

# Talking Points: What Can We Learn From Birds!

A collection of sources and imagery to explore the ways in which artists are inspired by birds.

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AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

AGES 14-16

FREE TO ACCESS

Artists often draw parallels with other lives/beings to help us learn about ourselves. The resources below explore how artists take inspiration from birds, not so much visually but by drawing parallels between behaviour of birds and ourselves.

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## Conference for the Birds by Marcus Coates

Conference for the Birds celebrates the lives of the birds Thomas Bewick depicted in his wood engravings. His book 'A History of British Birds'

first published in 1797 was a comprehensive guide to both the appearance and behaviour of birds.

The birds, played by wildlife experts, discuss topics from migration to predation, with each species speaking about the challenges they face day to day. By exploring the lives of the birds that Bewick studied and depicted, this artwork attempts to reveal how we, when speaking from the position of another animal like a bird, rely on subjective experience to relate across to this alien perspective. – [Kate Macgary](#)

Marcus Coates, Conference of the Birds, 2019, (excerpt) Film by Kate MacGarry

## Questions to Ask Children

What kinds of challenges might birds face?

How do you think it would feel to be sharing a space with the installation?

How does it make you feel? What does it make you think?

How do you think the artist made the heads?

## Migrations: Open Hearts Open Borders

The Migrations project started when word was sent out to illustrators asking them to create an image for the front of a postcard (plus appropriate text on the reverse) on the theme of 'migration'. The

project's aim was to 'express support for and solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of human migrants who face immense difficulties and dangers in their struggle to find a better and safer place to live.' When asking for postcards, the organisers stated 'Do not be concerned about possible damage to the card that you will mail to us. The stamp, the journey of the mail and all it entails will reflect the fragility and the precarious nature of migration.' – [AOI](#)

## Questions to Ask Children

Why do you think that birds were used as a symbol in this project?

What do you like about this project?

Why do you think that they asked lots of illustrators across the world to join in with this project?

How does it make you feel? What does it make you think?

## This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Sculpture, Structure, Inventiveness & determination



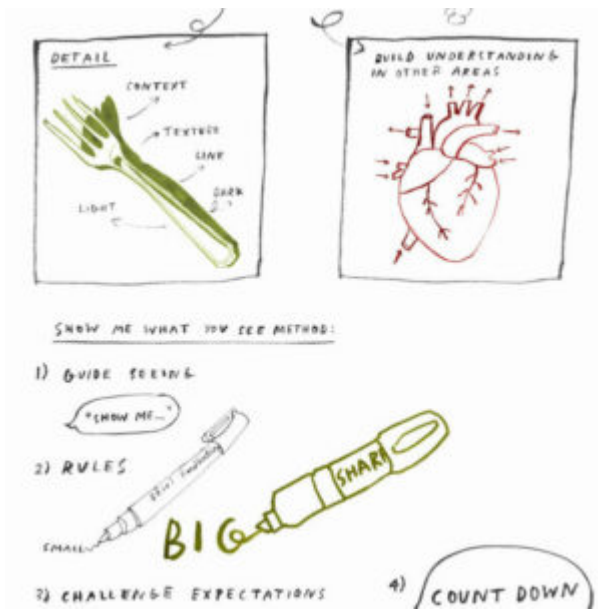
This is featured in the 'Sculpture, Structure, Inventiveness & Determination' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks

# Show me what you see



Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise