

WOODWARD GALLERY

ESTABLISHED 1994

Swoon (B. 1977)

Caledonia Curry, known as Swoon, is a contemporary artist and filmmaker recognized around the world for her pioneering vision of public artwork. Through intimate portraits, immersive installations and multi-year community based projects, she has spent over 20 years exploring the depths of human complexity, and asking how art can fundamentally re-envision the communities we live in towards a more just and equitable world.

She is best known as one of the first women Street Artists to gain international recognition in a male-dominated field, pushing its conceptual limits and paving the way for a generation of women Street Artists. However, her expansive practice defies genre. As a classically trained printmaker, she has innovated new approaches to create large-scale relief prints, screenprint editions and intricate papercuts. The deep consideration of form is inseparable from Curry's vision of the transformative role of public art in communities. Her critical engagement with issues of social and environmental justice have positioned her at the forefront of the emergent discourse around socially-engaged art practices. Her commitment to expanding the possibilities of art to repair trauma and foster personal and collective healing continues to drive her substantial contributions to contemporary art through her work with portraiture, sculpture, installation and most recently, stop-motion animation.

Curry's gallery and museum exhibitions are deeply influenced by her activism and community projects outside of traditional gallery spaces. In 2015 she founded the **Heliotrope Foundation** to support multiple collaborative projects that use art to respond to crisis. These include *Konbit Shelter*, a sustainable building project developed in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti; *Music Box Village*, an immersive musical environment built to and address the cultural toll of Hurricane Katrina by fostering collaborations between the New Orleans' creative community and artists from around the world; and Braddock Tiles, a job-readiness and soft skills training program for local youth that responded to the decades-long disinvestment and economic crisis in Braddock, Pennsylvania. In 2020, after the conclusion of Braddock Tiles, Heliotrope launched a collaboration with **Za'kiyah House**, repurposing a three-story building in Braddock to provide trauma-informed transitional housing for people coming out of prison or facing other extreme crisis.

Curry's recent work has been focused on the relationship of trauma and addiction, drawing from her experience growing up in an opioid and alcohol addicted family. In 2015, she developed *The Road Home* in collaboration with **Philadelphia Mural Arts** and the Million Person Project to serve a community ravaged by the opioid epidemic in North Philadelphia. The project included daily drop-in art therapy workshops and an ambitious advocacy component that culminated with harm-reduction workshops with the Philadelphia Department of Health and a public symposium.

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HOURS OFFERED BY APPOINTMENT

Curry has a long history of executing projects of ambitious scale and vision. The most notable is a series of floating sculptures and experimental living projects that include *The Miss Rockaway Armada* (Mississippi River, 2006-2007); *Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea* (Hudson River, 2008); and the *Swimming Cities of Serenissima* (Adriatic Sea), which crashed the 2009 **Venice Biennale**.

Curry has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in major museums and galleries around the world, including the **Museum of Modern Art** and **MoMA PS1**, New York; the **Brooklyn Museum**; the **Mori Art Museum**, Tokyo, Japan; the **Institute of Contemporary Art**, Boston; the **Skissernas Museum**, Lund, Sweden; **MIMA Contemporary Art Museum**, Brussels, Belgium; and **Museo de Arte Contemporáneo**, Oaxaca, Mexico. Her first museum retrospective was *The Canyon: 1999–2017* at the **CAC Cincinnati**. Her work is held in public and private collections including the **Museum of Modern Art**, **Tate Modern**, the **Detroit Institute of Arts**, and **MASS MoCA**.

In 2021, Curry premiered *The House Our Families Built*, a major public art commission in collaboration with **PBS American Portrait**. She is currently developing a full length narrative movie which will bring together drawing, immersive installation, stop motion animation and her collaborative work, with the traditions of storytelling through film.