

## Niki Hastings-McFall: *In Flyte*

2 February – 16 June 2013

### Teaching and Learning Resource



*Home from the Sea* 2012 dimensions variable standard lamps, paint, shades and synthetic lei

### About Niki Hastings-McFall

Niki Hastings McFall is a New Zealand artist with Samoan and European ancestry who creates multi-dimensional art works. She creates sculptures, jewelry, assemblages and mass installations using both found and created objects. Her art work is based on her extensive research of Pacific adornment and she is also inspired by the ceremonies, identities and migration of the Pacific peoples that the culture belongs to. Niki's own dual European and Samoan heritage is visible throughout her work and many of her pieces show her personal journey as a New Zealander with Pacific Island roots, such as Lei flowers covering domestic furniture to symbolize urban Polynesian living and her childhood and life in West Auckland.

Niki is interested in how people view the Polynesian culture, what being a modern Pacific Island person means today. Often her work reflects her views on how the culture has evolved or travels or is based in a modern urban society.

### About this exhibition

*In Flyte* surveys highlights from the past fifteen years of Niki Hastings-McFall's highly detailed and creative practice. It spans jewelry, sculpture, mixed media assemblage and installation works. The exhibition also includes the full scope of her art practice from her Lei and light box series to her more recent 'Vanitas' dioramas and her 'Cloud' series which includes an assemblage of thirty flower covered lamps.

Students can 'navigate' the exhibition by viewing the range of works and following the signs, symbols and cues to explore and draw a route throughout Niki's art works. There are a range of conceptual and practical learning opportunities for students which include symbolism, culture, diversity, navigation methods, map making, sculpture, narratives, translation and colour theory.

Education resource compiled by Kiri Hiha, Educator, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2012.  
Pataka Education programs are supported by LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom)  
and funded by The Ministry of Education



*Red Moana* 2007 2400mm x 4200mm Acrylic sheet, reflective road sign vinyl

## Curriculum Links and Learning Opportunities:

### Visual Arts: Levels 1- 7

Explore, research, record and design symbols that could direct you or warn you through looking at and discussing Niki's **Urban Navigation** series.

Find out what a Lei is and create your own using the templates below. Present this to someone.

### Te Kotahitanga: Levels 1-7 Cross Curricular

Discuss symbols in Te Ao Maori and create your own 'sign' that would help someone navigate a place

Make your own Poi or Taiaha using recycled modern materials! Make up a kanikani about where they came from.

### Social Sciences/Geography: Levels 3-7

Discover where the Pacific Islands are and research how you could navigate your way there from where you are in New Zealand.

Design, run and present a survey for 'how people from another place in the world keep or change their culture' in New Zealand.

### Literacy/English: Levels 1-7:

Interview a Pacific Island person in your community about where they come from and their journey.

Write a story about how you navigate your way to school.

Read a story about a journey and tell someone how the journey was taken.

### Numeracy/Mathematics: Levels 1-4 Curriculum Strands:

Make your own symbol and put this up at school. Use the vocabulary and terms of Geometry in the planning of your symbol; it must show translation, repetition, and reflection.

Create a class Lei that has a range of different patterns; use odd and even numbers, prime numbers, symbols and algebra.

### “Suburban Lei” and “Urban Lei” series

Niki has explored the form and the idea of the Lei both as body adornment, which is rich in ancient Pacific traditions and also as a city based, modern object made from everyday materials.

In the 1990s Niki began her ‘Urban Lei’ and suburban Lei’ series of Lei style necklaces made from materials that could be found anywhere in our modern world. These works show the effect that manmade materials and mass consumption are having on our natural resources.

"Traditionally Lei were made from environmental detritus using multiple repetitive units. The urban lei series continues to use these principles of manufacture however the change of environment from the idyllic South Seas paradise to a 21st century urban reality sees a radical change in materials. Gone are the shells, seeds, leaves and fresh blooms. Plastic, metals, paper and suburban detritus are the new urban Polynesian resources."

