

# When art meets science - Try it yourself!

Art and science are often seen as two separate subjects. Historically however, art and science have served each other in lots of ways.

Here are four examples of people who use(d) art to do science, and some ideas on how you can take inspiration from their methods to become an artist/scientist yourself!

## Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717)

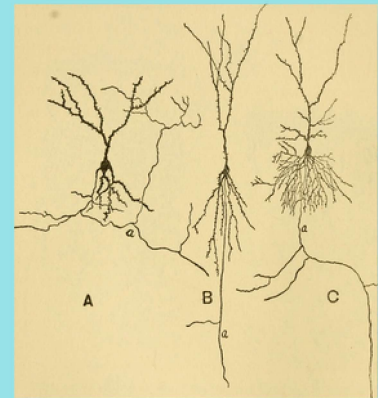
Maria Sibylla Merian was a scientific illustrator in the 1600s. Her illustrations were unique because they explored the interactions between plant and animal species, making her a predecessor of current ecologists. Her drawings of insects in particular helped investigate what their life-cycles are like.



**Try it yourself!** Have a look around outside. Draw a plant and any insects you may find around this plant. Why do you think these insects might be near this plant? Could it have to do with food or shelter for example? Does the interaction between the plant and the insects change at different times of the day or year?

## Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934)

Santiago Ramon y Cajal was a Spanish scientist, known for his beautiful ink drawings of brain cells. Because techniques to stain individual brain cells had only just been developed, Cajal was one of the first to draw them. His drawings laid the ground work for our current understanding of how brain cells are interconnected and how they work.



**Try it yourself!** Find something in nature that you want to observe. Draw it at face value first. Now zoom in on your subject (use a magnifying glass or take a picture and zoom in) and draw it again. Compare the two drawings. What can you learn from comparing the two drawings?



## Laura Bundesen© (current)

Laura Bundesen is an artist based in Massachusetts, specialising in creating representations of the brain. Her work stands out because of the use of texture and material, including textiles, embroidery and beading. Her creations can be found on her [website](#)



**Try it yourself!** Choose an unusual medium to make some science-y art. Maybe you already have hobbies that could be used for this: like knitting, scrapbooking, tea bag collecting. Or maybe you have some things lying around that you would otherwise throw out: newspapers, old clothes, bottle caps. Upcycling is always a plus!

## Cave drawings (50,000+ years ago)

Humans made cave paintings in the prehistoric age to document life around them. Many drawings depict animals that still exist today, but some are expected to show animals that have since gone extinct. In Australia for example, scientists are combining knowledge from fossils and cave drawings to learn more about an extinct giant kangaroo!



**Try it yourself!** Cave drawings were made with a variety of materials, such as charcoal, burnt sea shells and clay. Try your own hand at using natural materials (and your hands!) to draw your favourite animal. What material works best? Which one will last the longest?



We'd love to see what you make!

Reach us by [email](#) or [@scienceceilidh](#) on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

**Historically, art and science have served each other in lots of ways**