

1. *Untitled* (BMC.68, Stem with Leaves), c. 1948–49  
Watercolor on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of Aiko and Laurence Cuneo 2007.29.3

Learn about Asawa's introduction to the fundamentals of drawing at Black Mountain.



2. *Untitled* (BMC.123, Studies of Hands and Feet), c. 1946–49  
Ink on tracing paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, MA; gift of Josef Albers BR49.385

3. *Untitled* (BMC.84, Dogwood Leaves), c. 1948–49  
Oil and watercolor on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.6

4. *Untitled* (BMC.98, In and Out), c. 1948–49  
Oil and graphite on board

Private collection

5. *Untitled* (BMC.127, Meander in Green, Orange, and Brown), c. 1946–49  
Collaged colored papers mounted on brown paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, MA; gift of Josef Albers BR49.408

6. *Untitled* (BMC.70, 3's and S's), c. 1946–49  
Graphite, ink, and watercolor on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.32

7. *Untitled* (BMC.86, Dogwood Leaf), c. 1948–49  
Oil and watercolor on tracing paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.10

8. *Untitled* (BMC.124, Meander – Black and Red), 1949  
Black and red inks and graphite on tracing paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, MA; gift of Josef Albers BR49.387

9. *Untitled* (BMC.56, Dancers), c. 1948–49  
Oil and opaque watercolor on paper

Private collection

10. *Untitled* (BMC.112, Receding Circles), c. 1948–49  
Oil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.22

11. *Untitled* (BMC.48, Jello Molds), c. 1946–49  
Ink and graphite on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2007.28.57

12. *Untitled* (BMC.108, Stacked Triangles), c. 1948–49  
Oil and watercolor on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.12

13. *Untitled* (BMC.132, Color Study of Many Colored Squares and Triangles), c. 1946–49  
Oil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 1976.30.4


*Untitled* (LP.001, Large Leaf), c. early 1990s  
Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (LP.009, Fish), 1987  
Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

Hear about the process Asawa used to make  
this fish print.

 803 VD))) 803 Access

*Untitled* (Leaf from the Sacramento Delta),  
c. early 1990s  
Ink on Japanese paper

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

From left to right:

*Untitled* (BMC.75, Double Sheet Clusters), c. 1948–49  
Stamped ink on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2007.28.60

*Untitled* (BMC.74, Double Sheet Stamp), 1948  
Stamped ink on paper

Asheville Art Museum, North Carolina, Black Mountain College Collection;  
gift of Aiko and Laurence Cuneo 2010.33.02.60

*Untitled* (BMC.78, BMC Sunburst), c. 1948–49  
Stamped ink on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.44

Clockwise from top left:


*Untitled* (SF.047a, Potato Print – Cross, Blue/Black),  
c. 1951–52  
Stamped ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (SF.045c, Potato Print – Branches, Purple/Blue),  
c. 1951–52  
Stamped ink on Japanese paper

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from  
the Drawing Committee, the Director's Discretionary Fund, and partial gift  
of Paul Lanier 2018.112

Find out about Asawa's artistic experiments with  
everyday objects.

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*Untitled* (SF.043e, Bike Pedal – Black/Gray  
[Checkerboard]), c. 1951–52  
Stamped ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (SF.045a, Potato Print – Branches,  
Magenta/Orange), c. 1951–52  
Stamped ink on Japanese paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2010.51.6

From left to right:

*Untitled* (SF.063, Continuous Form within a Form),  
c. 1950s

Pastel and opaque watercolor on board

Private collection

*Untitled* (WC.133, Continuous Form within a Form),  
after c. 1980

Watercolor on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (CF.11, Sculpture, Continuous Form within  
a Form), c. 1980

Copper sheet

Private collection

*Untitled* (CF.13, Sculpture, Continuous Form within  
a Form), c. 1980

Copper sheet

Private collection

*Untitled* (SD.106, Continuous Form within a Form  
Sculpture Drawing Rendered in Dots), c. 1960s

Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (ZP.16B, Twelve Looped-Wire Sculptural Forms),  
c. mid-to-late 1950s

Screenstone on board

Private collection

Whitney conservator Clara Rojas-Sebesta describes  
Asawa's use of screenstone.

