

# Gallery of California Art At a Glance

This guide highlights five gallery “stops” with suggested questions and activities for students in grades 3 to 5. The Gallery of California Art is organized around three major themes that have inspired art-making in California from the 1800s to the present. These themes are California Land, People, and Creativity.

## Recommended Stops

- Stop 1**      **MEGAMATTERHORN**
- Stop 2**      **California Land**
- Stop 3**      **Gold Rush**
- Stop 4**      **California People**  
Portrait Wall
- Stop 5**      **California Creativity**  
Creativity Wall & Platform



PHOTO: OMCA

## STOP 1

### MEGAMATTERHORN

*MEGAMATTERHORN* artist Mary Anne Kluth is interested in “fake” places that humans invent. Using size, sound, color, and perspective, the artist creates a fantastic spot that is imaginative and different from the natural world. Start your adventure! Walk into the world of *MEGAMATTERHORN*.

- As you move into this space, how does it feel to be inside a “fake” setting?
- What natural features do you recognize?
- What clues tell you that this is imagined or “fake”?
- Does the artwork remind you of anything you have experienced? Why?

**Bonus:** Some landscape artists change natural features in their art to make fantastic worlds that mix imagination and reality. An artist might choose to change a landscape’s colors, add sunbeams or animals, make something look closer or bigger than it is in real life. Find another landscape in the Gallery of California Art. Which parts of the landscape feel like a real place? Which feel fantastic or imagined? How can you tell?



C A L I F O R N I A

# Land

## Landscapes, seascapes, and cityscapes

A landscape is an artwork depicting an expanse of natural scenery or man-made environment. The suffix, “scape” means “a view of.” Landscape is a view of the land, cityscape is a view of the city, and seascape is a view of the sea.

## **BACKGROUND**

California’s rugged coastlines, barren deserts, jagged mountains, and bustling urban centers have inspired artists for generations.

Like the diverse landscape itself, these artworks show a variety of styles, media, and time periods. As the land has changed over time, artists have mirrored those changes.

## **ACTIVITY: Sensory Hike**

Take a multisensory hike through a landscape or cityscape. Ask students to imagine being in that environment.

- What sounds might you hear?
- What smells might you discover?
- What is the season?
- What is the time of day? What is the weather like?
- What do you see in the scene that makes you say it might be cold or hot?

To discuss texture, have students imagine a barefoot walk through the scene. Where can they find something soft, hard, bumpy, or with another texture?

## STOP 3

## California Gold Rush

“It is the infant village put before us, from which our great city has emerged.”

—George Henry Burgess



George Henry Burgess,  
*San Francisco July, 1849*.  
1891. Oil on canvas. Gift  
of the Oakland Museum of  
California Women's Board.

PHOTO: M. Lee Fatherree

### ACTIVITY: A Closer Look

This painting depicts the diversity of people living in San Francisco during 1849. Can you find the following things?

- A man carrying two baskets
- Two ladies walking and carrying fans
- Two men lassoing a bull

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

The following questions will help you further explore *San Francisco July, 1849*.

- Why are so many ships in the harbor? Why have they been abandoned? (People quickly left the ships to pursue the rush for gold.)
- What would you do after you got off the ship you had been on for many months?
- How would you communicate with your family back home? (Look for the post office with lines of people waiting for mail from home.) What do you see that makes you say that?
- Where would you stay?
- How many kinds of housing can you find? Where could you purchase supplies?

In their eagerness to please clients and the public, these artists created a romanticized vision of heroic adventure in the Far West.

Look for examples of artistic mythmaking (romanticized examples of the Far West) among the works shown. Who is present in these works? Who is missing?

# STOP 4

# CALIFORNIA People

## Portrait

When an artist creates a picture of a real person, the picture is called a portrait.

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Who do you see here?
- What can you learn by looking at their faces?
- What parts of a person's face help you guess how he or she feels?
- What kind of mood do you think this person is in?
- Does the person seem to be posing? What tells you this?
- Does the person seem to be aware of the artist? Why do you think that?
- What can you learn from looking at the clothing? From looking at the hair?



PHOTO: OMCA

### ACTIVITY: Portrait Wall "I Spy"

1. Have students face the portrait wall. Make sure that all students can see all the portraits.
2. Select a volunteer to begin the game.
3. Have the student select a portrait in her or his mind. Remind the student to keep the choice a secret.
4. Have the student say, "I spy with my little eye" and give a clue about the portrait he or she has in mind. The student should start with one or two clues like "I spy with my little eye someone wearing a white shirt" or "with black hair."
5. Have students raise their hands and call on them as they guess. Allow for two or three guesses. If they can't guess, have the student give another clue.
6. Have the student who guesses correctly select the next portrait.

# STOP 5

CALIFORNIA

# Creativity

## Artist

The definition of an artist is constantly changing and covers a broad range of activities that have to do with creating artworks and practicing the arts. Art forms range from ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and photography to video, filmmaking, performance art, and many more.



PHOTO: Jeff Warrin

## **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS**

Explore the variety of materials artists use to make art. Look for different types of art and consider the following questions for each piece you look at:

- What kinds of materials are in the artwork?
- How do you think a piece was made? What kinds of tools do you think were used to make it? How can you tell? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Do you think this is used for some purpose?
- Do you have something at home that looks like this? How is it different here?

# Gallery of California Art

