



Art Outreach Program

Projects & Lesson Plan #2 Niki's Letters & Dear Diary Prints

1ST-6TH GRADE: PRINTMAKING AND CUSTOM STATIONARY PROJECT

LESSON OVERVIEW:

Students will learn about Niki de Saint Phalle's Personal & Artistic Biography, highlighting some of her major works and relationships as an artist. Students will also learn about the mediums of printmaking, sculpting, assemblage, and performance art, more specifically the meaning of editions, and large production of art with printmaking. Students will learn the art of letter writing through Niki de Saint Phalle's personal correspondence. Students will analyze self-image, self-perception and discuss their personal impact on the world around them.

ART VOCABULARY:

Contour Lines: The "outlines" of an image.

Editions: Multiple art pieces that are exactly alike but limited to a certain number of replicas.

Nana: Is a way to say "girl" or "chick" in French

New Realism: a French artist movement founded in 1960 by art critic Pierre Restany and painter Yves Klein, which made extensive use of collage and assemblage as well as painting

Outsider Art: art that is made by artists that have no formal training at an art academy.

Printmaking: medium of art that uses the negative and positive space to create an image by relief, or engraving.

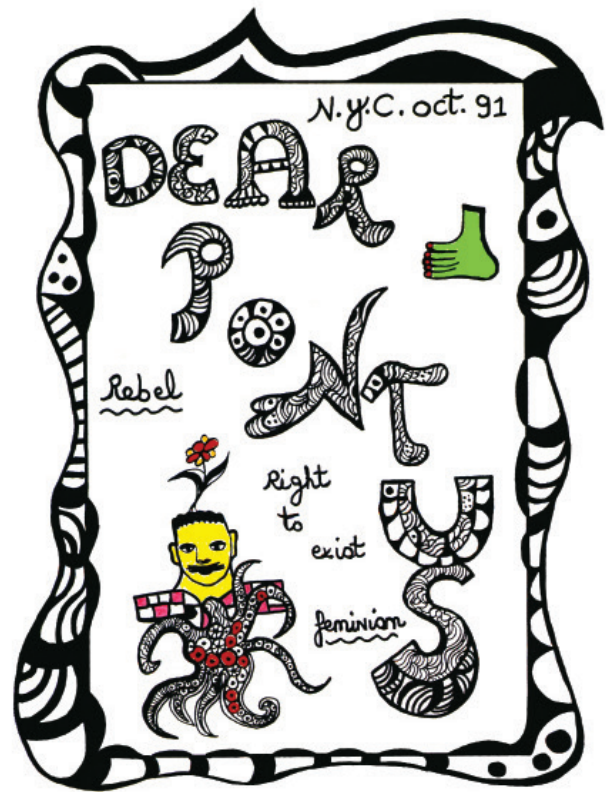
Positive/Negative Space: Positive space is occupied, Negative space is empty

Relief Printing: a process consisting of cutting or etching a printing surface in such a way that all that remains of the original surface is the design to be printed

Symbol: something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Students will learn the basics of printmaking, more specifically Block Printing, and how all letters and images will be reversed. They will learn the art of letter writing, as well learning the coexistence of text in or as art work.



Niki de Saint Phalle- *Dear Pontus* 1991

Notice how the artist created a frame around her correspondence text, get creative with your printmaking skills.

LEARN ABOUT NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

Background:

• Niki de Saint Phalle, born Catherine Marie Agnès Fal de Saint Phalle on October 29th 1930, was a Franco-American Artist. She lived in many places such as New York, Paris, Tuscany, and San Diego! She did not go to art school and was not professionally trained, that is why her art works is often known as "outsider art." Her works are found in many countries, such as Germany, France, the US, Japan, Italy, Sweden, and Taiwan. She is a world-renowned artist that has had many exhibitions in her lifetime and continues to after her death.

Art in the making:

