

Benjamin Swatez – +1. 213. 332. 3869  
benswatez@gmail.com

## **SUMMARY**

**Mr. Swatez is an Executive Art Director and International Artist:** Founder and Director of multiple creative therapy projects with a focus on children facing adversity in conflict zones, refugee camps, catastrophe zones, orphanages, homeless shelters, safe homes and disability centers worldwide. He has painted large scale murals in over thirty-five countries for embassies, schools, airports, community centers, hotels and so forth. His art has been exhibited in over 80 international art shows on four continents and in 13 museums of contemporary art - Skilled at designing art curriculums. An innovator, a consultant, and a mentor, easily adapting to the streets, the jungles, the classroom and high-profile events to share experience and wisdom in best service of humanity - Multi-lingual, a seasoned traveler and highly in-tune with the environment - The Executive Art Director of international art conventions and eight organizations - An inspirational speaker, a natural leader and a celebrated international painter. Former professional soccer player in Denmark. Masters/PHD student at European Graduate School – Switzerland. Currently working on his PhD in Peace Building/Conflict Resolution through Art

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **FOUNDER/ DIRECTOR/ FACILITATOR:**

**2020-2021: The Heart of Resilience** – Co-directing creative therapy classes with over 1000 youth from war across Eastern Africa and painting a mural in Tanzania, Kenya, 7 murals in the Democratic Republic of Congo and a mural for the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rwanda. **November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021** – Founder and Co -Director of a two-month creative therapy/ community mural project down the Congo River offering psychosocial to children of war, orphans, former child soldiers, survivors of slavery in mining camps, survivors of sex slavery and disabled from explosives... Collaborating with Rotary International, Camme RDC, SafeGirl International and the Contemporary Art Museum of Rwanda

**2020: The Goodness Tour Bahamas Post Catastrophe** – Art Director – directed 14 large scale community murals post Hurricane Dorian at schools, shantytowns, library, water-tower and on ruins. Director and event coordinator of Abaco Sunny Waters Event in collaboration with UNICEF, Watermission, Water and Sewerage Cooperation of the Bahamas and the Bahamian Government. Created the largest event in the country post hurricane to solarize the water fields of Abaco, Bahamas. Painted the largest painting on the island with over 100 youth from across the island to educate the country on the relationship between solar power and water. Led art classes as psychosocial support with hundreds of youth across the country after surviving the worst hurricane catastrophe in the Caribbean ever recorded

**On-Line Art in the face of Covid** – Offered on-line art classes for youth stuck at home, children of an international tech company employees – Beeline

**Art Director of Addy's Homeful Project in Jacksonville, Florida** – Art classes at homeless shelters and painted large scale murals at Drug Rehabilitation Center with inpatients – Painted large scale mural for Missionary Flight International private airport - Large scale murals in Zen-room of Beeline headquarters – 2 Large scale for Cooperstown Elementary school...

**2019: The Goodness Tour Cuba – Art Director** – Art, Music and Film making courses for impoverished Cuban youth. Painted 4 large community murals with children and local professional artists in community center of Havana, Cuba

**The Goodness Tour Florida** – Live concerts with live paintings and large-scale community mural with children with mental disabilities in Jacksonville

**The Goodness Tour Bahamas Post Disaster** – After Hurricane Dorian destroyed several islands of the Bahamas directed creative therapy workshops in 3 shelters in Nassau, the capital, for displaced Bahamians and Haitians in collaboration with the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas/ Live concert and live art events at the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, transported seven busloads of displaced from the shelters to the museum. One Love, One Heart Art workshops in the shantytown of “The Farm” with illegal Haitian children in front of the Bahamian Defense Force holding semi automatics

## **2018: President of OMAI (Organisacion Mundial de Artistas Internacional)**

**Executive Director of “International OMAI Goodness Tour International Art Convention Puerto Rico”** – Organized, fundraised, curated, and directed... International art exhibition and concert at the Museum of the Americas with Luc and the Lovingtons and the Music Conservatory of Puerto Rico, San Juan - International Art Exhibition and concert with members of the National Symphony of Puerto Rico at the House of Music Museum, Cayey, Large scale community mural at the Benjamin Harrison School, Cayey - Largest mural in Puerto Rico in the shantytown of La Perla painted by international artists from 18 countries beside locals and a United National Rep. – music and painting therapy courses with under-represented single mothers and at the San Jorge Children and Women’s Hospital in the mental health ward and the child cancer ward

**-Wall of Hope Campaign** – Directed largest mural in Nepal on the Kathmandu 5-star Hotel with local artists, international artists and locals with a composition that stand for women’s rights as 10,000 girls are trafficked out of Nepal into each year.

