



*A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC NONPROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION*



I was born in San Francisco in the early eighties and raised in a radical, artistic, and loving community. My father is a very imaginative contractor and draftsman and my mother is an artist, so my childhood was spent in her studio and in his garage exploring the many ways I could express myself creatively. When I was still young we moved to the small town of Fairfax in the county immediately north of San Francisco, and there I spent my time exploring the beautiful Northern California woods and beaches and painting. Fortunately my life continues to be oriented around creativity and a deep-seated appreciation for nature. I am also interested in sustainable food systems and seek to live in a more harmonious relationship with my environment.

At 18, I moved to from our quaint small alternative town to Brooklyn, New York, where I majored in Cultural Studies, and minored in Film, and Fine Arts at the New School University. During that time I left the country for a year to live in Cuba. I had fostered a desire to visit the island since my childhood. My father was a young teenager when his family moved from Chicago to Cuba. It was 1962, the first year of the US embargo against Cuba. His family lived on the island for over a decade. My father was deeply transformed by his experiences as a teenager in Cuba, and I grew up hearing stories about that remarkable time in his young life. I wished to know this place that had been so much apart of my childhood mythology, and so I spent a year living in Havana, satiating my curiosity and getting to know family and friends. Through a twist of fate, I met a group of artists, some of whom were part of the street theatre collective, "Giganteria Ambulante". These friends enriched my experience and helped make my time there sweet and meaningful. When I came back to the US, I eventually became acquainted with various people in the "Giganteria" extended Diaspora family, and thus, Felix came into my life.

Upon my graduation from the New School University I moved back to the SF Bay Area where I have had the privilege of teaching in a number of amazing community programs and educational institutions. I facilitated art groups for homeless and at-risk youth through DrawBridge organization for the Arts, and gave regular classes at the San Quentin Children's House, for kids whose families were visiting incarcerated relatives in the prison. Later, I worked as a coordinator for an urban youth employment program, gleaning and donating fruit by bike from volunteer residents in Oakland. We also toured urban farms with the teens exploring our food systems and aspiring healthy communities in the East Bay. In the last few years, I worked as an art group facilitator in a program called "Growing Great Families" in Richmond. The program was aimed towards underserved and struggling families and included people of all ages. The participants were divided into adult and teen support groups, followed by art sessions. We implemented curriculum that encouraged participants through creative expression and play to form closer bonds and open communicate with their family members and also investigate emotional territory explored in the family support sessions. I have also worked in many community schools facilitating classes in youth mural projects, papier-mâché puppetry, mask-making, preschool cognitive creative/motor skills development and inquiry based early childhood arts education, nature/garden/outdoor art classes, and so on. I am currently teaching intermittent 10-week sessions for a free Richmond preschool-arts program sponsored by the East Bay Center for Performing Arts.





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Working with any age-group in a creative context has always been a great inspiration in my own work, and also extremely rewarding. Unfortunately, our schools continue to see enrichment and art classes disappearing and many of the students I have worked with over the past 10 years, need more creative freedom but have little opportunity to express themselves imaginatively. I aspire for my classes to nourish the growth of our community's imagination and spontaneous creative playfulness, and I aim to continue this work for the rest of my life, both here and in Cuba.

BACCA's projects in Nuevo Mundo are exciting to me on many levels. The immeasurable possibilities for the projects and for the community we envision and for the Cuban communities we are currently collaborating with, will bring together many of the themes which have guided and inspired the itinerary of my life.

