

EDUCATOR GUIDE

SWOON

THE CANYON: 1999-2017, SEPTEMBER 22, 2017-FEBRUARY 25, 2018



ARTIST BIO



Born in 1977, New London, Connecticut; raised in Daytona Beach, Florida

Lives and works in New York, NY

Education: Received a B.A. in Fine Arts from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY

QUOTES

“I loved being a part of that process,” (she says of the explosion of street art in the early ‘00s) “For me; it was taking this classical background in portraiture and taking it outside, maintaining my identity as a classic portrait artist. And bringing that into this other tradition of working outside.”

“There’s that feeling that you get when you see something that you don’t understand the origin of: wonderment. It brings about a kind of innocence, and I love that. I love to witness it. I love to be a part of making those moments happens.”

“When I was a kid, and I was like, ‘I want to be an artist,’ I had all these dreams and all these thoughts: ‘What’s it going to be like? And what am I going to make?’ And I just feel like I have exceeded my wildest dreams by, like, 5000.”

EXHIBITION/WORK

- The exhibition is a retrospective of Swoon’s adult career, spanning over the last eighteen years of her work.
- Swoon started making street art in 1999, while living in New York and attending the Pratt Institute. At Pratt she studied a more classical approach to painting. She wanted to push this sometimes stuffy academic background and take it outside the traditional gallery walls.

EXHIBITON/WORK CONT'D

- The subjects in Swoon's work are often inspired by the people she sees while drawing on the streets of New York. Her work is also influenced by her family members and the community members she meets through different social projects around the world.
- In 2015, Swoon founded the Heliotrope Foundation. Swoon created this nonprofit organization to help communities respond and heal after natural disasters and other urgent social crises, using creative practices.
- Swoon's work often deals with environmentalism. Many of the pieces are made from recycled materials.
- In her pieces, she works primarily with drawing, printmaking, site specific installations, street interventions, and community-based projects. Oftentimes, her work is politically motivated, blurring the line between artist and activist.
- Swoon's real name is Caledonia Dance Curry. Many street artists work under an assumed name to hide their identity. Caledonia chose the name Swoon after a former boyfriend had a dream about it.

KEYWORDS AND THEMES

Street Artist
Social impact
Community
Environmentalism
Public Art

MATERIALS

Wheatpaste print
Video
Mixed Media Collage
Ceramic tiles
Linoleum block prints
Paper cut outs

DISCUSSION



Before Viewing

What is street art? How is street art different from work you might find in a gallery or museum?
Why might street artists want to hide their identity?
What comes to mind when you hear the word swoon? Does the name Swoon match the artist's work?
What name would you pick if you were a street artist?
What might an artist be interested in making work about current social issues?

After Viewing

How might Swoon's work reach a larger, more diverse audience than other artists who show only in a gallery or museum?
Is a work of art still considered street art if it's taken off the street?
How do the materials used by Swoon differ from more traditional art making supplies?
What social issues do you think Swoon's work is influenced by?
What social issues interest you? How could you use art to address them?

RESOURCES

<https://swoonstudio.org/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamlehrer/2016/02/13/new-york-street-and-installation-artist-swoon-uses-humanity-as-her-most-powerful-tool/#4472f204c16d>

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/arts/design/swoon-blurs-the-line-between-art-and-activism.html?_r=0#

<http://konbitshelter.org/>

<http://www.heliotropefoundation.org/>

LESSONS

Follow the link for lessons that focus on CAC exhibitions:

<http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/learn>

