Color Us Hopeful

Coloring, word play, mindful moments, I-Spy, and more!

ACTIVITY BOOK

CROCKER art museum

BLOCK BY BLOCK
About the Crocker Art Museum

The Crocker Art Museum, established in 1885, exhibits artworks from pre-history to the present. The 20,000+ objects in the permanent collection come from the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Crocker is best known for housing the nation’s premier display of art from the Golden State, plus a renowned collection of international ceramics and one of America’s finest collections of Master drawings. With more than 600 programs offered every year, including artist talks, gallery tours, live music, art classes and more, the Crocker brings people together and connects them in unexpected ways with art, ideas, each other and the world around them. The 69th largest art museum in North America, the Crocker serves as the Sacramento region’s primary center of fine art, discovery, and human expression.

About Block by Block

The Crocker Art Museum’s Block by Block (BxB) initiative seeks to enhance cultural participation and quality of life throughout Sacramento’s urban core. A unique approach to Museum work, BxB is inspired and informed by the community.

We acknowledge that the Crocker Art Museum is on the traditional land of the Nisenan people, and California is the homeland of many tribes. We are honored to be here today.

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Growing up, one of my favorite activities was playing I-Spy with my brother. The great thing about this game is that you can play almost anywhere, and we did just that! We played on long car rides, in waiting rooms, and in restaurants — anywhere there were lots of little details that we could try to stump each other with. Inspired by this childhood pastime, here we have a painting by Todd Schorr, *The Hydra of Madison Avenue*, 2001. Within this painting there are more than 50 different characters, or references to them, from marketing campaigns throughout the years. I’ve identified a few here for you to find. Enjoy looking closely at the art. You can view this work and many others by Schorr when *Todd Schorr: Atomic Cocktail* opens at the Crocker Art Museum this summer.

**Try to find:**

- 1. Tony the Tiger
- 2. The Michelin Man
- 3. Mr. Clean
- 4. Captain Crunch
- 5. McDonald’s SpeeDee mascot
- 6. The Kool-Aid Man
- 7. Mr. Bubble
- 8. _________________
- 9. _________________
- 10. _________________
Let’s color

Whether you are a Crocker kid or kid at heart, coloring activities are a great way to reduce stress, improve fine motor skills, and nurture creativity. This coloring page is inspired by the Minton tilework in the Crocker’s historic building. The tiles were imported from Stoke-on-Trent, a center for outstanding ceramic production in England. During the renovation of the historic building in 1976 each tile was marked so that the original pattern could be recreated when the tiles were replaced. For inspiration, take a look at the Crocker’s floors and then, using your imagination, explore new color combinations and create your own pattern.

▲ Minton tiles are known for their beauty and durability. The color and pattern found in these encaustic tiles are not just on the surface but imbedded in the clay ground.
I’m an ideas guy, and I get my best ideas during my morning walk to work at the Crocker. My daily meander begins in Alkali Flats, takes me past the Golden 1 Center, along Capitol Mall toward the Tower Bridge, through Crocker Park and into the Museum. Along the way, I watch the city wake up; I glimpse the sun glint off Tower Bridge, and I think about my role at the Crocker in a city that is changing so rapidly.

Of my regular routine, I miss this the most as we shelter in place. It is the one I think about most now that I cannot exercise it.

We all experience Sacramento in different ways and this is the beauty of cities. They can be anything to anyone. What then are your versions of the city, and what are your daily interactions with it?

Inspired by works of art that require you to follow instructions (like Yoko Ono’s conceptual book project, Grapefruit or the DIY exhibition design compendium Do It from curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and artists Christian Boltanski and Bertrand Lavier), this activity encourages you to spend a few uninterrupted moments being mindful of the details of how you interact with your version of Sacramento.

Step 1: Sit
Find a comfortable place to sit and think. Be free from distractions and preferably in or with a view of nature.

