

Oh My Goddess!

Ola Ko'u Akua Wahine!

Project Concept The creation of four ground breaking and epic new costumes by IONA Artistic Director Cheryl Flaharty inspired by the Hawaiian goddesses Pele, Hi'iaka, Poli'ahu, and Nāmaka. The new pieces will top IONA's existing collection of amazing costumes in their scale, design, and use of materials. Rooted in antiquity but realized as contemporary works of art, they will be brought to life by the IONA dancers at local and visitor events beginning in 2020 and entered into New Zealand's World of Wearable Art competition in 2021.

Their presence demonstrates the power, beauty, and resilience of the awakened feminine—embodying the spirit of the current women's movement. They are a reminder of our intricate kinship with our environment and the need to nurture and protect our āina. Oh My Goddess! collaborators include local fashion designer Kini Zamora and photographer Kim Taylor Reece, who will create a book featuring the goddesses in their respective environments (lava, 'ōhi'a forest, ocean, and Mauna Kea). The project will have a substantial impact on the visitor industry as well as the local fashion, costume design, and performing arts fields, while captivating thousands of enthusiasts and patrons of the arts.



Pele Hawaii's best known and most revered goddess, Pele, dwells on the big island of Hawai'i in the Kilauea volcano. Her power is unmatched; her force at once destructive and life-giving. Her costume is inspired by the lava itself in all of its forms as well as the many legends in which Pele shape-shifts between seductress and crone. Materials include black velvet and lace, red/orange satin and chiffon, LED lights and wires, and plastic. Ideally, Pele will have a mini fogger under her dress and smoke will rise out of the lace.



Poli'ahu Often seen as Pele's rival, Poli'ahu dwells on the top of Mauna Kea amidst the ice and snow. While Pele would disagree, Poli'ahu is said to be the most beautiful goddess of Hawai'i. Her costume is a mix of jeweled midnight blue and white velvets, rhinestones, wire, and floating pearls that depict her surrounding snow. She is elegant, all powerful, stunning, soft, and serene – mixed with a bit of sharp ice (she has a habit of freezing her enemies).



Nāmaka Goddess of the sea, Nāmaka is the powerful sister of Pele who sends tidal waves to destroy Pele's lands and homes. Her costume is inspired by the many layers and colors of water that fill the oceans surrounding the islands. She is within the sea – continually moving, swirling, and flowing. Materials include turquoise, gold, and silver brocade, silk organza in shades of blue, lace, rhinestones, boning, plastic, and wire.



Hi'iaka Pele's younger sister, Hi'iaka represents the life force that is born out of Pele. Hi'iaka lives in a grove of lehua trees which are sacred to her and she spends her days dancing with the forest spirits. Inspired by her forest, Hi'iaka's costume is a mix of greens and yellows, brown, and red – depicting the flora and fauna that first grows out of the lava. Materials include silk dupioni, velvet and taffeta, yarns, satin, wire and boning, and plastic. She is the forest brought to life before our eyes.

Contributions in support of Oh My Goddess! / Ola Ko'u Akua Wahine! can be made to:
Nova Arts Foundation PO Box 670 Kailua, HI 96734, or online at:

<https://nova-arts-foundation.donortools.com/my/funds/78274-Oh-My-Goddess-Oh-La-Ko-u-Akua->