*Niki Hastings-McFall, 2004*



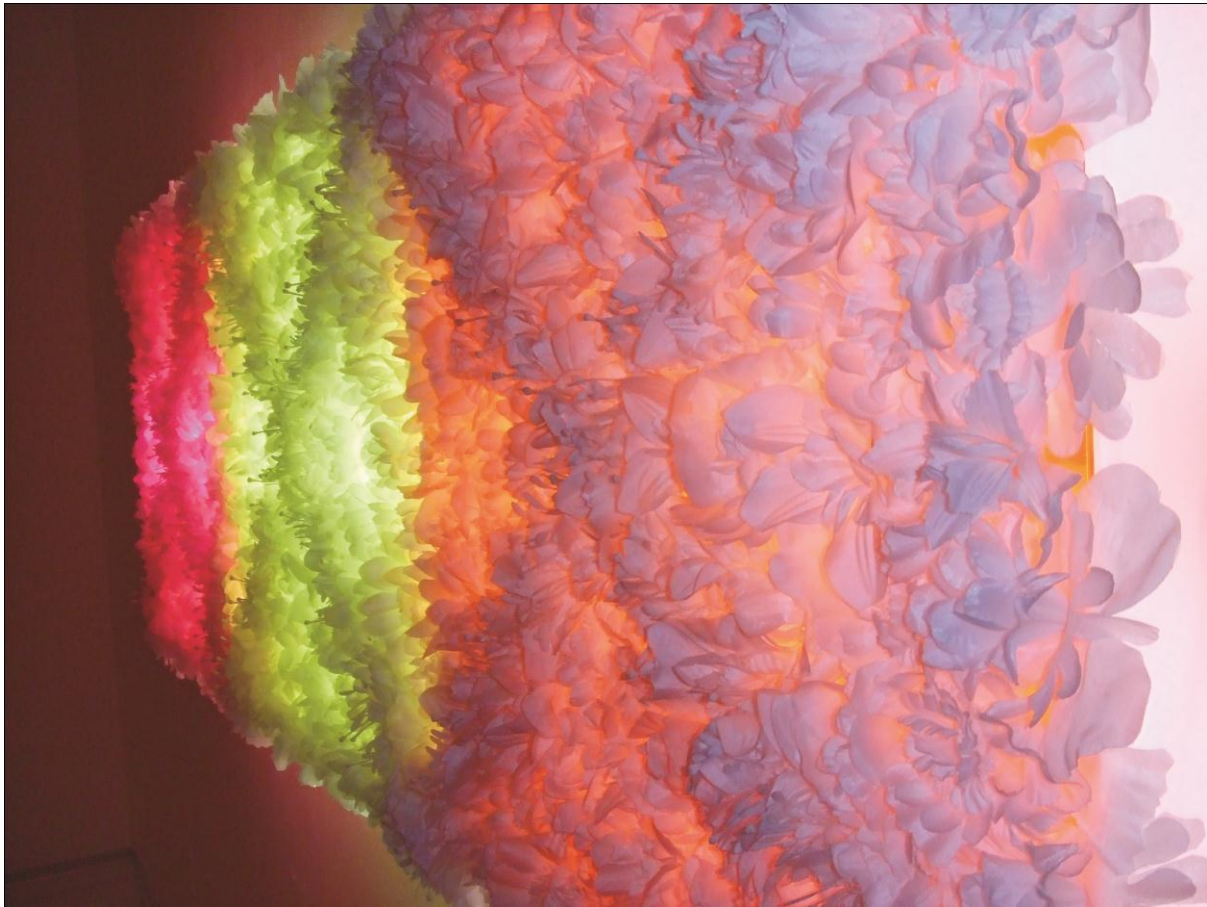
*Too Much Sushi* 2003 400mm x 650mm x 20mm plastic sterling silver

### Techniques and materials

Niki draws the viewer in with vibrant color and use of everyday, familiar materials; plastic Lei flowers, lamps, soy sauce packages and street signs. She uses these media to talk about the present, past and future of the Pacific Island environments and the changing of the culture as more people live in or are born in other places away from the Pacific Islands. Some of the materials she uses are familiar or

Education resource compiled by Kiri Hiha, Educator, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2012.  
Pataka Education programs are supported by LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom)  
and funded by The Ministry of Education

recycled and her Lei that are made from recycled materials talk about consumption and pollution of precious resources and environment both in the Pacific Islands and in the modern world.



