Nature Art: Notice, Imagine, Create

Badge overview:

Students and teachers slow down and look closely at nature, noticing colours, shapes, patterns and textures that can inspire artistic ideas and creative expression.

Badge goals:

By the end of this activity, students will

1. Look closely at natural features in their everyday surroundings.
2. Identify colours, shapes, patterns and textures in nature.
3. Explore how nature can provide inspiration for artistic expression.
4. Use observation to develop creative ideas.
5. Experiment with composition, cropping and abstraction.
6. Express a personal response to something observed in nature.
7. Develop greater appreciation for the often-overlooked details of their surroundings.

When & Where to use this badge:

Teacher Tip

This activity can link with

- **Art** (observation, composition, colour and creative expression)
- **Environmental Studies** (local biodiversity and observation)
- **Science** (patterns, structures and natural materials)
- **Languages** (describing observations and artist statements)
- **ICT / Media** (nature photography and digital composition)

Flexibility

- Students can join at different break-club sessions, with each session producing its own small artwork or observation.
- The activity can be done entirely through drawing, photography, temporary natural arrangements, or a combination.
- Students do not need to know anything about art beforehand. The emphasis is on looking, noticing and responding creatively.
- Teachers can adapt the activity to the available space and materials while keeping the basic flow: Look & Notice → Explore → Create → Share.

Steps to complete:

Step 1 Look & Notice

Teacher Instructions

- Introduce the idea that nature can be an artist's inspiration. Show one or two examples of nature art, such as the work of Georgia O'Keeffe, who found the extraordinary ijn the ordinary. Ask students to notice how natural materials, colours, shapes or patterns have been interpreted.
- Explain that they do not need to find something unusual or beautiful. The challenge is to look closely at ordinary things and notice what is already there.
- Take students outside and invite them to look around quietly for interesting natural arrangements, colours, shapes, textures or patterns.

- Encourage them to look at things from different distances and angles. A small patch of leaves, a crack in a wall, stones, seed heads or overlapping plants can all become an artistic composition.

Step 2 Explore

Students choose something that catches their attention and explore it through drawing or photography.

They might notice:

1. **Colour** – What colours, tones or contrasts can you see?
2. **Shape** – Are there interesting outlines, curves or geometric forms?
3. **Pattern** – Is something repeated or arranged in an unexpected way?
4. **Texture** – What makes the surface interesting?
5. **Composition** – What happens when you look at only part of it?
6. **Feeling** – What does the arrangement make you think or feel?

Students can use a small viewfinder or their camera to crop what they see and discover a composition within the larger scene.

Step 3 Create

Students use what they have noticed as the starting point for a simple piece of nature-inspired art.

They could:

- Make a quick observational sketch.
- Enlarge or crop part of what they saw.
- Recreate a natural pattern or arrangement.
- Use the colours or shapes they observed to create an abstract composition.
- Make a temporary arrangement using fallen natural materials such as leaves, stones, twigs or seed pods, without picking living plants.
- Photograph their arrangement before leaving it for nature to reclaim.

The aim is not to make a perfect picture. It is to transform something noticed in nature into an artistic idea.

Step 4 Share the Discovery

Students share their artwork or photograph and briefly explain:

- What they noticed
- What inspired them
- What they changed, emphasised or reimagined
- What they might not have noticed before doing the activity

The work could be displayed as a **“Nature is Art”** collection around the school or shared digitally.