



4A KIDS Spring 2020 – this is the third 4A KIDS kit!



[nathanbeard.org](http://nathanbeard.org)

**Nathan Beard** is a Perth-based artist who uses various mediums such as photography and sculpture to unpack the influences of his Thai-Australian heritage.



[fredachiu.com](http://fredachiu.com)

**Freda Chiu** is a Sydney-based freelance illustrator and educator at The University of Technology Sydney.

She is inspired by her love of children's picture books, indie comics, horror movies and good stories.



[shireentaweel.com](http://shireentaweel.com)

**Shireen Taweel** is a multimedia installation artist whose work explores her cultural heritage, knowledge and identity.

4A KIDS is a 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art project connecting kids with contemporary Asian and Asian Australian contemporary art, culture and ideas. All activities are commissioned from artists and each 4A KIDS kit has activities for kids ranging from 5-17 (and beyond!) Want more? Visit [4a.com.au](http://4a.com.au)

All artworks and images in 4A KIDS are featured courtesy of the artists, with additional imagery provided under creative commons. 4A KIDS is for educational use only and is a free product produced by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Visit [4a.com.au](http://4a.com.au) to find more 4A KIDS, art and stories. Shireen Taweel's profile picture is by Jacquie Manning.



## Flower Fingernail Dance with Nathan Beard



My recent body of work **'White Gilt'** took inspiration from the various hand gestures found in a wide range of influences found throughout Thai culture. This work highlights particular memories of my mum looking at my hands when I was little, and telling me that I'd make a good Thai dancer. I think a lot about how growing up in Australia meant that I never had the opportunity to test her theory out.



Image: Nathan Beard, Leaf Arrangement (2019)



Image: Nathan Beard, White Gilt (2019)

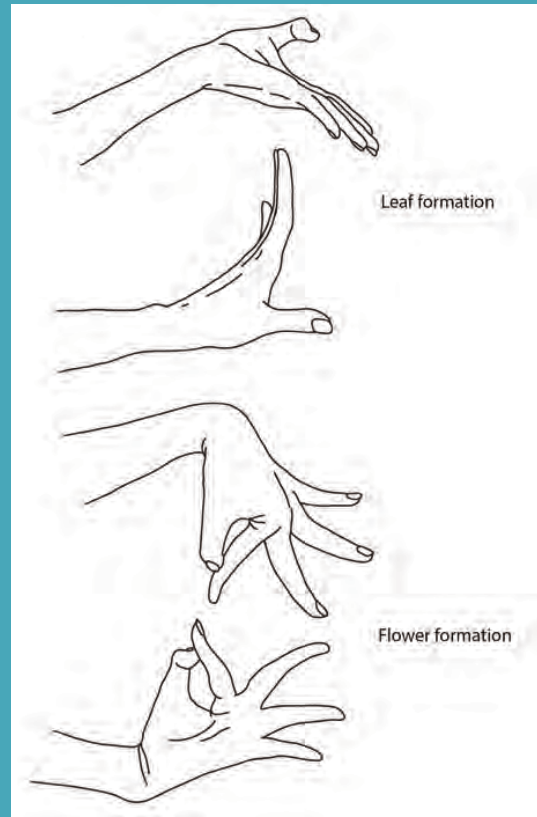


# Flower Fingernail Dance

with Nathan Beard

In traditional Thai dance there are very specific hand positions and movements which carry a range of symbolic meanings, such as flowers, fruits or leaves. The slowness and gracefulness of these hand movements is very important to this traditional performance, so strong and flexible hands and fingers are seen as a valuable asset for dancers to possess.

In a traditional '**fingernail dance**' called **Fawn Lep**, performers will wear brass finger extensions that specifically enhance the length and shape of their hands in order to make them appear more graceful.



With these photographs of my hands, I've taken the inspiration from these brass finger extensions and used custom fake acrylic nails instead to extend the natural curve and grace of my fingers as I assume these traditional hand positions.

# Flower Fingernail Dance

with Nathan Beard

This activity will go through the steps you can take at home to create your own press-on nails inspired by my work and using common household materials.

## Step 1

For this demonstration all you'll need is paper, coloured pencils, scissors and double-sided tape.

For each of my hands I'll need half a piece of plain A4 paper, and make sure you're repeating each step for both hands.

### What you'll need

Paper  
Coloured pencils or acrylic paint  
Scissors  
Double-sided Tape  
1/2 piece of plain A4 paper for each hand

Let's get started!



Ready?  
Let's make!



# Flower Fingernail Dance

with Nathan Beard

## Step 2

Use your own fingernails as a guide for the width of your press-on nails, draw a rough leaf or petal like shape that extends out from this.

