

SWOON: PORTRAITS PAST AND PRESENT

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

This lesson can be adapted for various grade levels



QUOTES

Caledonia Curry, better known as Swoon, “... is a pioneering social champion in a field traditionally dominated by men, machismo and activities deemed illegal; she has overcome every barrier to re-define what “street art” means today.”

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

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

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

OBJECTIVE

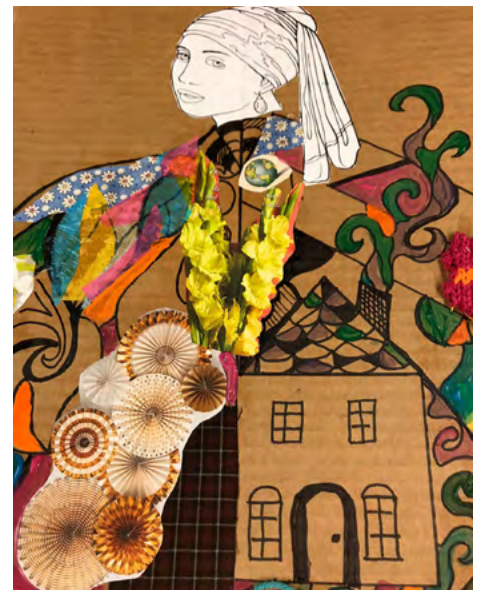
Inspired by Swoon’s artwork, the students will design and illustrate an elaborate portrait using famous faces from art history as their muse.

VOCABULARY

Street Art, Collage, Portraiture, Graffiti, Mixed Media, Urban

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 street art? How does it differ from art usually found in museums or galleries?
- Share photos of Swoon's portraits as well as examples of famous faces from art history with the class.
 - How does Swoon's work differ from traditional portraits?
 - How does her work compare to the street art you may have seen in your city?
- Discuss the quote: "Street artist Swoon considers her work an addition to the naturally occurring collage of the city."
-<https://collections.artsmia.org/art/109328/alixa-and-naima-swoon>
 - How do you think natural weathering and decay affect her work?
 - How do you feel the location for her installations affects her work and the community?
 - Note how Swoon's portraits feature a realistic face and an elaborately illustrated design.
 - » What kind of images do you see in her illustrated design?
 - » Who do you think the faces represent?
 - » How does Swoon use color in her work?
 - » How does the absence of color affect her work?

PROCEDURE

- Have the students choose one of the printed portraits from art history or a photocopied black and white photo of themselves or someone important to them. * Be sure to adjust the size of the portrait to match the size of cardboard being used.
- Instruct the students to carefully cut out the head from the selected portrait and mount it on the recycled cardboard using Modge Podge or glue.
- Using examples of Swoon's work as inspiration instruct the students to outline a basic design for the remainder of the portrait using a pencil. Encourage the students to include scenes from urban landscapes and everyday life in their design.
- When the students are happy with their drawing have them trace it with a black Sharpie marker. The black outline should resemble a stained glass framework.
- Make available various types of collage material and urge the students to incorporate texture, printed material and illustration into their artwork.
- Have the students share their work in a large critique format or have them discuss their design peer to peer.
- Display the student's work on a wall or along the hallway to create a community collection of street art in your classroom/school.

EVALUATION

- Evaluate the students' ability to follow directions and complete the project.
- Evaluate the students' presentation for clarity and content.
- Note the students' participation in class discussions.

RESOURCES

- <https://swoonstudio.org/>
- <http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/exhibitions/2017/09/swoon>
- <https://www.artsy.net/artist/swoon>.