**Free to Dream Art Project – Directed art project for TCS Abroad** - intercultural mural painting with 70 TCS Abroad American PhD psychology students and 80 youth from the LEAP school of Diepsloot Township – Diepsloot Township, Johannesburg, South Africa – (Most dangerous neighborhoods in the country)

**2017: Colors of Love International Mural Tour** – Directed and painted community murals in **Tunuyan, Argentina** with International Artists from OMAI International/ in **San Agustin, Colombia** leading Chime-in International youth Ambassadors to paint in the **red zone** of Colombia to paint with indigenous and build compost toilet accompanied with education of keeping the watershed clean/ Across **Greece** in Syrian Refugee Camps, community centers, detention centers and prisons with Amaka (the first Art Therapy NGO of Greece) bridging cultures by leading intercultural dialogue creative therapy courses and community murals of paint and mosaic with refugees from **Eritrea, Pakistan, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Syrian** beside locals from Greece/ **Vadodara, India** with artists from the Pithora Tribe, considered the untouchables of the Indian cast system and painted the largest mural in Northern India/ **Gujurat, India** painting the largest mural in the city with children from the slums and teaching creative therapy curriculum in charter schools for underrepresented and in the streets/ **Jaipur, India** in an orphanage with children with HIV/AIDS teaching art and mural painting/ **Kathmandu, Nepal** with Wall of Hope Campaign teaching creative therapy with survivors of sex slavery and painting community murals for the EU Embassy and the Australian Embassy for human rights

**The Goodness Tour Puerto Rico**, directed the project directly after Hurricane Dorian ravaged the island. Mural painting, art classes, song writing classes, film and photography courses

**2016: Syrian Refugee Art Therapy Project in Jordan** – Project Director/ art teacher/ mural painter - sponsored by NGO Voices of the Children & NGO Save the Children. Over 4,300 square feet of wall throughout Jordan was painted with murals by Benjamin Swatez, his team and hundreds of Jordanian and Syrian Refugee youth. Mr. Swatez led the art therapy classes and directed an intercultural dialogue between youth of the Northwest and the Syrian Refugees in Za’atari, the second largest refugee camp in the world. 40,000 photographs were taken by Syrian youth, over 30 short documentaries were made with more to come, 7 original songs written and sung by/with the youth... SO EMPOWERING!!! 3 canvas murals of 12 x 5 feet were painted by youth from both sides of the world. Art Miles collaboration. These canvas paintings will be exhibited before the United Nations for the month of peace, September 2016. I directed seminar training with the field staff of Save the Children to develop a sustainable model, covering art therapy and art practice, for the work to carry on with the Syrian Refugees long after my departure.

**2015: Art Therapy in Israel Project\*** - Co-Founder and Director. Originated the concept, produced fundraisers, acquired sponsors, taught the creative therapy classes and painted murals. Mr. Swatez used art as a platform of intercultural communication between Arab and Jewish Youth. This project touched the lives of over 200 youth. He directed and painted, together with fellow staff, youth, parents, and a mayor, four murals that cover over 210 sq. meters of wall throughout Israel. Hundreds of paintings were produced from the hands of the youth. **Partner Associations:** Eco-Me at the Dead Sea, Neve Shalom, The City of Jisr Al Zarqa and NGO Variety, Tel Aviv. **Sponsors:** Senellier, Savoir Faire, Chartpak, Nadir, - **Art Director of Chime In: The Change is Me International Youth Ambassador Program.** Painted and Directed 11 murals with local community participation in the inner city of Guatemala. Together with international youth ambassadors and families living on trash fills in the capital of Guatemala, we built 10 houses along and painted murals in/on all ten houses and the 11th mural on the school/ education center. District 3: Guatemala City, Guatemala –  
- **Mentor for Chime-In International Youth Ambassadors** around the world, guiding young, upcoming leaders to lead community minded projects in their home countries and present their projects to the United Nations

