodies feel like?</i>(surface texture)  <i>What shapes can you see?</i>  Draw these shapes in the air.  <i>How many body parts or shapes can you see?</i>  <i>Are the legs bent or straight?</i>  Draw the lines of the legs in the air.  <i>Where do the legs join the body?</i>  <i>Do insects and spiders have the same number of legs?</i></p> <p>Suggest words for a <i>word bank</i> that describe the appearance of insects and spiders, e.g. lumpy, spiky, slippery, slithery and rough and how they move, e.g. walk, crawl, slide, jump, etc.</p> <p><b>Appreciating artworks</b>  Look at and talk about the artwork <i>Mantis</i> by Robert Knottenbelt.</p> <p><i>What types of lines and directions can you see?</i>  <i>How would this insect move?</i>  <i>Why has the sculptor used an arrow shape in the work?</i></p>	<p><b>Image resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• photograph of a praying mantis</li> <li>• photographs of insects and spiders</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Beyond the frame</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mantis</i>, Robert Knottenbelt, image no.17</li> </ul> <p><b>Other resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specimens of insects or spiders</li> <li>• drawing materials: felt tip pens, charcoal, crayon</li> <li>• watery paint for washes</li> <li>• drawing paper</li> </ul> <p>Explain the term <i>surface texture</i> as how a surface feels. Compare different surfaces in the classroom.</p> <p>List words on the board or on a large sheet of paper.</p> <p>Explain that <i>Mantis</i> is a sculpture made from glass.</p>

Look at the picture of a real praying mantis.  
*How is this different to the surface that Knottenbelt has created in the sculpture?*

In a short poem or story give a praying mantis a name and describe what sort of creature it is and how it moves.

### **Making drawings of insects and spiders**

Look again at the specimens and/or photographs of insects and spiders as well as the wordbank containing descriptive words. Consider the linear (referring to line) and textural (surface texture) qualities of the insects and spiders.

*How can you show "spiky" in a drawing?*  
*How can you show "hairy" in a drawing?*

Closely observe the specimens or pictures. Make detailed sketches using felt tip pens, charcoal or crayon, concentrating on line and texture.

Decide which media is best suited to show qualities of line, texture and shape.

Use the edge of the charcoal stick to fill in and describe the shape of an insect or spider.

Washes (watery paint) of natural colours may be applied to the drawings to suggest part of the spider or insect or their environment.

### **Appreciating: reflecting**

Display and talk about the finished drawings.

*What techniques were most successful in representing the insects and spiders? Why?*

Encourage students to write creatively about an insect referring to its surface and other qualities.

Show which words refer to line and texture.

Demonstrate different media and techniques that can best represent the surface texture qualities of the insects and spiders using a variety of materials.

Ensure that students refer to the pictures or specimens of insects and spiders and the word bank. Point out areas of overlapping, e.g. the legs and different surface textures, e.g. lumpy, spiky or hairy bodies.

## Learning experience 2

### **Making sculptures of insects and spiders**

Discuss what natural materials would be suitable for making a sculpture of an insect or spider.

*What materials could be used for the body?*

*What materials could be used for the legs?*

Collect natural materials, then discuss options for their use, as well as possible techniques to use and join materials.

*What tools and other materials are needed?*

*How can materials be joined together?*

Make a sculpture (approximately 15–40 cm) of an insect or spider using natural materials.

Paint parts or the whole sculpture.

### **Resources**

- natural materials
- glue
- wire
- tools
- wire mesh
- plastic mesh
- charcoal

### **Optional activity**

- newspaper
- old fabrics
- cellophane
- cardboard
- stockings
- string

Consider the textural possibilities of leaves, twigs, pine cones and grasses.

Demonstrate how bundles of twigs, bark or leaves could be wrapped in chicken wire or mesh to produce a body.

If chicken wire and pliers are too difficult for younger students to handle, consider using plastic mesh. Aluminium wire and mesh is easy to manipulate.

Demonstrate construction techniques such as tying, gluing and wrapping, as well as cutting and joining wire.

Show how sticks can be joined together by tying with layers of string or wool, coating each layer with PVA glue.

Demonstrate the possible use of staplers, sticky tape, glue guns (for older students), pliers, saws, drills, etc.

Consider inviting interested parents or older students to help younger students with construction problems.

Where there is a limited range of natural materials use any discarded materials such as fabric, paper, cardboard, stockings, pieces of fabric, cellophane, crepe paper, ribbon and string.

A body could be made by stuffing a stocking with scrunched up newspaper.

Wings, feelers, body covering, etc. could be fashioned from pieces of fabric, crepe paper or cardboard then attached to the body using string, ribbon or wool.

### **Appreciating: reflecting**

Review the process of constructing the sculptures.

*What feelings do you think of when you look at your insect or spider?*

*Do the materials help give these feelings? How?*

*What parts of the process did you enjoy?*

*What parts of construction did you find difficult?*

### **Learning experience 3**

#### **Making drawings from shadows**

Suspend the sculptures in front of large sheets of paper and trace the outlines of the shadows in pencil or felt pen.

Alter the position of the sculptures to obtain different shadow compositions.

Use charcoal to strengthen line and create the shadow areas.

#### **Extension 1**

Video the moving shadows. Add dialogue to create a short *Spider movie*.

#### **Appreciation: reflecting**

Display the finished sculptures in a natural environment such as in trees, bushes or amongst rocks, or suspend them from trees or between buildings. Photograph the works.

*How do the different settings affect the impact of the works on an audience?*

#### **Resources**

- large sheets of paper
- pencils or felt pens
- charcoal

If it is cloudy or the weather is unsuitable, use an overhead projector to create shadows of the creatures in the classroom.

The moving shadows could be used as an inspiration for dance, drama or writing activities. Students could emphasise the magical qualities of the *shadow creatures*.