

Elissa Swanger

Artist Statement

Making art is an intensely personal endeavor, one that typically requires hours of isolated concentration. At the same time, we work with an ongoing awareness of a potential or future audience. Privacy and performance are linked in a studio practice.

My current body of work depicts women on stage to reflect and explore my interest in this intersection between internal personal engrossment and external self-conscious display. The two dimensions of canvas and paper mimic the shallow depth of the stage, but like the stage can be expanded through an infinite variety of effects. Using the stage as a setting calls attention to the artifice and construction of painting and creates a sort of visual pun. Furthermore, I am able to literally draw my audience (in).

The people in my paintings are women not because they are surrogates for me, a female painter, but because I believe that being female we are generally on display in a manner different from men, and are in fact constantly navigating this border between self-possession and self-consciousness.