Drawing with Wire

I realized that if I was going to make these forms . . . it can only be done with a line because a line can go anywhere.

— Artist Ruth Asawa (1926–2013)

Look

To help you look closely, think of the wire as a line. How long can you follow a single line by drawing it with your finger in the air?

Ask

Ruth Asawa thought of her wire sculptures as three-dimensional drawings. In what ways do you think her sculptures are like drawings?

Make sure you’re also looking at the shadows. How do they help you see the work as a drawing?
As you look at Ruth Asawa’s work, practice sketching her sculptures in these boxes. Here are some things to try.

Sketch a sculpture without taking your pencil off the paper.

Layer your sketch with overlapping shapes.

Sketch using both light and dark lines.

Sketch the shadows.

Do any of your sketches look three-dimensional?

Copper and brass wire; monel wire (copper and nickel alloy), various dimensions. Gift of the artist, 2005.90.5–8. © Estate of Ruth Asawa

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

— Artist Ruth Asawa (1926–2013)