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*Untitled* (BMC.107, Dancers), c. 1948–49

Watercolor and opaque watercolor on paper

Private collection

Contour line drawings of looped-wire sculptures filled Asawa's sketchbooks and accompanied her applications for the Guggenheim Fellowship, as did collages made from screentone—patterned adhesive films that Asawa would cut, burnish, and layer in an effort to render the interlaced mesh of her looped-wire surfaces. These collages, like the one above, were based on the sculptures, not made as preparatory studies for them, and her choice of screentone allowed her to translate her sculptures' layered and transparent qualities to two dimensions.

Letter from Ray Johnson to Asawa (RJ.027), c. 1952

Private collection

Looped-wire sculpture drawings included in Asawa's Guggenheim Fellowship application (STMT.002), 1952  
Ink and graphite on tracing paper

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

Untitled sculpture drawings (SB.009), c. 1954  
Graphite on paper in hardback sketchbook

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2007.28.811-61

*Untitled* (S.270, Hanging Six-Lobed, Complex Interlocking Continuous Form within a Form with Two Interior Spheres), 1955 (refabricated 1957–58)  
Brass and steel wire

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Howard Lipman 63.38

Hear Asawa talk about how she moved between two and three dimensions in her work.



*Untitled* (ZP.04, Four Looped-Wire Sculptural Forms),  
c. mid-to-late 1950s  
Screentone on board

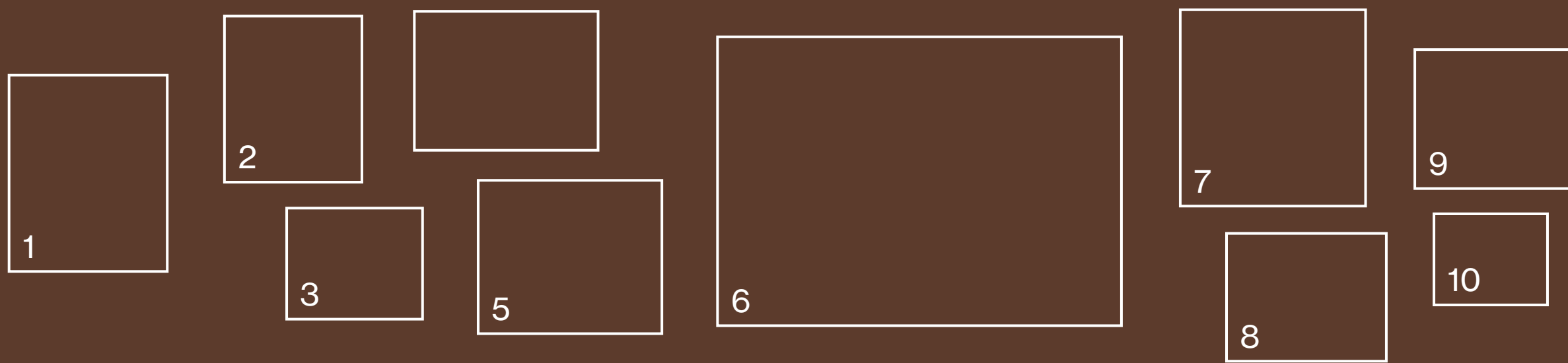
Private collection

*Untitled* (ZP.05, Four Looped-Wire Sculptural Forms),  
c. mid-to-late 1950s  
Screentone on board

Private collection

*Untitled* (BMC.121, Exercise in Color Vibration and Figure Background), c. 1948–49  
Collaged colored papers and opaque watercolor on paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, MA;  
gift of Josef Albers BR49.407



1. *Untitled* (FF.1211, Paul Lanier on Patterned Blanket), 1961  
Felt-tipped pen on paper on board

Private collection

2. *Untitled* (AB.004, Waves), c. late 1950s–early 1961  
Felt-tipped pen on paper

Private collection

3. *Untitled* (MI.053, Houses and Hills), 1963  
Felt-tipped pen on bitumen waterproof paper

Private collection

4. *Untitled* (AB.002, Waves 2), c. late 1950s  
Felt-tipped pen on paper

Private collection

5. *Bentwood Rocker* (MI.176), c. 1959–63  
Felt-tipped pen on paper

Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Asheville, NC;  
gift of Rita Newman 2006.10.1

6. *Untitled* (MI.153, Seven Thonet-Style Bentwood Chairs), c. 1950s  
Felt-tipped pen on paper

Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD

7. *Untitled* (SF.031, Red Meander on Pink),  
c. late 1950s  
Opaque watercolor and graphite on board

Private collection

Hear more about the importance of the meander to Asawa's practice.



