

WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Ruth Asawa

ARTIST INTRO:

Ruth Asawa (1926–2013) was a pioneering Japanese American artist, educator, and arts activist internationally recognized for her wire sculpture, public commissions, and her legacy devoted to education. Asawa was raised working on a farm until her family along with other Japanese Americans were detained in the early 1940s. She was first exposed to professional artists at an internment camp in Arkansas and went on later to study art at *Black Mountain College* influenced by modern artists, architects, and mathematicians. She continued her art practice and career in San Francisco creating an impressive body of work over the course of more than a half century while raising a large family at home. In 1968 Asawa co-founded the *Alvarado School Arts Workshop* and would go on to serve on the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and become a trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. In 1982 Asawa helped to create the public arts high school which in 2010 was renamed in her honor, the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts.

ARTWORK:



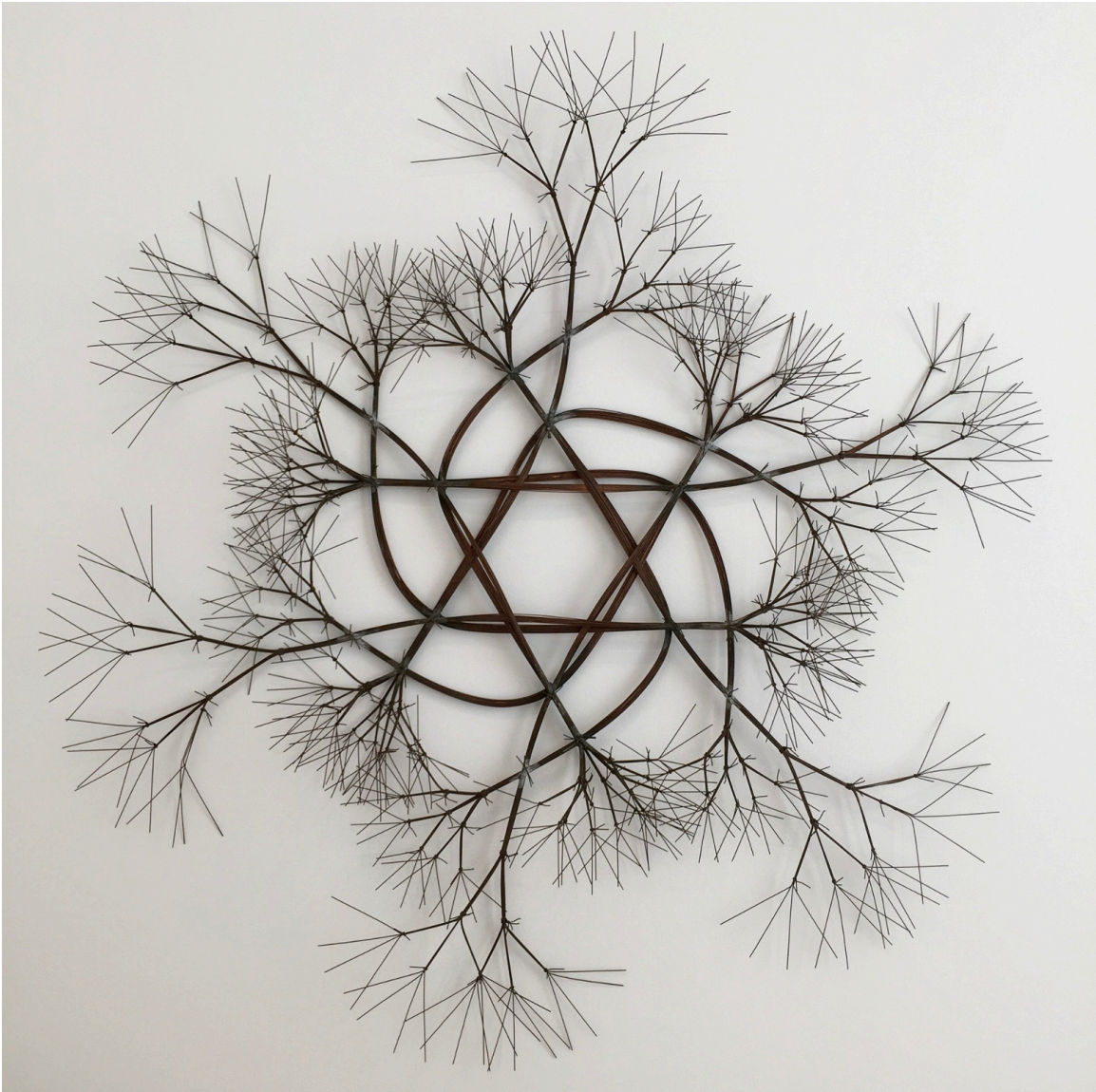
WORKSHOP:

Let's go out into nature, draw objects that inspire us, and find branches or other natural materials that we can turn into sculptures inspired by Ruth Asawa!

