



Lyman Allyn

Book of the Month

Making Art from War

This month's project is inspired by our children's book and the work of Ruth Asawa. Asawa has become well known for her sculptural work, but her artistic beginnings began with works on paper. Her early work began with drawings to fine tune her observational skills prior to moving towards painting and print making during her Black Mountain College days.

Asawa's sculptural work includes both personal work and public commissions. Metal became the primary medium for her sculptures, working with both wire and cast metal. In addition to her artistic career, Asawa became an art activist for public schools. It is with her work with children that she developed her baker's clay recipe, allowing the children to create their own sculptural work using a non-toxic and easy to make medium. Made with ingredients you likely already have at home; clay will be the most accessible way to explore Asawa style sculpture. We have included the recipe here, but you can always use any ready-made clay you already have at home.

We encourage everyone to explore Asawa's website, ruthasawa.com, to see examples of her work and learn more about the artist. We would love to see which era of Asawa's work you chose to explore. Share your experience and work using #LymanAllynAtHome.

Baker's Clay materials and preparation:

The following recipe will make one batch of dough which is ample for 6-8 students.

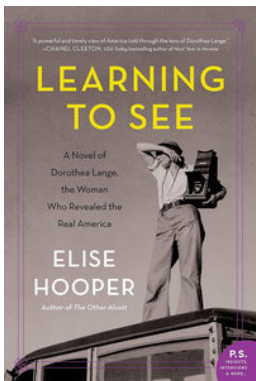
4 cups flour

1 cup salt

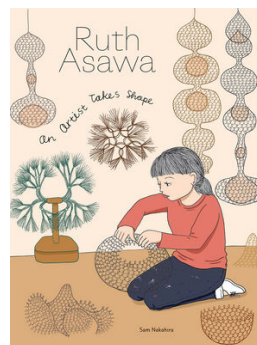
1 ½ cups water

Mix the flour and salt. Add water. Knead the dough until smooth. It might take up to 5 minutes of kneading to get the flour, salt and water properly mixed. This dough is not elastic, like bread dough. It should be soft, but still firm, and be able to hold the shape of a good mound. It doesn't like to be kneaded too much. Generally, it's hard to make the dough softer if you have mixed it with too little water. You can, however, make the dough stiffer by adding flour and salt in the same proportions.

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Our adult selection also features an artist connected to war, Dorothea Lange. While many know her name and work relating to the Great Depression, it is not widely known about her work the government commissioned and quietly submitted to the National Archives documenting the "evacuation" and "relocation" of Japanese Americans in 1942. Elise Hooper's *Learning to See* is a piece of historical fiction that allows readers to learn about Lange's life as if from the artist's own perspective.



Intended for readers ages thirteen and older, our young adult book was developed in consultation with the artist's youngest daughter. "Ruth Asawa: An Artist Takes Shape," is a graphic novel by author and illustrator Sam Nakahira bringing to life the story of a lesser-known American artist. The book covers Asawa's experience as a Japanese-American from her time being interned along with thousands of other Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor, through her art education and success as an artist.