8. *Untitled* (AB.005, Waves), c. late 1950s–1961  
Felt-tipped pen on paper

Private collection

9. *Untitled* (BMC.57, Curved Lines), c. 1946–49  
Ink on paper

Private collection

10. *Untitled* (BMC.59, Meander – Straight Lines),  
c. 1948  
Ink on paper

Private collection



*Redwood 356 (PF.1012), 1960*

Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

Artist Virginia Overton reflects on growth patterns in this drawing.



*Untitled (SD.168, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with Six-Pointed Star in Center), c. 1969*

Ink on Japanese paper

Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA; gift of the Joan Pearson Watkins Trust 2014.19.4

*Headlights (MI.137), 1961*

Ink on Japanese paper on board

Collection of halley k harrisburg and Michael Rosenfeld

*Untitled (SD.263, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with Six-Branch Center and Drops at the Ends), c. 1963–69*

Ink on Japanese paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Sinton, Hillsborough 1969.24

Above:

*Untitled* (S.780, Wall-Mounted, Double-Sided, Center-Tied, Six-Branched Form Based on Nature), c. 1963  
Galvanized wire

Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA; gift of the Joan Pearson Watkins Trust 2014.19.1

At left:

*Untitled* (SD.129, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with Five-Pointed Star in Center), c. 1973  
Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (SD.126, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with Eight Branches), c. 1980s  
Ink and wax crayon on amate paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the RAL, Inc. 2007.28.76

*Untitled* (PF.295, Endive), c. early 1990s  
Ink on paper

Private collection

Artist Virginia Overton talks about drawing and gardening.

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From left to right:

*Untitled* (BMC.93, In and Out), c. 1948–49  
Oil and graphite on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (BMC.91, In and Out), c. 1948–49  
Oil on board

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of Aiko and Laurence Cuneo 2007.29.4

*Untitled* (BMC.102, In and Out), c. 1948–49  
Oil on paper

The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.11

*Untitled* (SF.039b, Logarithmic Spiral Squares,  
Navy/Blue), c. 1951–52  
Screenprint on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (SF.039c, Logarithmic Spiral Squares,  
Orange/Orange), c. 1951–52  
Screenprint on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (BMC.128, Study in Repeated Vertical Angular  
Lines [Triangles]), c. 1948–49  
Black and purple inks over graphite on tracing paper

Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, MA;  
gift of Josef Albers BR49.386

From far left:

*Untitled* (S.842, Mounted Paperfold of Alternating Horizontal Black and White Zig-Zag Pattern), c. 1952  
Ink on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (S.839, Mounted Paperfold of Columns of Alternating Black and White Parallelograms), c. 1952  
Ink on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (S.841, Mounted Paperfold of Alternating Vertical Black and White Stripes), c. 1952  
Ink on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (S.843, Mounted Paperfold with Diagonal Black and White Stripes), c. 1952  
Ink on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (S.840, Mounted Paperfold of Alternating Columns of White and Black Triangles), c. 1952  
Ink on paper


Private collection

At right:

*Untitled* (S.691, Wall-Mounted Paperfold with Horizontal Stripes), 1951  
Ink on paper

Private collection

Learn about the techniques Asawa used to make this paperfold.

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Excerpt from *Breathing*, 1989

Digital video, color, sound; 4:14 min.

Sculpture and visuals: Ruth Asawa, Mae Lee, and Frank Lilleff

Choreography: Randee Pauve and Yvonne McClung

Performers: Artemis Anderson, Cara Goldman, Chantell Lucia, Adrian Skaj, and Joy Watts

Performance space: School of the Arts, San Francisco (now the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts)

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

The practice of paper-folding was integral to Asawa's work as an artist and educator. She turned to folded paper when designing certain public commissions, such as the *Origami Fountains* (1975–76) installed in San Francisco's Japantown (see the related photographs in the nearby vitrine). She also helped develop a paper-folding curriculum and led workshops for young children throughout the Bay Area. In 1989, Asawa collaborated with the School of the Arts (now the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts) students and fellow artists on *Breathing*, a dance performance in which lengths of folded paper became props and scenery. As seen in this video recording, the constructions could be manipulated to stretch to the width of the stage or coil to cocoon a dancer, serving as flexible, dynamic forms.