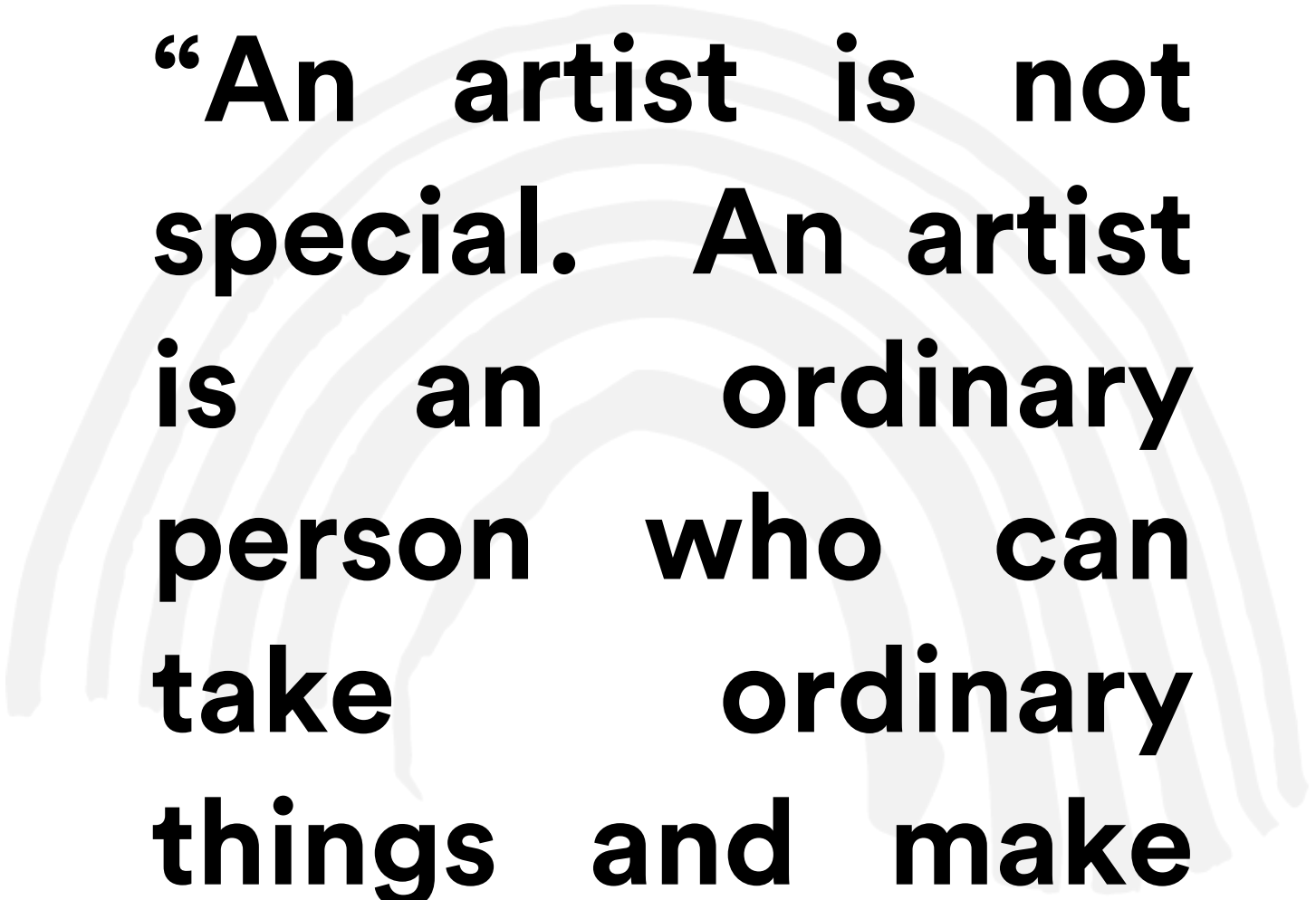
1. Go out into nature with a piece of paper & pencil
2. Find objects that inspire you, take a closer look, and draw what you see
3. Begin to gather natural objects that inspire you along with twigs, branches or other sturdy materials for your sculpture
4. Lay out all of your natural materials and start with one piece, building different shapes (Ex: star, square, circle, or unique patterns with lines)
5. Experiment by reorganizing and rebuilding your shape(s) into different forms until you find one that you like
6. Once you have your sculpture, use string or yarn to tie it all together

MATERIALS:

- Twigs, branches, etc.
- String or yarn
- Pencil
- Paper



Ruth Asawa Untitled (S.383, Wall-Mounted Tied Wire, Open-Center, Six-Pointed Star, with Six Branches), c. 1967.



“An artist is not special. An artist is an ordinary person who can take ordinary things and make them special.”

– Ruth Asawa

FOLLOW UP:

What did you observe when you went outside into nature?

What did you find?

What did you choose to draw? Why?

What objects did you use to create your sculpture?

Can you describe your sculpture? What did it become?

What do you think art is?

What is an artist? Are you an artist?

Where can you find art?

Is art in nature? What inspires you to make art?

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