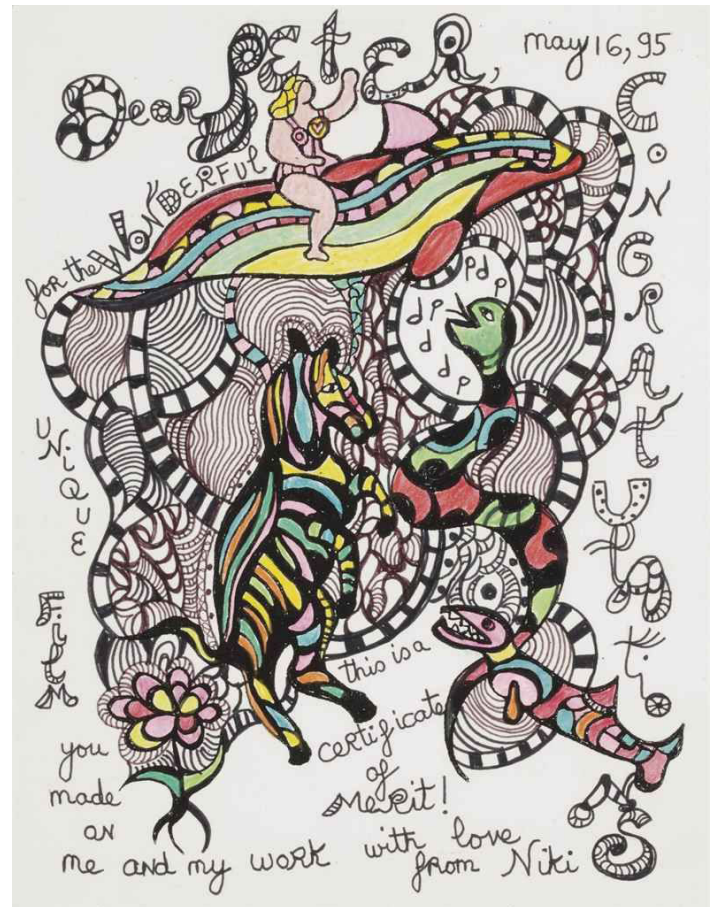
• Throughout her life Niki worked with many mediums. Paint, stickers, found objects, Resins, clay, plaster, for sculptures, as well as ceramic tiles, and stones.

• Niki created, paintings, lithographs, assemblages, sculptures, houses, and sculpture gardens.

• Niki also has many prints and serigraphs in her collection of works, some of them were made for the books she wrote and illustrated, and some were made because this is another medium for artists to produce work that can be made into multiples! Niki used her own money to make some of her largest projects, so sometimes selling prints and multiples, helped her finance her undertakings.

• Niki had many friends with whom she kept a correspondence with. She wrote letters in personalized stationary, she drew pictures of things she likes or things that were relate to the person she was writing to, or what she was writing about. And placed her own stickers on pages that she would then xerox and write notes or letters.

• In the United States, Niki made a sculpture garden. Located in Escondido, Queen Califia's Magic Circle is filled with totems covered in Mosaics of mirrors, had made tiles and locally sourced stones. This was a gift to the people of



Niki de Saint Phalle- *Dear Peter* 1995

Notice how the artist fills the page with a large centered image and writes the text around the image. Don't forget to date and sign your letter!

California, since she lived in La Jolla from 1994 until her death in 2002. In this sculpture garden, Niki has made many totems that are meant to honor Queen Califia, (The mythic Goddess of the lands of California).

• Here are examples of some of the reoccurring animals in the artists work: Birds, Reptiles (Dragon, Alligator, Snakes) Rhinos, Cats, Horses

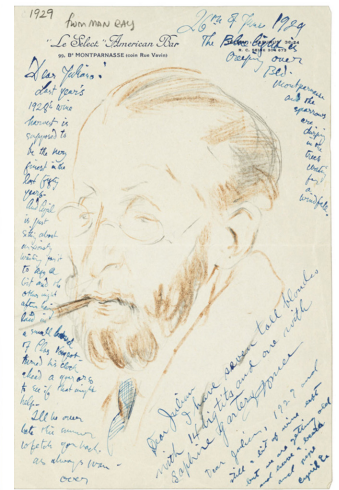
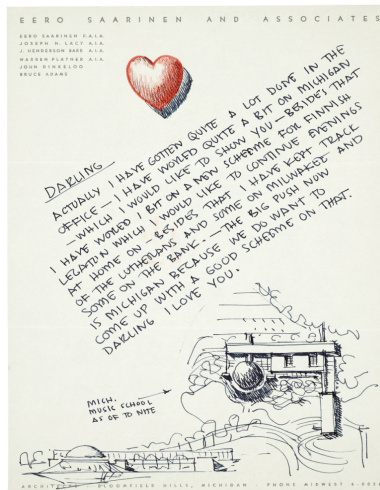
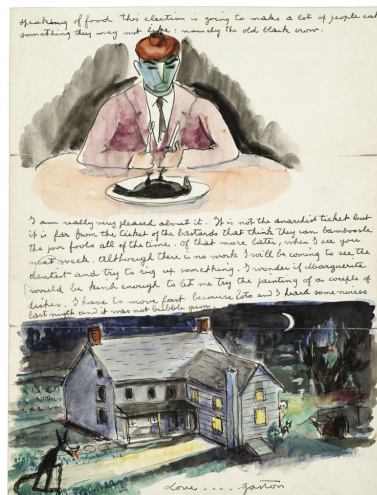
• Have you seen any of Niki's sculptures around San Diego?

