Welcome! Use this family guide to explore our main-level galleries. You and your child can use its simple questions and fun activities to slow down, look closely, and understand a work of art. Have fun!
Wilsey Court

Architecture and the Park

Wilsey Court is an excellent place to start your visit. Look up, look down, look out the windows! The de Young was designed so that visitors would appreciate the beauty of nature and Golden Gate Park just as much as the art inside the museum.

1. What do you notice?
2. What can you see through the windows?
3. What art can you see from where you are?
Stories in Murals

These mural fragments are from the ancient city of Teotihuacan, near current-day Mexico City, and were originally found on the walls inside an ancient apartment complex. Murals decorated the interiors of buildings and contained messages, symbols, and stories the people of Teotihuacan understood. Archaeologists don't know the exact meaning of each mural, but there are some symbols that are open to interpretation.

1. Look closely at the mural pieces. Do you notice plants and flowers? Can you find anything that might be a symbol? Sketch it here:

2. After you have found the symbol and made a sketch, talk to someone in your group about what you think is happening in the scene.
Gallery 2

Courts and Cosmos

Maya artists created some of the finest pottery of the ancient world. Look around the gallery space and notice the different bowls, plates, and elaborate incense burners. Maya artisans used ceramics to tell stories about how the universe began, to depict gods and supernatural beings, to honor and remember great rulers, and to represent the plants and animals around them.

Take a look through the gallery and notice some of the animals. Do they live on land, or do they swim or fly?

Circle the words that describe the animals you find.

- Fierce
- Protective
- Mischievous
- Graceful
- Playful
- Regal
- Agile
- Wise

Now, find some creatures that are fantastical, meaning that they are not real animals but have imaginary qualities or the body parts of several different animals. Find one that captures your curiosity. What would you call it? Sketch one here:
Artists and the Natural World

In western North America, the practices of many Native American artists require a deep understanding of the natural world. Potters visit specific places in the desert to gather the right rocks to make their clays and paints. Basket makers wait until certain times of year to collect reeds, branches, and roots, being careful not to overharvest the plants so that there will be enough for the next season. Carvers search the forests for trees strong enough to chisel, shape, and smooth. Images in the art can tell stories about the artist’s life, family, history, and environment.

Take a walk around the gallery and find three objects that stand out to you. Sketch each object below and discuss the following information.

1. **What natural materials to do you see?**
   (Clay, wood, stone, plant fiber, bone, shell)

2. **What type of image do you see?**
   (Animal, person, pattern, activity)

3. **How do you think this object was made?**
   (Weaving, carving, painting, molding)

4. **Where in North America is the maker of this object from?**
The Artist’s Process

The artist Carl Cheng is interested in creating work that plays with natural and artificial elements in surprising ways. The artist designed this machine that replicates something normally done by nature. What do you think this machine does? Notice the materials and how they work together.

Imagine you create a machine that does something only nature can do. Consider rain, rivers, mountain ranges, volcanoes, forests, glaciers, and more! Now, write a description of your machine.

1. How does it work?
2. What does it make?
3. What is it made of?

Materials Tell a Story

Look at this sculpture and create a story using the words below:

Tools, labor, metal, persistence, heavy, tired, strength

Sculptor Joe Minter collected scraps and salvaged rusted tools, metal, and other unwanted items to create his works. For artists, materials can tell a particular story in their art. Minter's work often speaks about the physical labor of African American slaves in US history.

Now that you know more about the artist, would you want to change your story? If so, what would you change?
Barbro Osher Sculpture Garden

What’s “Growing” in the Sculpture Garden?

This artwork is called Conversation Piece. Feel free to walk around the sculptures. Listen quietly and see if you can hear what they are saying. What are they talking about? What tone of voice do you hear? What body language do you see? What emotions are they expressing?

Write down what you would add to the conversation.
Family Activities

Curiosity and wonder are the foundation for all our programs. Explore more through our family activities, classes, and camps!

Join us every Saturday for free Family Art Making, 11 am–4 pm, and while you’re here, visit the de Youngsters Studio, 9:30 am–5:15 pm.

Toddler Tours

Art after School: Four-Part Series

Discovery Guides

Summer Art Camp

Teen Programs

For more information on these programs, visit deyoungmuseum.org/learn or contact us at families@famsf.org.

Family Membership

Membership pays for itself in two visits and is great for parents, grandparents, or anyone else who wants to inspire young minds.

