

# Mondays with MoMA



**MoMA**

## Step 1 Look closely

1. How are the flowers in this artwork similar or different from flowers you have seen?
2. How did the artist use materials to show value (areas of light and dark)?
3. What else do you notice about this artwork?

## Step 2 Learn more

Ruth Asawa grew up on a farm and had a lifelong love of observing plants which she often painted and drew. She drew everyday — in the morning before her family was awake, when watching her children, and when watching television. Drawing was a daily exercise to develop her perception and concentration so that she was always ready to look closely as she observed her subjects.

This artwork is part of Asawa's group of prints called *Flowers* that illustrate different kinds of flowers, using the medium to different effects in each print. The images range from simple black linework of flowers to soft, colorful ink washes and forms. In artmaking, a wash is a technique resulting in a semi-transparent (almost see-through) layer of color.

See more works from Ruth Asawa's portfolio, *Flowers*:

[moma.org/collection/works/portfolios/77372](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/portfolios/77372)

## Step 3 Activity: Wash painting using everyday materials

Materials: table cover, paper, pencil, paintbrush (cotton swabs can be used as substitutes), leftover condiment packets (like ketchup, mustard, or soy sauce), leftover coffee, dirt or soil, a small waterproof container. Ask a grown up before using kitchen materials.

1. Look for a plant or flower that you want to draw.
2. Make a simple line drawing of your selected plant.
3. In your waterproof container, mix a small amount of your condiment, coffee, or dirt with a small amount of water; this is your wash. Play around with adding different amounts of each to make the color darker or lighter. Test out a small amount on a piece of paper to see how the colors appear.
4. Paint in your line drawing, starting with the light parts first, and add the dark parts last. To make an area darker, wait for it to dry, then add another thin layer of your wash.
5. *Optional:* When your artwork is completely dry, use colored pencils or markers to add extra colors and details.

## Step 4 Share!

Share your artwork with a classmate or family member. Or, you can email it to us at MoMA: [schoolprograms@moma.org](mailto:schoolprograms@moma.org)



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Image: Ruth Asawa. Untitled from *Flowers*. 1965. One from a portfolio of twelve lithographs (including title page and colophon). Tamarind Lithography Workshop, Inc., Los Angeles. proof outside the edition of 20. Gift of Kleiner, Bell & Co. © Estate of Ruth Asawa.