

WHATU MARAMA

Niho Whatu

Kaupapa Matua

Niho Taniwha (teeth of the taniwha), is often presented as a series of triangles, used in Māori tukutuku panels, woven kete, and carvings. Niho Taniwha is a symbol of guardianship, trust and protection. In some tribal areas niho taniwha is connected to the Tohorā (whale) and the Mako (shark) and were held in high regard as the deities of the sea. Rangatira (high born chiefs) wore niho as adornment to denote their chiefly lineage and status within a tribe.

Niho Whatu encourages class or school collaborations where by individual works will be joined to fabricate the sculptural installation representing a kaitiaki taniwha. This taniwha installation will be made by multiple niho whatu in celebration to the multiple layers of culture, heritage, tangata whenua, kaitiakitanga and Te Taiao.

Papamahi Activity

Design and whatu (weave) your Niho (tooth) that reflects your identity 'Ko wai āhau', your connection to the wai (water) and whenua (land). Express your understanding of a taniwha kaitiaki, their place of importance and protection within your natural environment - Te Taiao.

Ko wai āhau?

- Optimistic.
- Realistic.
- Beach.

Taniwha:

- Childhood spirit
- Ancestor
- Mystical
- Spiritual
- Danger
- Guardian/Protector

Found? (our environment):

- Beach - Ocean - Every where
- Protecting/Guarding
- Signifying

Superpowers?

- Invisibly = sense it but can't see it.
- Telepathy
- Telekinesis.

Design challenge:

Design and create your own Niho Taniwha that reflects you and your spaces of protection within Te Taiao.

Task 01: Brainstorm

Get into groups of 2 to 4 students to brainstorm ideas and thoughts on paper about Taniwha. Create a discussion with the students around Taniwha exploring questions such as:

What is a Taniwha?

Do you know of one?

Why do they exist?

Name or describe two taniwha that protect the people or places.

What are its super powers, characteristics, form, skin and name?

Task 02: Concept Drawing

Choose 4 keywords from your brainstorm and write these keywords beneath the triangles template on the worksheet. Using colour pens create 4 line drawing designs that narrate a story about you and your kaitiaki taniwha.

Eg. Your special tohu (symbol), family, river, mountain, sky, land, sea, forest, strength, protection, symbols of your environment.

Note: Draw 2-6 lines per triangle template keeping each design really simple. Draw straight lines, dot to dot on the templates to create linear patterns, parallel, vertical, horizontal, diagonal lines and shapes. Use 2-3 colours to represent ideas too.

Keywords: Ocean

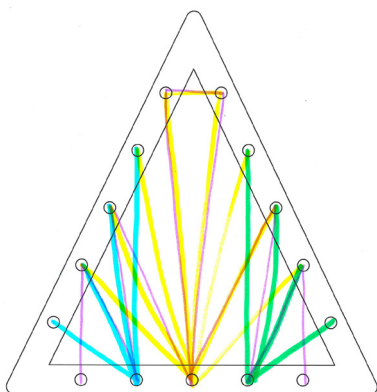
Keywords: Forest

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Papamahi Activity

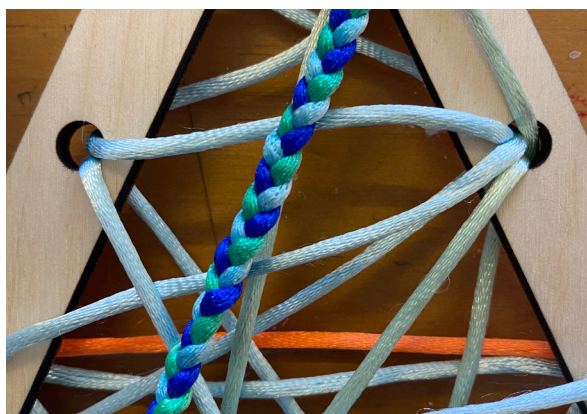
Niho Whatu

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Task 03: Final Niho Whatu Design

Take all 4 designs and draw each design in a layered fashion onto your final Niho Whatu template. Write in your own words what your Niho Whatu represents, including the messages and ideas you are weaving into it. (Approx. 100-150 words).



Task 04: Whiri and Pona | Plaits and Knots

Practice some plaiting or braiding techniques using coloured aho (strings) to add unique patterns to your niho whatu design. Knots on a string can say many things like how old you are, how many people are in your family or even morse code. Add knots to your Niho Whatu to convey your message,



Task 05: Niho Whatu

Using your final Niho Whatu design showing your 4 layered string concepts, your choice of string colours and practiced whiri and pona; compose all of the ideas and techniques to whatu (weave) your special Niho Whatu. A wooden frame will be provided by ĀKAU. String options provided by teachers. With your papamahi packs ĀKAU has provided a special aho to weave through your niho. This is the aho whiri tangata, the connector thread, that will unify all niho whatu together. Use other colours or textures as desired.

Take progress photos and a fun photo with your finished Niho Whatu and upload it on the ĀKAU Website!

<https://akau.co.nz/kete/whatu-marama-2023#miharo>

Learning Outcomes

This papamahi (workshop) encourages students to explore 'Ko Wai Ahau - Who am I?' and 'Te Taiao - the environment'. Taitamariki will have the opportunity to experience the process of creativity and design to empower them to express a sense of identity and self-determination.

Tangible Outcomes:

- 1x A3 Brainstorm page about Kaitiaki Taniwha.
- 1x A3 Concept drawing page of 4 triangles.
- 1x A3 Final Niho Whatu design.
- Thread samples of whiri and pona made by students.
- 1x Small Niho Whatu - small frame woven by student (koha to keep)
- 1x Large Niho Whatu - large frame woven by student (Return to ĀKAU for exhibition)

Materials:

- A3 Paper.
- A3 Concept drawing template.
- A3 Final niho whatu template.
- Pencils.
- Colour felt pens.
- Plastic needles or hair pins.
- Coloured cord, string or wool:
 - 4mm Chinese knot, silk satin sord.
 - 4mm Embroidery threads.
 - 4mm Wool yarn, 4-6 ply.
 - Natural jute thread.
- Small wooden niho test frame.
- Large wooden niho frame for Taniwha Kaitiaki installation.

Kaiako Notes:

Talk about some of the taniwha in books written by Robyn Kahukiwa.

Show students how to use a plastic needle or hair pins to help weave the threads through the holes to make lines, patterns, and shapes.

Remind students to leave the three corner holes on each frame for ĀKAU connectors to join all niho whatu frames during the installation at Waitangi in 2024.

Advanced students can weave threads through their existing layered designs adding their own creative weave of expression!