## Ruth Asawa Through Line Labels (Vitrines only)

### Photographs

Dancers rehearsing with large paperfolds for *Breathing*, performed at the School of the Arts (now the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts), 1989

Photograph by Tom Wachs

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

#### From left:

Asawa folding paper, c. 1975

Photographs by Laurence Cuneo

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

Asawa holding a paperfold, c. 1970s

Various paperfold models, c. 1970s

Addie Laurie Lanier and Aiko Cuneo discussing a paperfold model for San Francisco Japantown's *Origami Fountains* (PC.006), 1975

Asawa's daughters recall making paperfolds with their mother.



### Sketchbooks

#### From left:

Untitled drawing of Albert Lanier sleeping (SB.024), c. early 1960s  
Felt-tipped pen and graphite on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Untitled drawing (SB.070), 1973  
Graphite on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Untitled drawing (SB.059), 1971  
Graphite on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Untitled cityscape drawing (SB.243), c. 1957–59  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

### Letter and notecards

Letter from Asawa to Barbara (Bobbie) Loines Dreier, April 20, 1951

Western Regional Archives, State Archives of North Carolina

*Untitled* (SF.037, Logarithmic Spiral Square Notecards), c. 1951  
Screenprints on paper

Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries

### Single artwork

*Untitled* (FF.1053, Experimental Pen and Ink and Brushed Ink Technique Examples), c. late 1950s–early 1960s  
Ink and felt-tipped pen on Japanese paper


Private collection

*Untitled* (PT.106, Plane Tree #12), 1959

Ink on coated paper

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from Gregg Seibert 2016.5

Learn about the ink-and-brush process Asawa used to make works such as this one.

 811 VD))) 811 Access

*Untitled* (PT.064, Plane Tree), c. early 1960s

Ink on coated paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (PF.1016, Eucalyptus Grove), 1961

Ink on coated paper on board

Private collection

*Untitled* (PT.062, Blue and Black Ink Wash [Water]),  
c. early 1960s

Ink on coated paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (AN.077, Pigeons on Brick), 1963

Ink on coated paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (BMC.148, Trees), c. 1948–49

Watercolor on paper

Private collection

From left to right:

*Untitled* (MI.108, Shell), c. 1969

Ink, watercolor, and colored pencil on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (WC.252, Persimmons), c. 1970s–80s

Watercolor on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (WC.100, Nasturtiums), c. 1970s–80s

Watercolor on paper

Private collection

*Untitled* (PF.686, Watermelon), c. 1960s

Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

*Allie's Iris* (WC.175, Purple Iris with Three Blooms), 1987

Ink and watercolor on paper

Private collection



## Sculpture on pedestal

In center of gallery:

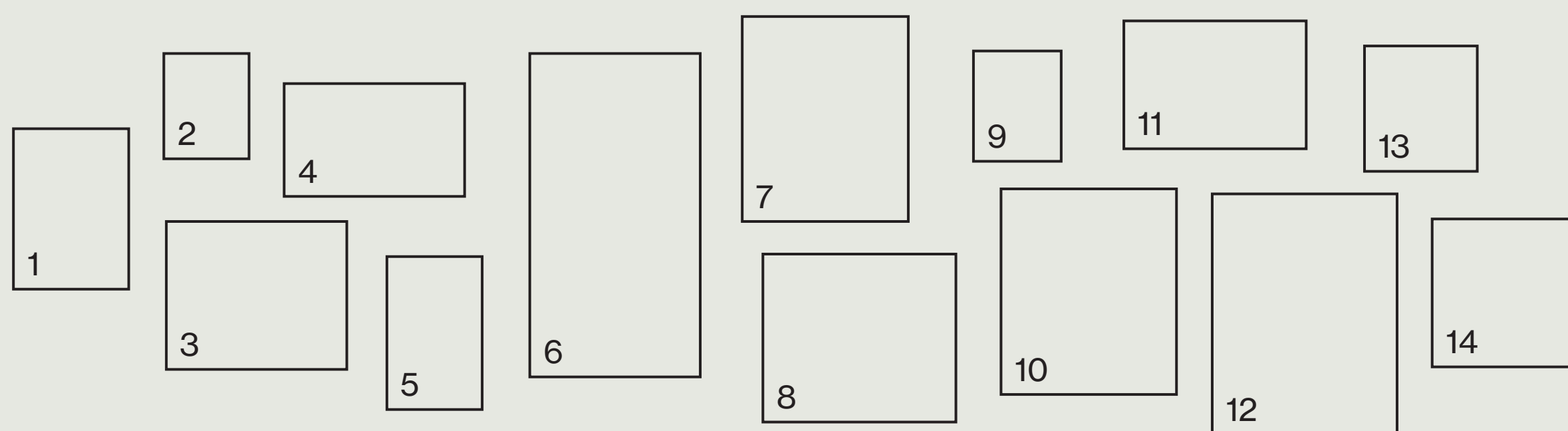
*Untitled* (S.003, Freestanding Reversible Undulating Form), 1998