*Sweet Little Kisses* 2006 1810mm x 690mm x 170mm lighting unit, synthetic lei

### Lightbox', 'Polynisation' and 'Cloud' Series':

#### Artistic Concepts:

In her **Lightbox** series' Niki Hastings-McFall's light boxes remember and celebrate the Lei as a symbol of Samoan women and the tradition of wearing tropical flowers in their hair and behind their ears. During the European discovery and settlement of the Pacific Islands, Christian missionaries forbid Samoan women to wear flowers in their hair as it was deemed too attractive to males. Niki's works show masses of flowers from fabric Lei, layered onto light boxes and lit up to create a riot of colour, this work is a symbol of celebrating Pacific Island women.

**Polynisation** is a series of furniture you might find in any city house; chairs and a table, that have been covered in deconstructed Lei flowers to create a colorful sculpture that is familiar and yet odd at the same time. Niki has been influenced by her urban upbringing in West Auckland and the familiar items of furniture that remind her of her childhood. The lei covering the tables and chairs discuss her dual Pacific Island and European heritage and also show how New Zealanders who are of Pacific Island descent live their culture every day in an urban, modern environment.

The **Cloud** works are a series of second hand lamps that Niki has covered in plastic and fabric Lei flowers; these lamps are lit up and are Niki's reminder that there are many Pacific Islanders that have lived many years in New Zealand, have jobs, children and families but are still termed 'migrants' instead of New Zealand citizens.

Education resource compiled by Kiri Hiha, Educator, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2012.  
Pataka Education programs are supported by LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom)  
and funded by The Ministry of Education



*Flyte* 2012 1200 x 1200mm acrylic sheet, stainless steel, aluminum

### 'Urban Navigation' series:

#### Symbolism

The navigation series is based around the symbols and signs that Pacific Island peoples have used over the generations to navigate their journeys. Niki has researched and used the traditional symbols that can be found in Polynesian tapa, tattoo and weaving traditions to make her own 'signs'.

Made from reflective roadwork material, these works show us how modern, urban dwelling Pacific Islanders use modern signs to navigate to work, family, food, home or wherever they need to go, instead of the traditional Pacific Island lifestyle where the vehicle for travel is the boat and the destination is signposted by natural elements such as wind, stars, sun, birds and the sea. The symbols for these natural elements can be found in many ancient tapa, tattoo and weaving traditions. Niki has cleverly drawn a line between how these may have changed because of the location of the culture and yet also how they have stayed the same because there will always be directions and needs to guide us through our everyday life.



*Soar* 2012 1200mm diameter acrylic sheet, aluminum and stainless steel



*In Some Sweet Flower* 2011 240mm x 100mm x 70mm granite, plastic, paper, lime wash

## Pre Visit Learning...

**Invite** a person from your community to talk about Lei, explain a Lei ceremony or show your class how to make a Lei.

**Find out** what a Lei or Ula are, where they come from and how they are used...

**Collect** some interesting or brightly colored everyday items that you would usually throw away. Clean and cut some symbols or shapes from these to make beads. You can use plastic bottles, bags, caps, food packages, cartons, material...anything! Thread these onto a string with a needle.

**Give** your Ula away or wear your Lei to celebrate an event at school! Here are some ideas; a prize giving, a parent/teacher evening, a choir or dance or music performance...

**Make** or Find some Lei flowers that you can break up or hang and cover an object, a corner or a location in your classroom with.

**Find** a place that you think is 'your place' at school and with a group of friends and create your own large scale art installation! Cover, hang or tie bright lei that you have made on the place or stick it to the furniture.

**Share** your installation with the school community and the world! Take photos and have an exhibition, make a blog or make invitations to a "Lei-a-fying" event.

**Discuss** the terms 'cross-cultural' and 'colonisation' and what you think they might mean.

## Post Visit Learning...

**Research** 5 symbols Pacific Island cultures use to communicate what is important to them.

**Draw** 10 symbols you use or read regularly

**Research** and list 3 types of methods Polynesian navigators used to tell them what direction they were going or how to get there and...