Step 2: Identify
Identify a particular interaction with Sacramento that you have regularly, but aren’t able to have right now. (For example, maybe you are working from home and don’t stop for coffee at a favorite coffee shop on your morning commute.)

Step 3: Consider
Mentally walk yourself through that interaction and consider these prompts/questions:
- What happens during this interaction?
- Where does it occur?
- What/who do you see and what/who do you hear?
- What actions does it involve?

Step 4: Explore
Explore what you miss about not being able to experience/partake in this interaction.

Step 5: Enjoy
Finally, notice where you are right now and what you are enjoying most about this moment.
Podcasts help me feel connected to other people and new perspectives. I’ve found some that provide fresh cultural context, comic relief, and a way to make some sense of our individual and collective challenges at this time. Here are a few I hope will provide inspiration.

My Current Top 5 Podcasts

1. **DEATH, SEX & MONEY**
   - Hosted by Anna Sale, this podcast explores big questions that are often left out of polite conversation. Through interviews and voicemails left by people from all backgrounds, Sale explores how we live with and think about everything from student loan debt and class status to sudden disability and cross-racial friendships.
   - [wnycstudios.org/podcasts/deathsexmoney](wnycstudios.org/podcasts/deathsexmoney)

2. **WAIT WAIT... DON'T TELL ME!**
   - Hosted by the brilliant musician Rhiannon Giddens, this series breaks down famous arias through the insights of everyone from sex workers to anthropologists. In the process, it helps explain the nuances of opera and makes it digestible for novices.
   - [wnycstudios.org/podcasts/aria-code](wnycstudios.org/podcasts/aria-code)

3. **Social Distance**
   - A podcast about living through a pandemic. This very topical, nearly daily production from The Atlantic, is a straightforward examination of questions many have in experiencing the pandemic. The casual banter between the hosts and other staff writers provides a comforting base.
   - [theatlantic.com/podcasts/socialdistance](theatlantic.com/podcasts/socialdistance)

4. **The Lonely Palette**
   - The podcast that returns art history to the masses, one object at a time. Tamar Avishai listens to the observations of real people who are viewing a famous artwork, then explores the work through beautifully crafted and exciting stories, history, and insight.
   - [thelonelypalette.com](thelonelypalette.com)

5. **NPR’s Weekly News Quiz**
   - The panelists have improved and grown increasingly diverse over the years, and they are highly talented at finding humor in unique places. When the news is seriously depressing, this podcast makes it laughably bearable.
   - [npr.org/programs/wait-wait-dont-tell-me](npr.org/programs/wait-wait-dont-tell-me)

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You can listen through any podcast application on your smartphone or desktop.
Granville Redmond’s work captured California’s diverse landscape and color. Born in Philadelphia, he was deafened by scarlet fever as a toddler. Soon after, the family moved to California, and in 1879 he became a student at the California School for the Deaf in Berkeley.

Redmond preferred to paint landscapes in subdued tones, but his poppy subjects were his most popular. In this painting, he manages to include bright poppies in a tonal setting. Many of Redmond’s colleagues felt that these introspective, tonal paintings elicited a sense of quietude informed both by his deafness and his contemplative nature.

Look at Patch of Poppies for a few seconds. How would you describe the mood of this painting? How does Redmond create the mood?

Now imagine you are walking on the path in the painting. What do you see? What do you hear? Where do you think the path will take you?

Write a short poem about your aspirations for what lies at the end of the path. Your aspirations can be tangible, conceptual, or fanciful. Send your poems to us at education@crockerart.org, and yours could be shared on Facebook or Instagram!
Color Us Hopeful — Special Addition

This work was created for, but not included in, the Color Us Hopeful: Coloring Book — one of a series of art activities the Crocker has provided the community during the COVID-19 shutdown. The coloring book features the work of Sacramento artists who love their city and represent its creative energy and unyielding spirit. A digital version of the full coloring book is available at crockerart.org/coloringbook.