**2014: Art Therapy in Argentina Project\*** - Co-Founder and Director. Originated the concept. Target groups: youth living in safe-houses, mentally and/or physically disabled youth. Benjamin Swatez guided over 150 youth of Northern Argentina through his own art therapy curriculum, offering a positive outlet to channel out the pains of the past and have fun. He curated a professional art exhibition for the youth to build self-esteem. Mr. Swatez directed and painted a 2.5 x 20-meter mural with 70 participants including many youths in wheel chairs holding a paintbrush for the first time. **Partner Associations:** Escuela Especial 2-020, Escuela DiRani, DINAF, Association Cultural Uco Hue and the Municipality of Tunuyan, Mendoza, Argentina. OMAI Argentina

- **The Goodness Tour** - Co-Founder with Luc and the Lovingtons. Director of Art/ Painter. Taking music and art to where it cannot be paid for. Directing 24 collaborative paintings in concert with people facing adversity. Locations: Homeless shelters, Tent Cities and safe homes from Seattle to Los Angeles. **Partner Associations:** NGO Harmonic Humanity

**2013- 2014: Heal Africa through Art Project\*** - Founder & Director. Produced fundraising events and secured sponsorships. Mr. Swatez wrote and utilized an art therapy curriculum with over 800 former child soldiers, recently freed sex slaves, and children born into captivity in Goma, DR Congo, Pedertown, Uganda and Lira, Uganda. He painted four murals with his staff and the youth. Thousands of paintings were produced by hundreds of youth that had never before touched a paintbrush. Guest visit by Former Head Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Jorge Ocampo. **Partner Associations:** NGO Camme RDC, NGO Friends of Orphans, NGO Children of Peace Uganda. **Sponsors:** Senellier, Savoir Faire, Chartpak

**Colors of Love Creative Therapy Curriculum** – Designed a 30 day – 6 months creative therapy curriculum fusing artistic techniques with psychological exercises and indigenous healing practices with permission to utilize from several indigenous tribes. The curriculum also has an element of art history as each daily course has examples of an important art piece throughout the history of the artistic guild that utilizes the specific techniques in question, related to the relevant exercise – utilized this curriculum around the world, adapting it for each culture, target group and trauma history

**2012 - Present: OMAI (Organisacion Mundial de Los Artistas Integrados)** – Co- Founder – Artists from around the world meet once a year in a symposium to exhibit art, share cultural developments and speak to the world through the tools of modern media and inspire peace through art – with on a focus on youth and art worldwide. International Collective Art Exhibitions are organized throughout the year. Enhancing Peace, Art and the Career of each artist simultaneously.

**2011: Art Therapy in Bahari, India Project\* - Founder**, Director. Produced fundraising events and secured sponsors. Creative Therapy with an entire village of former debt-bonded slaves, freed from the brick factories of Utar Pradesh for only 11 months. One month long intensive workshop with engaging the village the first time in their lives they had ever touched a paintbrush and guiding them through a creative therapy curriculum as a form of psychosocial support. **Partner Associations:** NGO Free the Slaves, NGO MSEMVS. **Sponsors:** Senellier, Savoir Faire, Chartpak

**2010 – Breathe Worldwide** - Co-Founder. A Canadian foundation that supports humanitarian activism worldwide, secures Canadian Sponsorships, leads healing retreats with the Amazonian Kofan tribe of Colombia and is currently developing an alternative school of consciousness on Vancouver Island, Canada.

**2009 – 2011: Art in Peru** - Founder/ Director. Taking art supplies deep into the Amazon Jungle of Peru and teaching painting and drawing to the children of the tribes. Directing the art therapy project with the street children of Cusco, Peru. Art work exhibited in the International Street Youth Art Exhibition in Germany. **Partner Associations:** NGO Quscomaki

**2008: Creative Therapy in the Red Zone** - Co-Founder/ Art Teacher. Shared the healing power of visual art with youth of the red-zone of Colombia. San Agustin, Colombia. **Partner Associations:** NGO Viracocha  
*\*Selected paintings from the art therapy projects are exhibited in USA, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina and Israel.*

**2004: University of California, Davis, Artsbridge Scholar** – Granted a scholarship from UC Davis to teach art to the under privileged in the inner city of Sacramento, California

