Return to Self

A Collection by Niki Lopez

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CURATORIAL NARRATIVE

Return to Self brings together a cross-section of works created between 2009 and 2024, offering a glimpse across fifteen years of Niki Lopez's evolving practice. Rather than originating as a single body of work, these pieces reveal recurring threads that have continued to surface over time: identity, ancestry, the body, spirituality, healing, protection, self-definition and transformation.

Across these works, interdisciplinary artist and social practitioner Niki Lopez explores ancestry, spirituality, the body, protection, transformation and inner knowing.

Through mixed media, sculptural faces, cowrie shells, vibrant color and recurring symbols of the sacred, Lopez considers healing as both an inward journey and a remembering. The works ask us to slow down, listen to what the body carries, honor those who came before us and reconnect with the parts of ourselves that can become buried beneath survival, expectation and the noise of everyday life.

Presented within the healing space of Longville Wellness, Return to Self creates a natural conversation between art and wellness. Here, healing is not presented as a destination or a state of perfection. It can be reflection. Rest. Release. Reconnection. Ancestral memory. Trusting the wisdom already living within us.

SELECT WORKS

Feral Feminine No. 6
2019
26" × 38"
Photography

$800

Imagine a world where we control our narrative and what we choose to share with the world. By removing objectifying gazes, we rule our expressive space and take back our raw, divine, feminine, feral energy, and power!

Imani
2024
24" × 36" × 3"
Mixed media: acrylic, plaster, cowrie shells on canvas

$6,300

Imani is a dynamic mixed media piece inspired by the wisdom of The Hermit tarot card and the Yoruba concept of "Ori," representing both the “head” and the “inner guide.” The gold-gilded locs symbolize a connection to the Ori and serve as an antenna to the heavens, embodying divinity, spiritual wealth, and abundance. Cowrie shells represent protection, good luck, and communication with the Orishas and ancestors. Influenced by Eshu or Elegba, the messenger and guardian of doorways, Imani reflects the journey of introspection, spiritual enlightenment, and the manifestation of one's destiny.

SELECT WORKS

The Guardian II
2023
6" × 12" × 1"
Acrylic on plaster,
cowrie shells, wood

$800

The Guardian II is a powerful mixed-media sculpture symbolizing self-healing and introspection. The plaster face mask features tribal markings and a sacred spiral on the third eye, representing spiritual awareness and meditation. Cowrie shells encircle the mask, evoking their sacred role in Yoruba practices as a connection to ancestors and the divine. The piece embodies themes of inner reflection, spiritual connection, and self-love, inviting viewers to explore their own journeys of healing.

Madre Antigua II
2024
5" × 7" × 1½"
Acrylic on plaster,
cowrie shells, wood

$300

Madre Antigua, or “Ancient Mother,” honors Niki Lopez’s Latina and Caribbean roots, drawing inspiration from Panama, Cuba, and Jamaica. At its center is the Egungun Faces of Ancestors sculpture, connecting ancestry, healing, and guardianship.

Adorned with cowrie shells, symbols of protection, abundance, and communication with the Orishas, the work bridges past and future while inviting reflection on heritage, spirituality, and our connection to those who came before us.

SELECT WORKS

Still Beautiful
2009
20"x24"
Acrylic

$2,000

Oftentimes, certain images are covered up in shame and embarrassment. Still Beautiful represents the beauty, strength, power, and courage it takes to go through everything associated with breast cancer. There is still life—both in the women who survived it and in the families that keep those who have passed away alive in their memories. This makes a great gift for yourself or someone you know who wants to honor the women who have gone through this, as well as bring awareness to the disease.

"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars." -Kahlil Gibran

Travels
2010
30" × 15"
Acrylic

$1,000

Travels is an intuitive abstract painting created through movement, color, rhythm, and gesture rather than a predetermined narrative. Its swirling forms and layered marks suggest motion, energy, transition, and the feeling of moving through inner and outer landscapes.

Art is not simply something I make; it is a way I witness, process, connect, and create spaces where others may do the same.

— Niki Lopez

Niki Lopez

Artist, Social Practitioner & Founder of What's Your Elephant

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