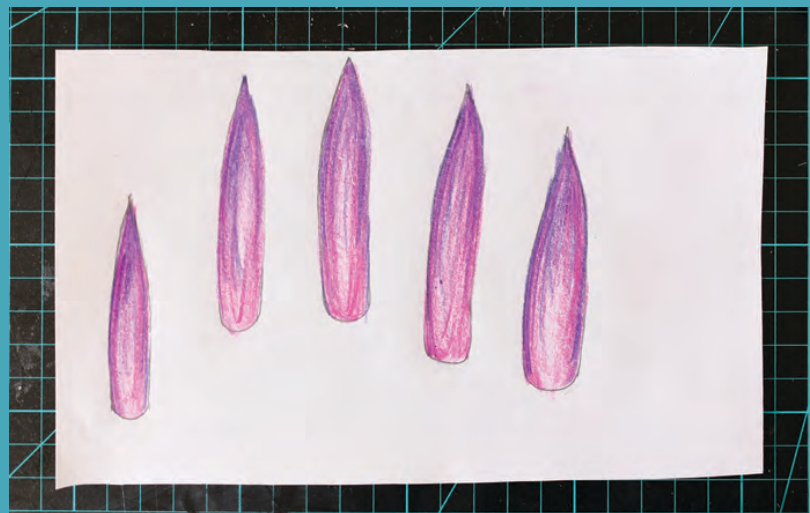
These shapes you've drawn will be the fake nails for your hand. It doesn't need to be perfect because you'll have further opportunities to clean up the shape when you colour the nails in and cut them out.



Make sure the base of each shape is a rounded convex line as this will be the base of your nail!

## Step 3

Using colour pencils or acrylic paints, fill in the colour and any pattern for your paper manicure. Mine is loosely inspired by the purple petals of the fake orchids I have in my studio. Any craft materials should work for this step as long as it doesn't oversaturate the paper and cause it to warp.



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with Nathan Beard

## Step 4

Use your scissors to carefully cut out each of these shapes and remember the order these will be going onto your fingers. On fake acrylic nails there is a tiny number under the tip of each one so you know the order they're meant to go on, so this could be a useful extra step to take!



## Step 5

Flip each nail over and colour it in so that the bottom side of your nail is filled in and won't appear blank. Keep these newly coloured in sides upright so you know which side is being attached to your hands.



**TIP!**

Make sure to  
colour both sides  
of the  
paper nail



# Flower Fingernail Dance

with Nathan Beard

## Step 6

Carefully place a tab of double sided tape the length of your own nail on the base of the paper one. It doesn't matter if it overlaps or overhangs if you need to use a couple tabs of tape, because you can carefully trim off any excess that hangs over the edge.



## Step 7

Flip the nail over and firmly press where the tab of tape is over your own nail. Make sure your own nails aren't wet or greasy to make sure the tape sticks more cleanly. As I press on each nail I like to curl up the tip so that it looks like the tapered end of a Thai dancer's brass finger extension.





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## Step 8

Once all the nails are in place see if you can replicate any of the dance positions I've highlighted in my work. Remember to keep flexible and graceful curves in your hands, wrists and fingers!



Look to different plants & flowers around your home or in your garden as a starting point.

You can let your imagination run free when it comes to the shape, length and decoration of these nails.

You could use the shapes of leaves or petals to experiment with the shapes of your paper nails and the way you decorate or pattern them.

You could even experiment with different textures of papers and paper-like materials such as foil, cellophane and tissue paper, or even magazine and newspaper clippings.

If you're self-conscious about your drawing skills you could get creative and print out pictures of your favourite plants and flowers. You could cut these petals and leaves out for you to use as a starter for your false paper nails.

# Flower Fingernail Dance

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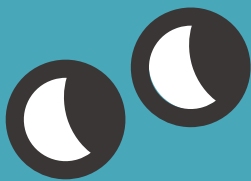
Try decorating the tops of your nails with glued on materials like sequins or glitter or beads for an extra challenge.



With some of my own nails I've made I've used Swarovski crystals and other found objects.

As long as the individual nails aren't too heavy you shouldn't have any trouble keeping this attached to your nail bed with double-sided tape.

The only limitation to this activity will be your imagination and gravity.



Thanks for hanging with me and 4A kids!

Nathan Beard

4A Kids is a project by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art In 2020.  
4A Kids is supported by the City of Sydney.

SUPPORTED BY  
**CITY OF SYDNEY** 



Thanks for having fun with 4A KIDS – see you next time  
[4a.com.au](http://4a.com.au)