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

    Oil and watercolor on paper  
    The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 2007.30.12

    Oil on paper  
    The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, CT; 1976.30.4
Hear about the process Asawa used to make this fish print.

803 Access

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.

*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
Screentone on board
Private collection

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

805

*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 2007.28.81.1-61
*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.

804

*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

   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

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

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

808
Artist Virginia Overton reflects on growth patterns in this drawing.
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

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*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

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

Private collection

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Artist Virginia Overton talks about drawing and gardening.

809
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

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.
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.
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

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.
807

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 (FF1053, 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 Selbert 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
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
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.
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 (Mt.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

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.

813

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.

814
*Untitled (SD.254, Tied-Wire Sculpture Drawing with Six Petals in Center), c. late 1960s*

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Private collection