

About the Artist: Ani O'Neill

Ani O'Neill's art practice spans craft, installation, object making, and performance. Born in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, in 1971, Ani graduated from Auckland University's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1994. Her early sculptural artworks delved deeply into her experience as an "Urban Pacific Islander." This was inspired by her maternal grandmother's traditions based on Cook Islands material and ceremonial culture and firmly nestled—somewhat comfortably—into the big-cityscape of Ponsonby, Auckland. Her work continues to reaffirm the cultural importance of these handcraft and survival skills to New Zealand and international audiences. Her inclusion in such major exhibitions as "The Nervous System" (1995), "Telecom Prospect" (2001), "Bottled Ocean" (1995), the Second Asia Pacific Triennial (1996), and the Biennale of Sydney (1998) contributed to the meteoric rise in her international profile and status as one of New Zealand's bright art talents. Ani has collaborated with many artists in festival performances, presentations, interactive exhibition installations, and workshops—independently and as a member of Pacific Sisters. She has participated in numerous exhibitions and residencies throughout New Zealand, the Pacific, Australia, Europe, and the United States. Since 2008, she has been based in her mother's homeland, Rarotonga, working as an art teacher at Tereora College. Ani and her husband, Croc, a tatau artist, are currently building a home in Muri, Rarotonga. Together they hope to share this space with visiting artists from the wider Pacific and the world, in a very relaxed residency program: BYO hammock.



Photo courtesy of Waikato
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Te Whare Taonga o Waikato

The art featured in this issue can be viewed in full color in the online version of The Contemporary Pacific via Project MUSE.



Dancer of the Year 2011. Solo exhibition by Ani O'Neill. 2011.
Installation included sculptural objects, opening night performance,
short documentary DVD, costume. Photos by Vinesh Kumaran. Images
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Auckland, New Zealand.

A lifelong love of Cook Islands dance and the desire (and fear) to enter
a national dance competition to prove this skill cumulated in a solo
exhibition that both acted out the fantasy and paid tribute to those
who dance.