
NATURALLY FANTASTIC WORLDS

New Museum Kids Menu provides families with activities to learn about contemporary art and ideas at home.

Daiga Grantina creates large-scale sculptural **assemblages** that **emulate** forms found in nature. She uses **synthetic materials** to make work that often resembles terrariums and plants.

The title of the exhibition, “What Eats Around Itself,” refers to **lichen**, a composite organism that results from the **symbiosis** between fungi and algae that work together to create and exchange nutrients. Grantina draws inspiration from lichen’s many adaptive qualities, like coexistence and self-replication, to devise her material processes.

You can **watch** this video and **listen** to the audio guide to hear Daiga Grantina speak more about her exhibition and the materials she uses.

What is lichen? Check out this **National Geographic video** to learn more!

KEY WORDS

- **Emulate:** imitate; take or follow as a model
- **Assemblage:** art that includes everyday materials and objects
- **Symbiosis:** a beneficial relationship or interaction between two different groups or organisms; “living together”
- **Synthetic material:** material that is human-made through chemical processes
- **Transparent:** clear, allowing light to pass through
- **Opaque:** not able to be seen through

START WITH ART: DAIGA GRANTINA





"I looked at how structurally the lichens bind, how they move forward, how they grow. And that was a main inspiration for the exhibition."

–Daiga Grantina (Introduction, Audio Guide)

- What do these forms call to mind?
- What parts of the natural world do you see in these sculptural **assemblages**?
- Which materials do you think the artist used to make these sculptures?
- Grantina often uses contrasting physical qualities of different material and forms. Where do you see inside/outside, bright/dark, **transparent/opaque**, hard/soft, shiny/dull, warm/cool, natural/unnatural, or other differences "living together" in these sculptures?

LOOK AROUND

Take a walk and observe flowers, trees, bushes, plants, fungi, vines, lichen, rocks, and other forms you might find outside in your neighborhood or at a park. If it's not a good time to be outdoors, look at images in books, cartoons, art, or online. Do you see any examples of **symbiosis**? You may wish to sketch or take photos to help you look closely and remember.

Observe from different angles: look closely, then look from farther away. What colors, textures, lines, and shapes do you see? Would you describe these forms as natural, surprising, out of this world, or something else altogether?

MAKE ART

Let's create a fantastic **assemblage** that **emulates** the natural world and brings your observations, sketches, and imagination to life!

Materials

- Markers or colored pencils
- Paper (either 8½" x 11" printer paper and/or colorful construction paper)

- Scissors
- Different binding materials: glue, colorful tape, masking tape, clips, pins
- Optional:
 - Collect different material that you might use in your **assemblage**, like fabric scraps, cut up boxes, washed take out or food packaging, foil, cellophane
 - Chord/string to hang your work
 - Phone, camera

Making

1. Think about the forms, lines, shapes, and colors that caught your eye.
 2. Cut paper into strips and different shapes of many sizes.
 3. Experiment by bending and folding paper and other materials to create dimension.
 4. Use your binding materials (glue, tape, pins, clips) to secure your forms or combine several together. Make them small. Make them big. Make one. Make many!
 5. Decide how you will display your forms. Will you arrange them in a container or box to make a little world? Place them on the window in front of the transparent glass for the outdoors and indoors to interact? Hang them so they might move like a mobile? The choice is yours.
- Photograph your assemblages from different angles! Share on social media with **#NewMuseumKidsMenu**

REFLECTION

- Does your sculpture **emulate** the natural world, an imaginary world, or somewhere in between?
- What did you discover while looking closely at forms in the natural world?
- What did you notice when you experimented with materials?



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MUSEUM

IMAGE:

"Daiga Grantina: What Eats Around Itself," 2020. Exhibition View: New Museum, New York. Photo: Toan Vu-Huu; Making Daiga Grantina inspired art at First Saturdays for Families, February 1, 2020

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