**SOLO ART EXHIBITIONS:** *Full List Available upon request - 10 plus on 3 continents.*

-Hands full of Hope - Manos Llenu de Esperanza" – *The Cathedral Gallery: Nuestra Señora del Carmen* – In the solo exhibition of Benjamin Swatez in a 130 year old cathedral he chose to present 8 works of his own works and 211 paintings from his International Art Therapy Projects: works from the former debt-bonded slaves of India, recently freed sex-slaves, former child-soldiers of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the paintings from the children of Argentina.- Tunuyán,

Mendoza, Argentina. November 25th - December 10th.

- "The Movement for Peace and for Life" - 3rd Annual International Symposium of OMAI - Benjamin Swatez had a solo exhibition and presented work from the former child soldiers of DR Congo and recently freed slaves of India - The Cultural Center "The Raspberry" - La Mora and the National Monument "The Flower of Venezuela" - Flor de Venezuela.

Barquisimeto, Venezuela. October

- "Freedom" - Phantom Gallery. Mr. Swatez chose to exhibit individual work, collaborative work with Mr. Swatez and the former debt-bonded slaves of Bahari, India, and works produced by the youth of Saturna Truth from the art therapy project directed by Benjamin Swatez and Rickie Byars Beckwith in the Crenshaw District of Los Angeles. Long Beach, CA.

- "The Power of Choice" - The Contemporary Art Museum of Huila - Solo Exhibition - Neiva, Colombia. "The Window" by Benjamin Swatez resides in the museum's permanent collection.

### **GROUP ART EXHIBITIONS: Full List Available upon request - 80 + on 4 continents.**

*(Upcoming International Exhibitions in Mexico, Colombia, United States...)*

"Presencia y Testimonio" - "Testimony and Presence" @ Museum el Penol Antioquia- international art exhibition with 16 countries represented/ MAI Colombia - Medellin, Antioquia, Colombia

- "Aires y Colores de Montana" International Exhibition - Cultural Association UCO HUE & International Organization of OMAI - Manzano Historico - Tunuyan, Mendoza, Argentina

- International Festival of the Arts "Grito de Mujer Flores de Desierto" - Asher Vida Project - Central Municipality of Culture - Cipolletti, Rio Negro Patagonia, Argentina

"The Eyes of Art - Los Ojos de Arte" - International Exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art of Huila - (MACH) Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Del Huila - MAI Colombia - Neiva, Huila, Colombia

- "The Children Paint the World - Los Ninos Pintan El Mundo" - 2 paintings created by the children (ages 6 -12) from each of Mr. Swatez's art therapy projects (India, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Argentina and Israel) - International Exhibition - (MACH) Museum of Contemporary Art - Neiva, Huila, Colombia

- "Spying on History with Casanova" - International Exhibition - Artistic and Cultural Project, the Gran Mosaic. OMAI Colombia. - La Carrion Gallery - Venice, Italy

Visions and Discoveries - Encuentros y Visiones" - International Art Exhibition - Museum of Contemporary Art MAC - Bogotá, Colombia

- "International Exhibition of Catalunya - Exposición Internacional en Catalunya" - BCM Art Gallery - Barcelona, Spain - February 14th - March 1st

- "International Festival of the Arts Bayimba" - Collective International Art Exhibition and Professional Ceremonial Fire Dance - Gulu, Uganda

2013: "33rd Fire Festival of Santiago, Cuba - XXXIII Festival del Fuego de Santiago de Cuba". Visual Artists, Musicians, Dancers and Actors of 40 Countries gather to celebrate and honor the culture of Colombia with a unified voice of Creativity. Art exhibition in the Contemporary Museum of Diego Velázquez *(One of the oldest structures in the Americas, this was the house of Hernán Cortés.)* July 2nd - 9th. Santiago de Cuba.

- "Art and Environment - El Arte y el Medio Ambiente" - Museum of Contemporary Art of Cusco, Peru. International Collective Art Show - Cusco, Peru. August 2nd

- "The International Day of Art - Día Mundial del Arte" - International Collective Exhibition - Art Gallery Luna Pizarro - Congress of the Republic of Peru *(Congreso de la República del Perú)*, Lima, