



Maria Sibylla Merian

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Maria Sibylla Merian

Entomologist and Artist (1647 – 1717)

- Can you describe the life cycle of a butterfly? Eggs hatch into caterpillars, caterpillars turn into cocoons and cocoons hatch into adult butterflies (metamorphosis).
- But how do we know this? Maria Sibylla Merian was a naturalist (someone who studies nature). It was her careful observations and drawings that first linked this life cycle together and showed that caterpillars turn into butterflies.



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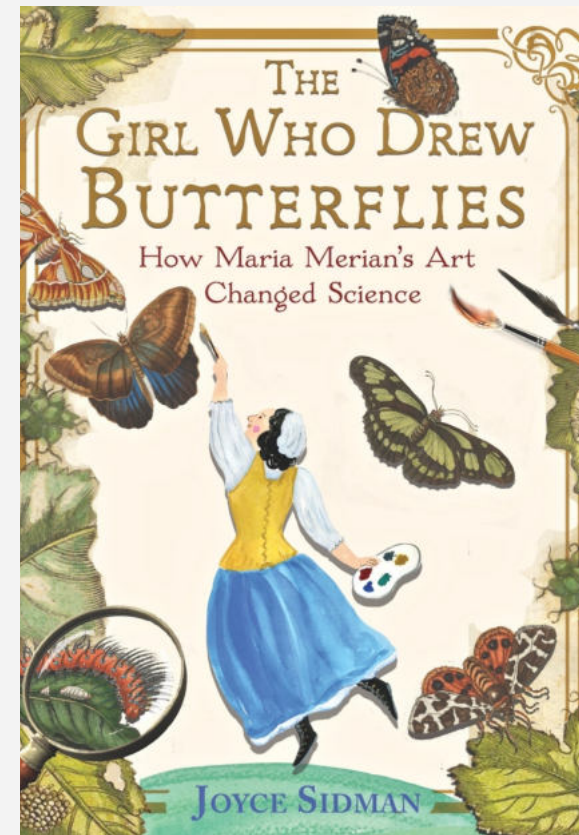
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- At this time, people believed that insects came out of mud as if by magic! Maria's observations helped to prove this myth was wrong.
- Maria's book about it "Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium" became famous across Europe. Maria was one of the first to draw the life cycles of insects and their food plants together – this was the start of the scientific topic Ecology.



Interested to know more?

- Have a look at this Biography by Joyce Sidman **'The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science'**
- Search on the internet to find examples of Maria Merian's beautiful art work



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. ISBN: 978-0544717138. 160 pages. Ages 10 and up.

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