



# Drawing in the Air with Ruth Asawa

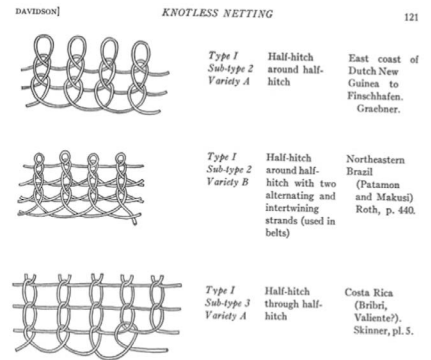
EPISODE LENGTH: 8:28 (CLICK FOR DIRECT LINK)

**SUMMARY:** Our podcast today is inspired by the work of one of our favorite artists, **RUTH ASAWA**. We explore her magnificent light-as-air wire sculptures using shape and line/pencil and paper. A few fun facts about Asawa: she used her hands and whatever materials were available to make art. She focused as much on the process of making art as the outcome. When Asawa and her family were placed in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II, she kept on creating. Asawa studied at the experimental **BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** in North Carolina; her wire looping was inspired by her travels in Mexico.

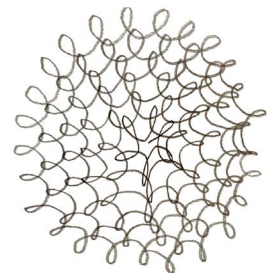
Here are some traditional looping techniques that look similar to Asawa’s wire work, and the drawing we do on this podcast.



And here’s a photo of Asawa creating one of her sculptures based on a traditional basket looping technique she learned in Mexico. Or rather, here’s a photo of her *drawing in air*.



This is from a 1935 article by Daniel Sutherland Davidson, “Knotless Netting in America and Oceania”



Asawa-inspired doodle of loops!

Asawa worked constantly. She was always folding paper, drawing on scratch paper, or looping wire. She once said “An artist is not special. An artist is an ordinary person who can take ordinary things and make them special.”

Photo © Imogen Cunningham Trust. Artwork © Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy David Zwimer.

**SUPPLIES:** paper, pen/pencil, pipe cleaners optional, all kinds of loops

**OTHER DRAWTOGETHER RESOURCES:** Watch video episode 4, “Heart Spirals,” for more weaving and looping on the page.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING:** developing focus, finding wonder in ordinary things

**CREATIVE SKILLS:** gross motor skills, making art out of anything (resourcefulness), focusing on the process

## Guiding Questions:

- What are other types of creating that also rely on drawing?
- What are non-pen/pencil/crayon/paint materials you’d like to “draw” with?
- What are some “ordinary” things that you have seen people make special? What do you think of that quote from Ruth Asawa?