- o Waterfront Park
- o Liberty Station (2019)
- o La Jolla
- o UCSD
- o Escondido

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

- What are examples of symbols we see everyday that convey a meaning?
 - X (crossing), Heart (love), Star, Infinity Symbol, Peace sign, Emojis.
- What symbol do you resonate with? What is a symbol that you would relate yourself with?
 - I would relate myself to an icon of glasses because I wear glasses, or an Elephant because it is my favorite animal.
- When corresponding with someone, what symbols would you draw in your letter?
 - Something you are talking about? (your favorite toy/gadget, your favorite game)
 - A picture that represents where you are writing from? (city, museum, park)
 - A picture of something the person you are writing to likes?
- What is a symbol you can incorporate in all of your letters?
 - Think of a universal symbol for your close friends and family, or a symbol that represents you the best. (kind of like a signature, be creative!)
- Why are hand written notes and letters important?
 - They are almost like gifts to the people you write them too because they can hold on to it for as long as they want.
- What is the difference between a note versus a text message?
 - Notes have your personal touch, whether it is your handwriting, your signature, or drawings you have included in it
- What importance do we put on birthday cards that is not translated via email?
 - We choose cards that have pictures representing the holiday, and even though it comes with a greeting, we can always add more to it and sign it, and the person that receives it will put it up on a shelf or on their fridge to look at it. (Emails rarely get printed out and framed!)
- How can letter writing take the form of art?
 - By taking the time to write/draw and curate your message to your friend, or family.
 - By making it into a book like Niki did.

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE ARTIST EXAMPLES FOR FURTHER INSPIRATION ON COMPOSITION



MATERIALS:

- Styrofoam sheets
- Pencil
- Brayer
- Wood Blocks
- Printmaking Ink
- Paper plate/acrylic surface
- Color Or White Paper
- Newsprint
- White Paper (sketch)
- Color Pencils (sketch)

PROJECT:

- Students will sketch an image relevant to what their letter will be about with inspiration from their own life and preferences, from correspondence illustrations, and from her drawings used for her books and print series. Using paper and color pencils to sketch.

- It is important to remember to draw big, too many small details can get lost when creating the relief print.

- Students will transfer sketch or sketches onto news print and place above styrofoam sheet.

- Students use a semi dull pencil to imprint the image onto the styrofoam sheet without puncturing the foam sheet.

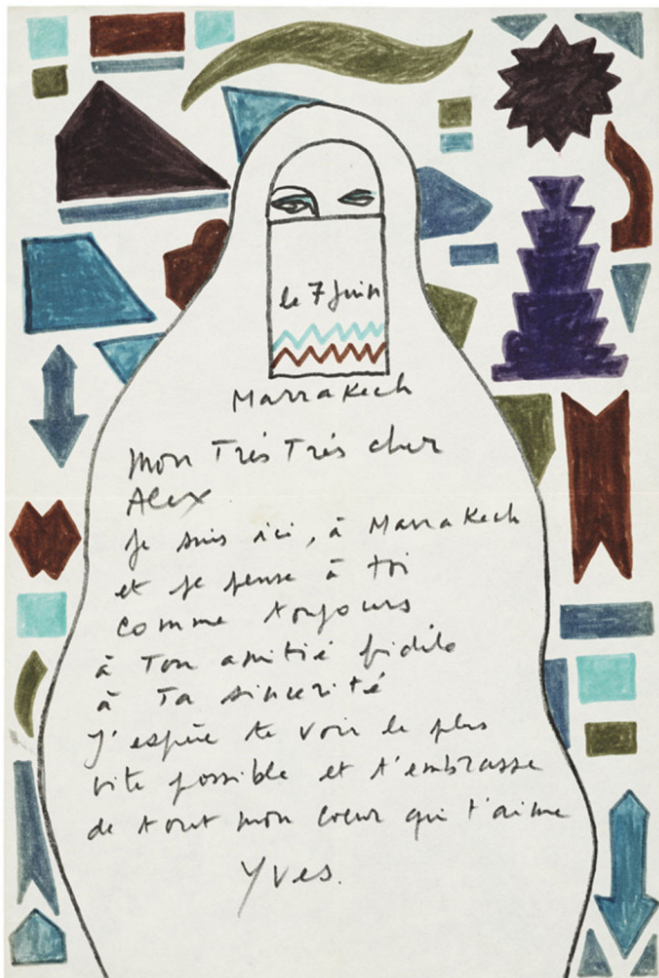
- Instructor will inspect the styrofoam sheet to make sure indentations are deep enough.

- Students will then roll ink onto the sheet using printmaking ink and a brayer, or use an ink-pad to add ink to their sheet.

- Students will line up a tester sheet of newsprint over the relief print, cover it with another newsprint and press down with wood blocks/ or heavy books to emulate woodblock printing technique. If any detail is missing or grooves need to be deeper now is the chance to do so.

- Students can then make various prints with different colored ink or different colored paper. And number editions! Artists can create personal stationary with their prints, since the styrofoam prints last shorter than a stamps, students can digitize these prints, to then print on custom stationary. Much like Niki did with her xerox drawings.

- Have students write a letter to a friend or family member. It can be a short note or a long letter, but the objective is to fill the letter, with a mixture of prints, drawings and writing.



STUDENT SAMPLES

