Powerful figures can be found throughout the Museum! They can be gods and goddesses, spirits, or people who are honored or worshipped for their greatness and achievements. Start your search for these major figures in Gallery 176, South and Southeast Asian Art.

**Ganesh**

Find the Hindu god, Ganesh. Spend some time looking at this sculpture.

> **What do you notice? Point out all the things you find.**

Have you heard the story of Ganesh? One day, the god Shiva went on a trip. As his goddess wife, Parvati, awaited his return, she molded a little clay boy from the earth and brought him to life as her son. When Parvati bathed, she asked him to keep guard. Shiva returned from his trip and the boy would not let him in to see Parvati. Angered, Shiva chopped off the boy’s head! Parvati was so upset by this that Shiva tried to find the head. At that moment, an elephant passed by and said he would be honored to give his own head to replace the lost one. Shiva hurried home, placed the elephant head on his son’s body, and brought him back to life. Their son was then named Ganesh.

Hindus of all ages pray to Ganesh, asking him for good luck and to remove obstacles. They recite the phrase “Shir Ganeshya Namah” which means, “praise to Ganesh.”

> **Can you find the rat in this sculpture? Remember him for later!**

**Shiva**

Look for a large sculpture of Ganesh’s father Shiva in this same gallery. Shiva is the main god of Hinduism. Walk all around this sculpture. What do you notice? Many Hindu gods have multiple heads and arms, which is a sign of their supernatural abilities. Look closely at the decorations on his headdress and body.

> **There are other sculptures of Shiva around this gallery. Can you find them? How do they look similar or different to this one?**
Travel across the first floor to Gallery 133 in the Art of the Americas Wing, and look for the giant painting of George Washington. It is 12 feet tall! As you may have learned in school, Washington was the first US president and a powerful, important figure in American history.

This painting shows the American soldiers crossing the Delaware River from Pennsylvania to New Jersey during the American Revolutionary War. They surprised the British troops on Christmas night and won an important battle the next day.

> Imagine being in the painting. What would it feel like to be there?

The artist Thomas Sully did many things to show us how important Washington is. Look at Washington’s pose and the expression on his face.

> Pretend you are Washington. How do you feel when you pose in this way?

Thomas Sully also painted Washington on a bright white horse and placed him in the middle of the painting, which draws our attention to him. Lastly, he shows Washington wearing his impressive general’s uniform.

> The artist used one more trick. Can you figure it out? (Hint: Where are the people and horses to the right of George Washington looking and pointing?)

You found three powerful male figures. As you travel through the Museum today, look for some powerful female figures.

After your visit

Remember the rat you saw in the Ganesh sculpture? The Hindu gods, Ganesh and Shiva, had animal attendants that were almost always with them. Ganesh had a rat and Shiva had a bull. If you were a powerful figure, what animal would you want as your attendant? Draw or paint an image of your animal companion.