**Write** a list of ways you can tell where you are going, what to do or what it is you are looking for.

**Design** and make your own sign for navigating someone travelling around the school... Is it warning, protecting or leading? Who is it for? Use reflective or bright paper- put this somewhere where everybody can read it and watch to see if people use your symbol and if it is successful.

Education resource compiled by Kiri Hiha, Educator, Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, 2012.

Pataka Education programs are supported by LEOTC (Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom) and funded by The Ministry of Education

## Teacher Resources:

### 'Ula Lei – Floral Garlands

In Polynesian cultures, a *lei* is something that is created by someone and given to another with the intent to decorate that person for an emotional reason—usually as a sign of affection. Common reasons include greeting, farewell, affection or love, friendship, appreciation, congratulation, recognition, or to otherwise draw attention to the recipient.



The most popular concept of a *lei* in Hawaiian culture is a wreath of flowers draped around the neck presented upon arriving or leaving as a symbol of affection. This concept was popularised through tourism between the Hawaiian Islands and the continental United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Samoa, a similar garland is called an '*ula*'. '*Ula*' (necklaces) were made from a variety of natural products that included fresh leaves, scented flowers, fruit, seeds, shells and whale's teeth. Most are still commonly used today. Threaded together in various combinations, '*ula*' are worn for festive occasions and given as gifts to arriving and departing guests.

The whale-tooth necklace is the most valued of Samoan necklaces and is traditionally worn only by chiefs and their offspring. Historically, the '*ula lei (ula nifo)*' were a symbol of status and wealth. Made from the teeth of the sperm whale, they were split and ground down into curved and pointed pendants. From there, they were smoothed and polished, threaded onto a cord and worn around the neck. '*Ula fala*' made from dried and painted pandanus seeds are worn by orator chiefs.

'Ula lei may be open or closed, depending on the circumstance. They should never be thrown away casually as a lei represents love, and to throw one away represents throwing away the love of the giver. Traditionally they should be returned to the place they were gathered, or if that is not possible, they should be returned to the earth by hanging in a tree, burying, or burning.

'Ula were made customarily from natural resources such as frangipani (plumeria blossoms), hibiscus, pandanus seeds, kukui nuts, banana leaves. More recently, and particularly in urban contexts, plastic flowers are used as well as ribbons, lollies and chocolates. This adaptation from an island-based lifestyle is an important feature of the reconfiguration of Samoan culture here in Aotearoa New Zealand.





'Ula materials clockwise: frangipani, hibiscus, pandanus seeds (dried and painted), lollies, kukui nuts, pandanus (fresh)



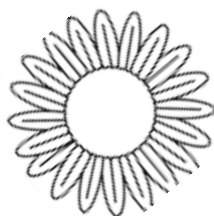
## DRAW YOUR OWN LEI!

1. Collect some images of or a bunch of real flowers that you would like to use in your Lei.
2. Use observational drawing skills to draw the flowers; use Line, Tone, Colour and Texture to record the outline, the colour and the details of your flowers.
3. Carefully cut these out and arrange these equal spaces apart around the paper Lei outline. Glue them to the page.
4. In the spaces between the flowers glue materials along your Lei, create a repeating pattern of your choice. You could use glitter, sequins, fabric, colored paper, beads, found or recycled objects, plastic bags or tissue paper. Try to use different textures to create contrast between the different materials and try to create a fixed pattern in your Lei.
5. Cut out the space inside your Lei to create a neck piece and wear it, give it, receive it or hang it!

Try drawing these flowers for your own Lei!