Family Membership Benefits Include:

- Free admission for two members, two guests, and all children through age 17 at both museums
- Quarterly Member Morning invitations with docents in the galleries, art-making activities, and complimentary tea, coffee, or hot cocoa
- Discounts on Summer Art Camp and year-round programming for children and families
- 10% off purchases at both Museum Stores and 20% off during seasonal members-only sale days
- Priority access to interactive gallery materials
- Quarterly family-focused email newsletter

To sign up, stop by the Membership Desk or Museum Store, or visit www.famsf.org/join.


This Discovery Guide was written by Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco senior teaching artist Claudia Tennyson. The Discovery Guides are made possible with a grant from the Walter & Elise Haas Fund.
Spaces and Places

Welcome! Use this family guide to explore our upper-level galleries. With this guide, you and your child can use simple questions and fun activities to slow down, look closely, and understand a work of art. Have fun!
Gallery 23

Getting Cozy Around the Fireplace

The carved details in the mantelpiece show a wilderness scene. Notice the animals, plants, and other details. The images carved into the mantelpiece describe one kind of woodland story.

Imagine you are about to begin your own adventure in the same forest. Imagine that it’s a chilly night as you gather with your group around the fireplace. Feel the warmth and hear the crackling of the fire. This is a perfect place to tell a story.

Share a story: Have someone begin the story and take turns adding to it until you reach the ending! Include at least two details in your story that you see in the mantelpiece.
Looking at Landscapes

Do some of these places look like anywhere you have been? They are all landscapes, or scenes that show what the natural world looks like from a distance, as you might see from a window. Notice the colors of the sky, weather, mountains, or sea.

Spend some time looking at the landscapes, then choose one as your destination. Use the space below to write a friend or family member, telling them what it's like in that landscape. Where are you? Where are you sitting while you write? What do you see from where you are sitting? How would you describe the weather?

Dear ______________,

Your friend,
Sensory Poems

Brrr . . . it's cold out there! This wintry landscape just might give you the chills! Use your senses to create a poem of your own.

Here is an example:
I see . . . gentle snow falling.
I hear . . . the crisp, crunching sound of footsteps.
I smell . . . frigid air around.
I touch . . . a snowball in my mitten.
I taste . . . a hot cup of tea.

Now write your own poem:

I see . . . ________________________________.

I hear . . . ________________________________.

I smell . . . ________________________________.

I touch . . . ________________________________.

I taste . . . ________________________________.
Discover the Materials of New Guinea

New Guinea is the second largest island in the world. The vast forests and rivers of New Guinea provide the raw materials needed to make the objects you see in this gallery. As you explore, you will find objects made of wood, plant fibers, mud, shells, bones, and feathers. Think about how artists might obtain these materials from the natural environment. As you look around the gallery, you will notice there are sculptures, masks, costumes, and shields. They may be made of the same materials, but they are brought to life in different ways.

Make a list of the materials you find:

What do you think this large drum is made of? What do you see carved into the sides of the drum? Can you imagine the sound it makes? Drums carved from a single, massive log were kept in and around the men's houses and played during important occasions. Try tapping out a sound pattern on your lap. Who do you imagine will answer you?

How would you describe this figure? Mangrove trees and shrubs grow in salty habitats near the ocean that surrounds the island of New Guinea. Spirit figures are obtained from the roots of mangroves. A carver or spirit-man dreams an image and then goes to “find” it in the mangrove forest. This spirit figure still has the rootlike appearance of the plant it came from. What has the artist done to make this root look like a living being?
Looking Closely at African Art

In addition to enjoying the objects in this gallery for their artistry, you can also appreciate them for their useful purposes! As you come across objects from regions throughout the continent of Africa, consider why the maker created them.

Walk through the gallery and find the case with a collection of stools and chairs. Which chair is your favorite? Find the chief’s chair from Angola. Notice the carved designs and patterns. What details stand out to you? Imagine sitting on the chief’s chair; how would you feel?

Search for more objects in the gallery and think about what they may have been used for.

Find an object that may have been worn for a ceremony.
*Sketch it here:*

Now, find an object that someone would have used in a home.
*Sketch it here:*

Now, find a piece in the gallery that captures your curiosity.
*Sketch it here:*

Would it be held in a hand or worn over a face?

What would someone do with this object? Would it have been used for decoration, cooking, or other purposes?

What about the piece is interesting to you? What questions would you like to ask the person who made it?
Sights and Sounds of the Cityscape

How did the artist George Grosz use lines and shapes to create this painting? What kinds of sounds do you imagine coming from this scene? Could you sleep with this activity going on outside your window?

Sketch some “noisy” lines here:
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