

# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT WHIRINAKI WHARE TAONGA

TERM 3 2025

Whirinaki Whare Taonga is Upper Hutt's own art and culture hub. We are committed to offering FREE engaging and accessible visual and performing art experiences for local students and have a range of exciting world class programmes.



## Message from the NEW Learning Programmes Specialist, Karen Nel

Kia ora koutou,

My name is Karen Nel, and I'm the new Learning Programme Specialist at Whirinaki Whare Taonga. I'm thrilled to be part of the team and to welcome you and your ākonga into the gallery this term and many more to come.

Life has flowed like a river and somehow brought me here to this beautiful space, surrounded by creativity, community, and curiosity. As an artist and educator, I believe that every person is capable of expressing themselves, exploring big ideas, and discovering new ways of seeing the world.

With a background in Fine Arts and Education, I've worked across classrooms, rest homes, kindergartens, and galleries in both Aotearoa and South Africa. I bring a playful, inclusive approach to learning, grounded in the values of whakapapa, curiosity, and kaitiakitanga, aligned with the curriculum.

As the Learning Programme Specialist, my goal is to create hands-on, meaningful experiences where tamariki and ākonga can engage deeply with art, nature, and their own creative voices.

*"There is no art without a spirit behind it and everybody has a spirit." – Corita Kent*

## What to Expect in Term 3

This term's learning programme is inspired by the extraordinary macro photography of Levon Biss. His highly detailed and captivating insect portraits spark curiosity and wonder, encouraging students to explore questions about biology, technology, design, ecosystems, and the role of insects in our world. This programme nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on discovery while supporting rich cross-curricular learning in Science, Visual Arts, and Technology — all aligned with the Aotearoa New Zealand Curriculum.

Each visit to Whirinaki Whare Taonga is a hands-on, inquiry-rich learning session that brings art and science to life.

## Gallery & Workshop Schedule

- **Mihi whakatau & karakia** – A warm welcome and cultural grounding
- **Guided gallery exploration** – Observation

- and discussion of incredible insect portraits
- **Whakawhanaungatanga** – Sharing impressions, questions, and wonder
- **Creative Workshop** – Design and build your own 3D paper bug inspired by what you've seen
- **Reflection & Poroporoaki** – Share creations



# MICROSCULPTURE: THE INSECT PHOTOGRAPHY OF LEVON BISS

**TERM 4: 19 July –14 September**

**Year 1- 8 —FREE**

## About the Exhibition

British artist Levon Biss creates large-scale portraits of insects that blend art and science. His exhibition, Microsculpture, features 40 beautiful high magnification portraits that capture the microscopic form of insects in striking large format are high resolution details. These high resolution images, each stitched together from thousands of microscopic photographs of a single insect.

These portraits reveal textures, colours, and adaptations invisible to the naked eye, inviting ākongā to slow down, look closely, and experience the natural world in completely new ways.

The insects featured are from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, which holds a collection of over 5 million specimens from across the globe.

Levon Biss has exhibited worldwide in museums and galleries and now his art is here for you to view.

This exhibition work invites curiosity and wonder and provides a rich foundation for classroom learning across multiple subjects.



## Our Big Questions This Term

- \* Why are insects important in different cultures, including Māori perspectives?
- \* How do technology and art help us see the world differently?
- \* What can we learn by looking closely at tiny things?
- \* How can bugs inspire us as artists, designers, and scientists?
- \* What does this exhibition tell us about being guardians (*kaitiaki*) of the natural world?
- \* What happens when we slow down and really look?
- \* Where in the world do these insects live, and what makes each one unique?

## Classroom Connection

To support and extend your classroom mahi, each visit includes a curriculum-linked resource pack with:

- Creative art activities.
- List of online resources
- Science and observation tasks.
- Learning ideas for before and after your gallery experience.

These sessions can be tailored to suit your learners and current focus. Please reach out if you'd like to collaborate on something unique I'd love to support your planning.

## PLANNING YOUR VISIT

### Getting Here

Public Transport: Just a 5-minute walk from Upper Hutt Station (bus and train).

Bus/Car: Parking and bus drop-off are behind Whirinaki near H2O Xtream.

### During Your Visit

Morning Tea/Lunch: Indoor space available if needed

Bags & Jackets: Space is provided for storage during your visit.

### Book Your Visit

Karen Nel

Learning Programmes Specialist

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**Whirinaki**  
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Open 7 days a week, 9am – 4pm • [whirinakiarts.org.nz](http://whirinakiarts.org.nz)