

SWOON: IMPACT ART

GRADE LEVEL: 4-12

This lesson can be adapted for various grade levels.



QUOTES

"I wanted to become part of something larger than myself...I wanted to embrace the world." -Swoon

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

OBJECTIVE

The students will create layered tile designs inspired by the artist Swoon and her collaboration with The Braddock Tile Company in Braddock, Pennsylvania.

In 2007, while working on an art installation in North Braddock, Pennsylvania, the artist, Swoon (Caledonia Curry), saw potential in an old abandoned church. Saving it from demolition she, as well as community members, other artists and the art collective, Transformazium, set in motion a project to make 20,000 colorful ceramic tiles to not only revitalized the roof of this historic building, but also establish a community hub for creativity and learning.

MATERIALS

- 4 x 4 tiles
- Modge podge
- Brushes
- Scissors
- Various magazine images
- Patterned paper such as wallpaper, origami, etc
- Velum or tracing paper
- Permanent markers
- Adhesive cork backings



BEFOREHAND

- Tour the Swoon exhibition at the CAC. Be aware this exhibition includes some mature content.
- Share photos of Swoon's tile work as well as projects by Braddock Tiles and the Heliotrope Foundation. (<http://www.heliotropefoundation.org/braddock-tiles/>); (<https://braddocktiles.org/>)
- Collect materials.

VOCABULARY

- Street Artist
- Activist
- Social impact
- Community
- Public Art
- Manufacturing
- Ceramics
- Collaborative

BEFOREHAND

- Tour the Swoon exhibition at the CAC. Be aware this exhibition includes some mature content.
- Share photos.
- Collect materials.
- Cut recycled cardboard to the desired size.

DISCUSSION

- What is an activist?
- Why might an artist be interested in making work about current social issues?
- In what ways can Swoon's work reach a larger, more diverse audience than other artists who exhibit only in a gallery or museum?
- Have the students share social issues they are interested in. Explore ways they could use art to address these issues and make an impact in their communities.

PROCEDURE

- Inspired by their own social issues interests instruct the students to design and create a tile.
- Using permanent markers instruct the students to add illustration to their tile.
- Have the students add another layer of design to their illustrated tiles by using Modge Podge to affix magazine images, patterned paper, poetic verse, etc.
- Once their design is complete have the students add a final layer of Modge Podge to seal the tile.
- Add adhesive cork backings to the tiles to complete the project.



RESOURCES

- <https://www.artsy.net/artist/swoon>
- <http://www.lscgallery.com/artists/swoon>
- <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/114749-we-don-t-inherit-the-earth-from-our-ancestors-we-borrow>
- <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/heliotrope/braddock-tiles>