

76 GRAND STREET NEW YORK NY 10013



SWOON
SWIMMING CITIES OF
SWITCHBACK SEA
SEPTEMBER 7 – OCTOBER 19, 2008
DEITCH STUDIOS
4-40 44TH DRIVE (ON THE EAST RIVER)
LONG ISLAND CITY

In the early evening on Sunday, September 7th, seven hand made boats, or more precisely, seven floating sculptures by Swoon, will dock in front of Deitch Studios on the East River in Long Island City. Their arrival at Deitch Studios will be the final stop on a three-week journey down the Hudson River and around the tip of Manhattan. The seven boats, built by Swoon and her friends from scrap wood and other discarded materials, begin their sail down the Hudson River on August 15th in Troy, New York, stopping along the way for musical and theatrical performances. *Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea* is a two-part exhibition merging Swoon's recent portraits, found objects of urban decay and a floating sculptural city. One part of the exhibition is on the water. The other is in the gallery.

As the seven boats dock in front of Deitch Studios, they will be tethered by ropes to the

skirts of a twenty-five foot high paper sculpture of two sisters embracing, the central image of the indoor portion of the show. The image of the *Switchback Sisters* came to Swoon in a dream when she was worried about the rising waters when her first set of boats was floating down the Mississippi River two years ago. She envisioned a woman who would gather the boats into a safe haven under her skirts.

Swoon's indoor installation, in the large cathedral like space of Deitch Studios, is divided into two levels, above and below an imaginary flood line. She imagines that if the water of the East River were to rise, her boats could float into the shelter of the gallery space. The imagery on the walls is drawn from the sea and from the mangrove swamps that the artist explored in her Florida youth. She is inspired by the way the trees in the mangrove swamps send out huge

networks of roots, both below and above the water, creating two parallel ecosystems. Above the imaginary waterline, Swoon has created the image of a city rising from the sea. The parallel narratives of the exhibition represent a convergence of her life on the river and her life as a street artist in New York City.

Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea is the result of a year of design and construction and the combined efforts of seventy- five collaborators, working under Swoon's direction. A crew of forty people will sail the seven boats down the Hudson. During the summer of 2006, Swoon and the Miss Rockaway Armada launched a similar project on the Mississippi River. For this year's project, Swoon designed and supervised the construction of all the boats herself and will culminate the journey with an ambitious exhibition of her large wooden and paper constructions and her large-scale prints.

Swoon is recognized as one of the most original street artists to emerge in New York during the past decade. Her imagery is both bold and intricate, a unique fusion of figurative and architectural elements. She creates portraits of people who she meets on her travels and inserts them into architectural settings both on the street and more recently in galleries. In her

gallery installations, Swoon is able to build her own artistic world, inventing a landscape that intersects with urban decay. Inspired by German Expressionist prints, Indonesian shadow puppets, and dense Asian cityscapes, she uses cut paper to create conceptual explorations of the urban street.

Swoon's collaborators on *Swimming Cities of Switchback Sea* include playwright Lisa D'Amour, circus composer Sxip Shirey, Kinetic Steam Works from San Francisco and the band Dark Dark Dark. Performances will take place as the boats dock during their journey down the Hudson River in August and in front of Deitch Studios during the second week of September. Please see the website www.switchbacksea.org for tour dates and additional information.

Deitch Studios is a large studio and exhibition space located at the end of 44th Drive on the East River in Long Island City. The objective of this new project is to give artists the opportunity to create work in the space and then exhibit the works that have been made there. Deitch Studios is open to the public Thursday through Sunday 2 – 10 PM.

There will be performances at Deitch Studios September 11th, 12th and 13th at 8 PM.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT JASMINE LEVETT AT
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