

# SWOON: ARTIST AS ACTIVIST

## GRADE LEVEL: 6-12

This lesson can be adapted for various grade levels



## OBJECTIVE

Inspired by Swoon's artwork, the students will design a stencil based on a cause they care about.

## VOCABULARY

Street Art  
Graffiti  
Collage  
Mixed Media  
Activism

## MATERIALS

Acrylic Sheets (cardstock can also be used)  
Permanent markers  
X-acto Knives and blades  
Cutting boards (or other suitable surface)  
Optional: acrylic paint, rollers and brushes, spray paint (can be trigger watercolor paint), scissors, paper and pencil for planning

## BEFOREHAND

Tour the Swoon exhibition at the CAC; discuss use of stencils in her process as well as how her artwork demonstrates her activism

## DISCUSSION

- What is street art? How does it differ from art usually found in museums or galleries?
- Share photos of Swoon's artwork.
  - How does her work compare to the street art you may have seen in your city?
- Why would a community benefit from activist artists?
- How can artists be activists?

## PROCEDURE

- Have the students begin by free-writing about causes they care about.
- Have students begin a design that represents this cause.
- Once the students have finalized a design, have them transfer that design onto the acrylic sheet or cardstock. Explain to the students that they are making a stencil and should consider this when transferring their design.
- After the design is completed, have the students use the x-acto knives to trim away where they want the pigment to show up
- Stencils can then be used to create a wall display (or individual works).
- Methods of painting can be watercolor spray paint, roller with acrylic, or foam brush with paint.
- Display the student's work on a wall or along the hallway to create a community collection of street art in your classroom/school.



## RESOURCES

<https://swoonstudio.org/>

<http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/exhibitions/2017/09/swoon>

<https://www.artsy.net/artist/swoon>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/arts/design/swoon-blurs-the-line-between-art-and-activism.html>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamlehrer/2016/02/13/new-york-street-and-installation-artist-swoon-uses-humanity-as-her-most-powerful-tool/#44c299f64c16>