



Crocker All-Stars: Top Ten List

A Suggested “Top Ten” List

We’re often asked, “I’m bringing my class to the Museum for a self-guided tour. What should we see?” Most school groups spend about an hour in the galleries; here are ten artworks you don’t want to miss. The arrangement of this list suggests one possible route for your visit.

1. **Rapunzel #10** A computer animated projection created by installation artist Jennifer Steinkamp, found in the main stairwell in the Teel Family Pavillion.
2. **Spirit Canoe (or Ancestor Canoe)** A large wood carving from Papua (in Indonesia), created by an unknown Asmat artist, located on the second floor in the Teel Family Pavilion’s atrium.
3. **African headrests** A collection of carved pieces from various African cultures, located in the African & Oceanic gallery, also on the second floor.
4. **Portrait of My Father** A very large acrylic painting created by Northern California artist Stephen Kaltenbach, hanging in one of the Californian & American Art galleries on the third floor.
5. **Progress II** A monumental fiberglass sculpture created by Luis Jimenez, found in another of the Californian & American Art galleries on the third floor.
6. **Great Canyon of the Sierra, Yosemite** Thomas Hill’s panoramic oil painting located in a Californian & American Art gallery at the rear of the Teel Family Pavilion’s third floor.
7. **Allegory of Painting** A 17th century oil painting by Dutch artist Gerrit von Honthurst hanging in the European Art gallery in the Museum’s historic building (east of the Teel Family Pavilion.)
8. **Suit of Armor and Helmet (Samurai Armor)** Exactly what its name describes, created by an unknown 17th century artist, displayed in the Asian Art gallery in the historic building.
9. **Sunday Morning in the Mines** Commissioned by the Crocker, this 1872 oil painting by Charles Christian Nahl is possibly the Crocker’s signature artwork. Located over the main staircase in the historic building.
10. **The Crocker Ballroom** A remarkable piece of architecture designed circa 1868 by Seth Babson, on the second floor of the historic building.

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Suggestions for Enjoying the Top Ten

Begin before your visit by [using the Digital Crocker resource](#), which includes images of seven of the ten All-Stars along with descriptions. Other helpful information can be obtained using a search engine, entering key words such as an artist's name, a style of painting, and so on. [A map of the Museum](#) can help you plan your visit. If you're able to preview the artworks in person, that will be invaluable.

Here are a few specific suggestions for the artworks that might help as well.

1. **Rapunzel #10** The artist Jennifer Steinkamp has a very informative website. You and your students might review the story of Rapunzel. Possible questions:

- Does this artwork surprise you?
- How is it different from other artworks?
- What kinds of patterns do you see, in the images and in the movement?
- Why do you think the artist named this artwork after the character Rapunzel?

Possible activity: Have students suggest titles for this artwork before you tell them what it's titled.

2. **Spirit Canoe** Called *Ancestor Canoe* [on the website](#). The vertical lines on the canoe were believed to make it go faster.

- Do you think this was used as a real canoe?
- Are the figures you see animals or people?
- What might they represent?

Possible activity: Stay put, but look at the other Asmat items in view and notice the similarities in color, material, and style.

3. **African headrests** This is a collection rather than a single artwork, providing a good opportunity to compare and contrast. An online search yields a wealth of information and images. Possible questions:

- What kinds of lines and shapes do you see?
- How are these objects the same? How are they different?
- How are they similar to and different from objects we use?

Possible activity: Have students pair up to play "I Spy" with just the headrests as a way to focus on details.

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4. *Portrait of My Father* Stephen Kaltenbach is a local artist with other artworks viewable in Sacramento. Possible questions:

- How are shapes and colors used in this painting?
- Why do you think it's so large?
- How do you think the artist feels about his father?

Possible activity: Have the students sit on the floor and quietly imagine what the man might say. You could invite a few to share. Note: The works in this gallery may depict subjects your students don't usually see. Be prepared to calmly address their reactions.

5. *Progress II* Give students a moment to walk all the way around to view this artwork. Possible questions:

- What material was used for this sculpture?
- How would the artwork be different if a different material had been used?
- How did the artist show movement?

Possible activity: The room containing this sculpture could be a good place for the second activity in the Gallery Games list.

6. *Great Canyon of the Sierra, Yosemite* This painting traveled from Boston to New York to San Francisco before settling permanently in Sacramento. A nearby QR code leads to more information about Hill and his art. Possible questions:

- How many people can you find in this painting?
- How do they provide a sense of proportion?
- Have you been to Yosemite?
- How do you think the artist felt about Yosemite? Did you feel that way too?

Possible activity: Have each student think of three adjectives that describe this scene. On your signal, they share and compare words with a partner.

7. *Allegory of Painting* An allegory is a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning; it is full of symbols. This painting combines portrait art with allegory, with the woman representing the art of painting and the imaginary figure of Cupid holding a portrait of the artist. Possible questions:

- How would you describe the colors and the textures you see?
- What helps this painting look realistic?
- What adds a sense of imagination?

Possible activity: Consider using the first activity on the Gallery Games list.



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8. Suit of Armor and Helmet Unlike the others on the list, this is a piece of art intended to be worn. It comes from Japan and is made from several different materials, so it is an example of actual rather than implied texture. Possible questions:

- What are some details you notice?
- Why do you think the artist made the armor so decorative?
- What else do you know about Japan?

Possible activity: There's not a big space in front of this display, so consider dividing your students into small groups to take turns getting a close look at several of the artworks in this gallery.

9. Sunday Morning in the Mines This is one of seven works the Crockers purchased from Nahl, all of which are on view in the Museum. Nahl and his family traveled from their homeland of Germany to join the California Gold Rush and settled in Sacramento. Possible questions:

- Notice the two halves of the painting. What divides them? How are they different?
- What information about the people can you learn from the objects you see?
- What do you notice about the frame?
- If you could enter this painting, what do you think you would see, hear, smell, feel, and taste?

Possible activity: Invite a student to pose like a person in the painting, and have the others guess who she represents. Repeat as time allows.

10. The Crocker Ballroom Architecture is a form of art, and this is a beautiful example. It's also a nice place to end your tour, and a good room for sitting and reflecting on your experience. Provide information about the people, the history, and the features of the room. (There is a very informative label near the door.) Point out some of the architectural elements such as the niches, columns, windows, and arches, and materials such as tiles, paneling, and glass. Remind the students about Museum Manners and allow them to explore the space, encouraging them to look in all directions. Possible questions:

- All of the elements of art and principles of design are on view here; ask your students to find examples.

Possible activity: Provide clipboards, paper, pencils, and time for sketching, allowing the students to move to different areas of the room to study selected features.