Bronze

Private collection

Artist Virginia Overton discusses what drew her to this sculpture.

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1. *Untitled* (FF.434, Aiko Lanier Blowing up Balloon), c. 1955  
Ink on tracing paper

Private collection

2. *Untitled* (AN.003, Mussels), c. late 1960s  
Ink on paper

Private collection

3. *Untitled* (PF.099, Nasturtiums), 1994  
Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

4. *David Tudor's Hands* (FF.896), c. 1964  
Ink on paper

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; gift of Ruth Asawa 2011.M.7.3

5. *Untitled* (FF.016, Life Mask of Ruth Asawa), c. 1968–70s  
Conté crayon on Japanese paper

Private collection

6. *Untitled* (PF.825, John Elsesser's Leek), 1976  
Ink on Japanese paper

Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD

7. *Untitled* (WC.112, Andrea Jepson), 1964  
Ink on Japanese paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2010.51.21

8. *Untitled* (MI.146, Clam Shell with Petunias), c. 1969  
Ink on Japanese paper

Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA; gift of the Joan Pearson Watkins Trust 2014.19.2

Artist Suzanne Jackson reflects on the range of textures in this drawing.



9. *Untitled* (FF.1231, Imogen Cunningham with Beads), 1975  
Ink on paper

Private collection

10. *Mervin Lane* (BMC.7), 1947  
Ink on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; gift of the artist 2007.28.55

11. *Untitled* (FF.054, Albert and Child Sleeping), c. 1964  
Ink on coated paper

Private collection

12. *Adam's Ranunculus* (PF.1107, Bouquet from Adam Lanier with Snail), 1999  
Ink on Japanese paper

Private collection

13. *Untitled* (FF.116, Albert Lanier), c. 1965  
Ink on paper

Private collection

14. *Untitled* (WC.134, Self Portrait), c. 1960s  
Ink on paper

Courtesy Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR

Untitled drawing (SB.076), c. 1974–76  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Drawing for *The Japanese Tea Garden Golden Gate Park* pamphlet (SB.091), 1976  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Untitled double-page drawing of cosmos (SB.087),  
c. 1976–89  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

*9.16.77 Gladiolas Paul's; Paul's Gladiolas 9.14.77*  
(SB.092), 1977  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

*N. Purifoy 2.28.77 LA Bd of Ed. (SB.102), 1977*

Ink on paper in hardback sketchbook

Private collection

*6.23.83 Venice to Milan (SB.137), 1983*

Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

*4:05 AM–3.16.85 hand unsteady 3:20PM–4:07PM*

*4:10–4:32PM (SB.157), 1985*

Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

*Hudson's Wildflowers for Mother's Day, 5.14.95*  
*(SB.200), 1995*

Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Untitled drawings of Addie Lanier sleeping  
(SB.013), c. 1960  
Ink on paper in spiral-bound sketchbook

Private collection

Hear Asawa's daughter Addie Lanier talk  
about this drawing.



*Suzanne Jackson, 2.11.77* (SB.100), 1977  
Ink on paper in hardback sketchbook

Private collection

Artist Suzanne Jackson talks about seeing  
this drawing for the first time.



*Untitled* (SD.254, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with  
Six Petals in Center), c. late 1960s

Tin

Private collection