

# Butterflies in Art

## Living things and their habitats: butterflies and moths

Culture is a word that means ‘the way that groups of people do things’ – the traditions and beliefs they have in their daily lives. A culture is passed on to the next generation by learning. Writing and art are two important parts of culture. Butterflies have a long history of being part of the culture of many different groups of people around the world. In writing, some groups of people use butterflies as symbols of growth and change through metamorphosis. Adult butterflies often have very beautiful, brightly coloured wings. Many cultures like to use butterflies in their art.

Damien Hirst is a UK artist that uses butterfly wings in some of his artwork. Hirst has made a series of beautiful ‘Kaleidoscope’ paintings using butterfly wings. In 2020, during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hirst made a rainbow artwork using butterfly wings. People in the UK could download a copy of this rainbow and place it in their windows to show support for the National Health Service and the doctors and nurses who were working really hard to help people who were seriously ill from COVID-19.

Kjell Bloch Sandved is a Norwegian naturalist who produced a photographic artwork called The Butterfly Alphabet. Over a period of **24 years**, Sandved travelled all over the world to find and photograph all 26 letters in the alphabet (A to Z) and the numbers 0 to 9 in the patterns on butterfly wings. These photographs are published in a book of the same name.



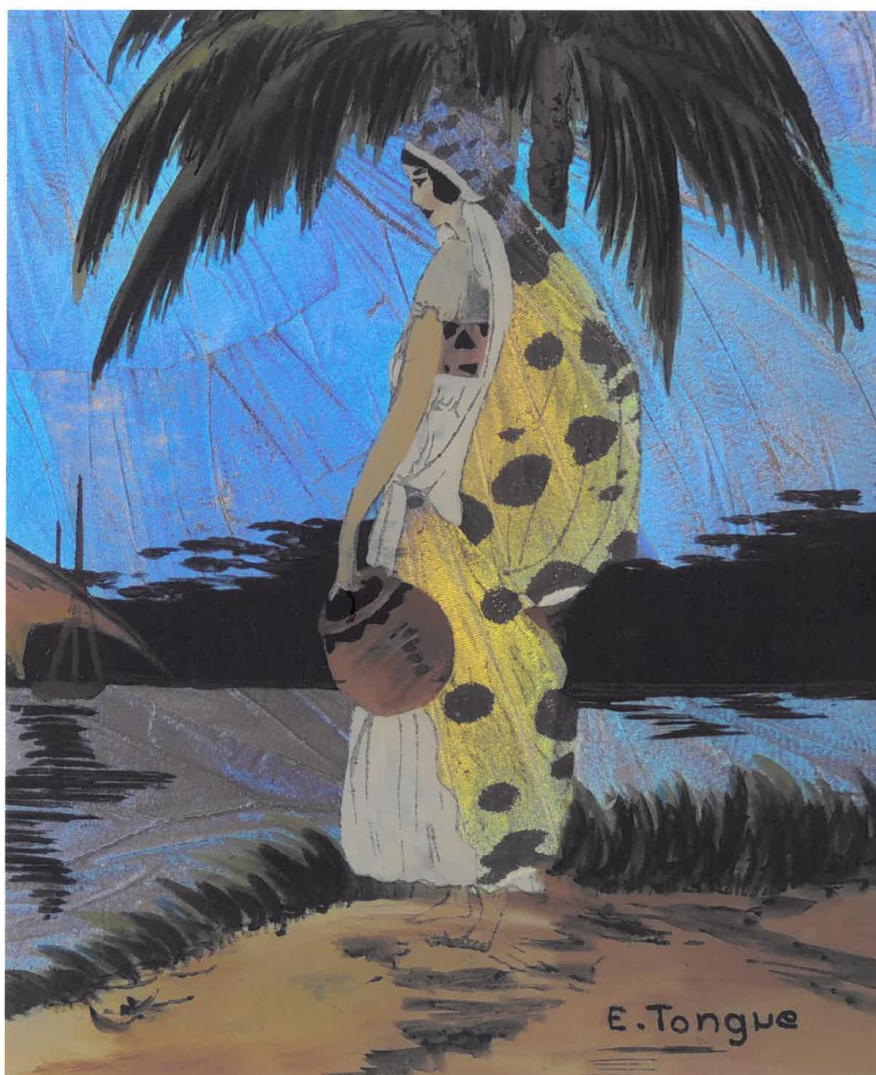
In the 1930s an artist called Evelyn Tongue used butterfly wings to make the beautiful artwork pictured below. Evelyn was not a famous artist, but an ordinary young woman who lived in Birmingham in the UK. In her early teens, Evelyn was employed to work in a factory to make pictures like these. The pictures were then sold in shops. These pictures were made by painting the basic outline of the picture onto a piece of glass. Butterfly wings were then carefully placed onto the glass to fill the blank spaces in the painting. This was not very easy to do! The finished picture was backed by wood, and placed in a metal frame, ready to sell to customers in a shop. Evelyn’s father would not allow her to go to art school. The lack of money and social attitudes in the 1930s meant that many women like Evelyn Tongue were not encouraged to go to college or university. After the Second World War started, Evelyn worked in a munitions factory, making bullets

for the weapons that British soldiers used in the war. By the age of eighteen, Evelyn was engaged to be married to a British soldier called George. After the war ended, Evelyn married George, and

spent the rest of her life looking after and caring for her family. She never did butterfly wing art again.

## Make some butterfly wing art of your own!

1. Watch the video 'How to\_ Butterfly Wing Art' for instructions of how to do some butterfly wing art inspired by the artists Evelyn Tongue or Damian Hirst
2. Draw the outline of your picture with a pencil. Or you can use the templates provided in the 'Butterfly Art handout' – a flower, a boat, a house or some colourful butterflies
3. Use the butterfly wing templates provided in the 'Butterfly Art handout'. Using scissors, carefully cut out the butterfly wings that you would like to use in your picture.
4. Using glue, carefully stick the paper butterfly wings onto you picture to fill in the blank spaces, and add colour to your picture.
5. Please provide us with some feedback about the [Butterfly wing art activity](#). Thank you!



Images provided by Linda Gibbs & Georgina Beddow  
Video Credits: L. E. Breuker

