

## **In(sect)spiration**

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Insects dominate the world, not only life in nature but they have invaded our culture as well. They contribute to many aspects of our daily lives, including our economy, our food, our medical care etc. Moreover, insects have inspired artists throughout the centuries. From the 13th century until present, artists have depicted insects in two-dimensional and three-dimensional works. Insects have often been used as symbols for the brevity of life, for the transcendence of the soul, but also because of the beauty of their forms and colours. Some artists paint or sculpt with insects themselves, either dead or still alive.

Over the past years I have visited more than 200 art museums and recorded the representation of insects in the works on display. As a result I have gained an entomological view of the history of art. This has provided insight both in the history of art itself as well as in the role of insects in its development.

At present I have seen ca 4,000 works of art in which insects are represented. Some artists have depicted only a single insect while others have represented over 100 insects in a single work of art. Of some artists I know only a single work with insects, while of others more than 100 works are known. In this presentation I will emphasize the role of insects in our culture with an emphasis on their appearance in the visual arts.