

# CLAIMING FACE

## --Self-Empowerment through Self-Portraiture--

{ *It's not just art, it's a way of life!* }

with

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Rising from my personal life experience and my work with children and educators, CLAIMING FACE has developed into a philosophy and a practice with a purpose intended for everyone. It is for everyone because CLAIMING FACE is about claiming self. To this end, all intention is geared toward building the powerful link between creativity and our sense of self.

### Fundamental Philosophies:

❖ **Reflection** - Reflection is a vital experience for us from infancy on. It communicates to us that we belong and we are valued. However, due to multiple reasons (some of which are: *sexism, institutionalized racism, ageism, classism, body size, homophobia, etc...*) many people are not reflected in their environment. When we become aware of and acknowledge this, we open the door to create our own reflection.

❖ **Creativity** - We are born creative beings. This is an inherent aspect of being human and insures that we will expand and grow to embody our full individual potential in all areas of life.

❖ **Presence** - Presence, paying attention, witnessing, observing, mindfulness and awareness are all words from multiple disciplines that name the experience of bringing our consciousness to any experience. Practices and philosophies, some ancient and some cutting-edge, are coming into alignment around the fact that we affect what we observe.

### *TO CLAIM FACE:*

- 1. to recognize and assert one's place/face and inherent belonging in the world;*
- 2. To embrace and celebrate what one's face expresses, how it reflects one's life and historical context in relation to ethnicity, gender expression, individuality, selfhood and more;*
- 3. to declare and require in community the birthright to be exactly who one is inside and out;*
- 4. to know one's self inside and out.*



## Practice:

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- ❖ **Reflection** - We create our own reflection through a vast and diverse sense of self-portraiture.
- ❖ **Creativity** - By engaging with the creative force within each of us, we use art as a tool to create our own reflection. CLAIMING FACE focuses on art that is simple and successful and not focused on art skills because we are less concerned with the product and more attentive to the process and experience of creativity.
- ❖ **Presence** - Beginning with paying attention to one self enough to create a self-portrait, presence can be explored on multiple levels, ranging from the most immediate and superficial to deep practice. Presence is explored through philosophy, imagination, questioning, exercises and art projects through the curriculum.

## Purpose:

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- ❖ **Reflection** - When we are reflected and sense on a non-verbal level that we belong and are valued, we naturally attend to ourselves and our world with greater care. Creating our own reflection also helps us know ourselves more deeply and come “face to face” with who we really are. The more we know ourselves, the stronger our sense of self becomes which empowers us to live our lives to our best ability.
- ❖ **Creativity** - When we engage with our inherent creative nature and use it to more deeply know ourselves, we build the powerful link between creativity and our sense of self. This not only supports our ability to change ourselves, our lives and our world, but encourages higher thinking and more effective life skills.
- ❖ **Presence** - The more present we are with ourselves and in our life, the more awareness we bring to our endeavors and the stronger we are at affecting our lives.

### *UNIVERSAL REFLECTION:*

*Reflection is usually defined as an image or representation. Reflection becomes universal when it is not dependent on image, but on action between two or more people. For example, when the educator and the student both do the CLAIMING FACE projects, they create a Universal Reflection of each other both being engaged in the creative process.*



To accompany reflection, creativity, and presence are **THE 3 RULES:**

- ☞ **Rule #1: Everyone is an artist.**
- ☞ **Rule #2: There is never a right or wrong way to make art.**
- ☞ **Rule #3: Art is always an act of courage.**

{ CLAIMING FACE is not about art, although art is made.  
CLAIMING FACE is about life. }