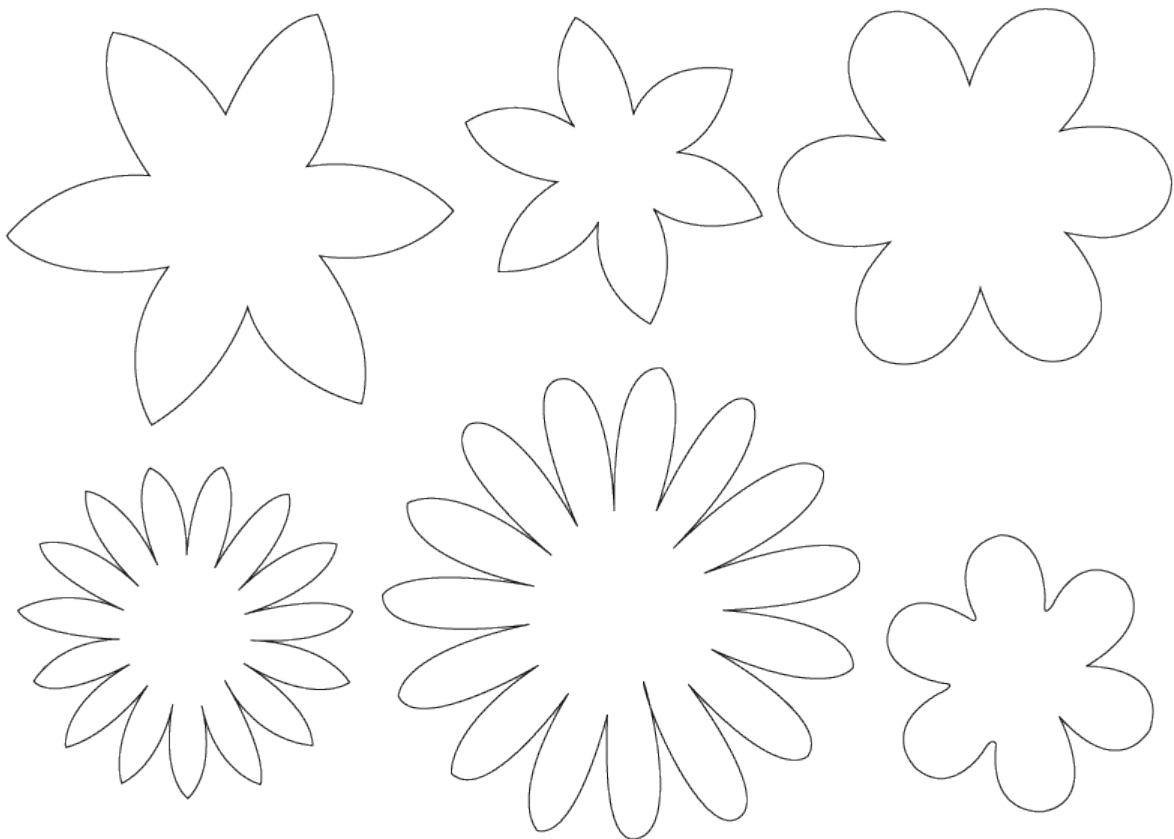
Cut up lots of different coloured and textured materials and collage over these flowers to add to your lei!



## SCULPT YOUR OWN LEI!






1. Print out the flower templates from below onto coloured card and cut these out to use later or draw your own flower shapes and turn these into templates
2. Collect lots of recycled flat materials that are colourful and you can cut up, like plastic bags, juice cartons, plastic milk bottles, chippie packets or fabric! Clean and dry them so you can use them. Cut up lots of different coloured straws to roughly the same length.
3. Trace around your flower shapes onto your recycled materials and cut out your new flower!-.
4. Use a needle and a thread or a hole punch and thread your straws and flowers together
5. Try layering your flowers together to create a really interesting three dimensional pattern or space your straws in between your flowers to break them up



## Vocabulary Activity: "Call My Bluff"

1. Put students into groups and give each group a different word. You can use the images with these words if you are introducing vocabulary, or not if you wish to make it more of a challenge.
2. Ask each group to compose four different "definitions" of the word- one that is correct and three that are incorrect.
3. Each group then presents their four definitions of the word to the class and the other groups must decide which the real definition is.

Word	Suggestions For Definitions- Students should think up their own correct definitions so the game is more challenging for the 'guessers'	Image Clues
Navigation	How a person plans and finds a way to their destination.	  
Culture	A group of people that have developed their own way of life.	
Symbol	A picture that has a meaning.	
Pattern	When you repeat, repeat, rotate or transform something	
Lei	A gift that you create for someone	
Assemblage	A piece of art that is made from many parts	
Adornment	Something that you can wear that is precious.	