By Aik Brown

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PUT ART BACK IN THE SCHOOL DAY

As they say, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Now that you are coordinating your child’s learning, you have the opportunity to put art front and center. Aim to set aside a block of time once or twice a week, during their school hours, for your young scholar(s) to get creative. If you are looking for a defined project, there are a variety of resources available online, including those at crockerart.org/fromhome. On our YouTube channel, there are step-by-step instructions kids can follow for projects that use common materials found in many households.

Looking for something more open-ended? Encourage them to “free draw” from their imagination or give them challenges like a still life of a pile of sneakers or the contents of the refrigerator – which may free you up to finish your Zoom call without a tiny face blocking your view.

GET CREATIVE WITH ART MATERIALS

Don’t let a dismal craft drawer stop you. Think outside the box for materials your child can use. Many of our homes feature art materials lurking in plain sight. Need cardstock to make the Crocker’s Slot Sculpture project? Look in the pantry or closet: Cereal and shoe boxes are both made out of a great cardstock material, thick enough to create a sculpture yet thin enough to cut, and many feature a blank side that can be drawn on with crayons, markers, or pencil.

Does your student want to paint, but watercolors are nowhere in sight? Get a cup of water and head outside. Use paint brush, old toothbrush, or Q-tips and “paint” with water on the concrete. Your little one(s) will get to experience painting, and once the water evaporates, there will be little mess to clean up. (You can also throw in a mini science lesson about evaporation if you’re having a particularly ambitious day.)

VISIT YOUR FAVORITE MASTERPIECES ONLINE

As fun as creating at home can be, sometimes we still miss the Crocker. Take a tour with us online! The Crocker is one of the Museums featured on the Google Arts and Culture website. Get closer than ever before to more than 80 artworks in our collection. Plus, the art is curated into themes, like plants, mammals, and seasons. Ask your scholar to explore the themes, then do a short writing prompt inspired by what they saw.

GO EASY ON YOURSELF

Whatever you end up doing, remember to be kind to yourself throughout this process. It’s no surprise that you might have some days where you can’t be the best teacher, employee, and sourdough baker all at once. Do your best, enjoy this time with your kids, and invite some art into your day.
This raku-fired clay sculpture, *John Randall, Buffalo Soldier*, by Akinsanya Kambon is featured in the Crocker exhibition *African Roots/American Expressions*. “Buffalo Soldier” originally referred to members of the 10th Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army — a unit of African American soldiers formed after the Civil War. One story about the origin of the term involved Private John Randall. In 1867, Randall was attacked by 70 Cheyenne warriors while escorting two civilians on a hunting trip. He suffered a gunshot wound to his shoulder and 11 lance wounds but survived. Native Americans are believed to have compared the African American soldiers to buffalo because of their strength and fortitude.

Using the letters found in *John Randall*, find new words matching the following criteria:

- Place
- U.S. basketball player
- Monetary unit
- Greeting
- Car make
- Something oddly amusing is
- Used to describe leader in an organized-crime family
- A type of pot/pottery
- A pilgrimage to Mecca
- Ruling government in India
- A physical show of agreement

**In the sculpture, John Randall…**

- is depicted regally, like a prince, ruler, or East Indian
- has a hat on his head, not a
- sits on a horse who’s mouth is slightly
- has this next to his horse’s bridle
There’s more to explore with Crocker at home.

From art activities and digital tours to curator talks and educational programs, crockerart.org/fromhome is the place to be for relaxation, fun, and entertainment. Here is just a hint of what we have to offer:

- A mini concert with a cosmic cabaret
- A quiet look at California poppies
- Paper sculptures kids can make
- Interviews with a comic book illustrator
- Virtual art classes and camps
- Online exhibitions

Color Us Hopeful was made possible in part by Bank of America, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld LLP, and Sacramento Office of Art & Culture.

We look forward to seeing you at the Museum!