

CALIFORNIA ARTISTS

Projects for Kids

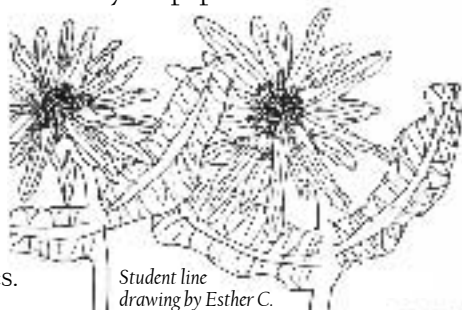
Ruth Asawa

For the past 50 years, Ruth Asawa (b. 1926) has sculpted, drawn, & molded her art. She approaches all parts of her life with equal calm, intensity & dedication. She bends wire forms & designs bronze sculptures that hang in museums, supports arts education in the schools, and is proud of her six children & many grandchildren. Her contributions stand among the notable works of 20th century American art.

Line Drawing

Ruth Asawa discovered drawing while living in a Japanese Relocation camp during WWII. Later, artist-teachers taught her to observe & draw from memory. She uses descriptive lines, loops, curls & tendrils to draw plants & flowers.

- ◆ Look at a plant carefully. Follow plant edges with your eyes while drawing its line on your paper.
- ◆ Add details. Observe closely. Keep your pen & eyes working together.
- ◆ Try using wire to “draw” by bending it into nature’s shapes.

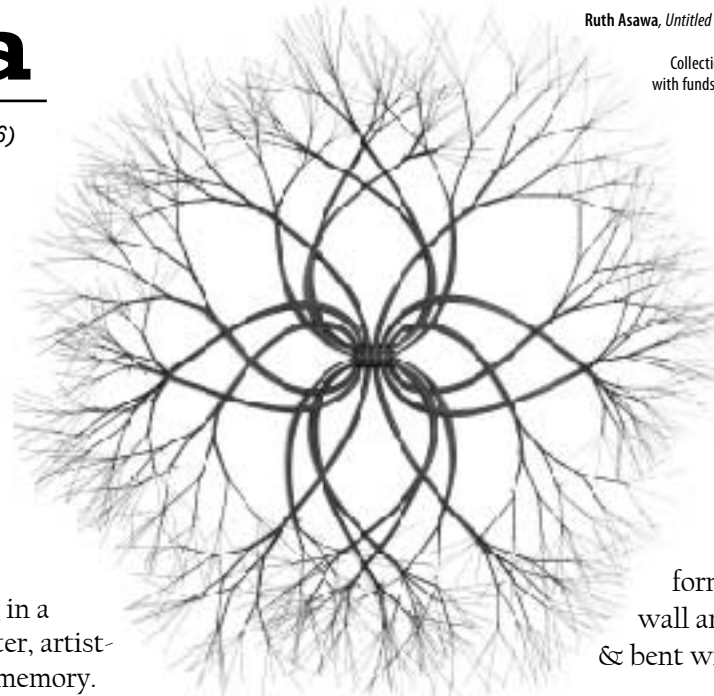


Student line drawing by Esther C.

Wire Sculpture

In Mexico, Ruth learned to make baskets & later adapted the technique to sculptures. She crocheted wire into bulbous shapes that bulge & curve. She hung her wire from the living room ceiling in collections of shapes & shadows. Soon, many museums collected Ruth Asawa’s sculptures. Visit her hanging sculptures, *Group of Architectural Works*, at the San Jose Museum of Art (SJMA) through mid-April, 2008: www.sjmusart.org

- ◆ Plan a 3-D wire sculpture: animal, imaginary creature, car, plant, or person.
- ◆ Bend wire into the main shape first. Crimp, coil & wind the wire to describe the form. Add more wire shapes to create the sides, top & bottom.
- ◆ Look at your form from many angles. Add details. Hang or mount your work for display.

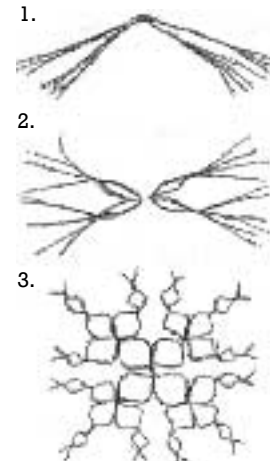


Ruth Asawa, *Untitled S.234 (Wall Mounted, Tied Wire, Five-Branded Form)*, c. late 1960's, Bronze wire, 64 x 64 x 15 inches, Collection of the San Jose Museum of Art. Museum purchase with funds provided by the Friends of the Collection, Elaine and Rex Cardinale, and Mary Mocas. 2006.12. Photography by Hudson Cuneo. Image courtesy of the Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco

Wall Wire

Ruth Asawa grew up on a farm with her large Japanese family where she learned to observe plants. Later, as an artist, she used varied materials to express the forms she understood. In this wall art piece, she bunched, tied & bent wire into branching shapes.

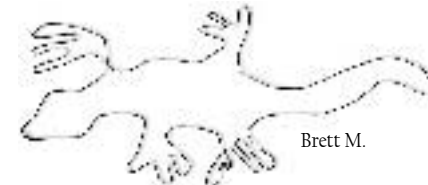
- ◆ Cut bendable wire into 12” pieces (24-gauge, florist paddle wire, recycled telephone wire, or craft wire). Wind 12 pieces together at middle.
- ◆ Divide the 24 ends into equal groups. (4's, 6's or 3's). Tie off with wire. Subdivide bunches into new groups.
- ◆ Bend wire bunches into shapes from nature: flower petals, leaf veins, tumbleweed branches. Experiment.
- ◆ Bend, twist, loop & recombine wires. Share & display.



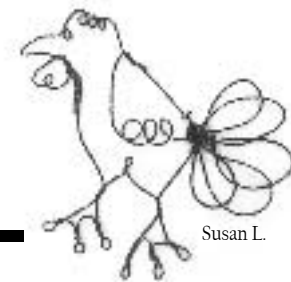
Learn more about Ruth Asawa’s artwork in SJMA’s Artist of the Week Podcast: www.sjmusart.org/podcast/#asawa



Hong D.



Brett M.



Susan L.

Wire sculptures by CSMA students

Community Projects

Ruth Asawa believes that the creative arts are important. She is a strong supporter of arts education, leading projects in schools & the community. Find more about her life, her work & art projects at: www.ruthasawa.com & www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=4828



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230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View, CA
650.917.6800 | www.arts4all.org

Written by Mary Bender
Designed by Ina Johnson, ©2008



Ruth Asawa, *Group of Architectural Works*, 1955 - 1965, Copper and brass wire. Dimensions vary, Collection of the San Jose Museum of Art. Gift of the Artist in honor of the San Jose Museum of Art's 35th anniversary. Museum purchase with funds contributed by the Museum's Collections Committee. 2003.28.01-.04 and extended loan from the Artist. Photography by Douglas Sandberg

Look in the Mercury News

Search the newspaper for ideas to transform into wire art: athletes, politicians, shoes or flowers. Bend away! Ruth Asawa worked tirelessly to improve school art education programs. Search for articles about individuals who help their communities.

Many thanks to: Ruth Asawa; San Jose Museum of Art; Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco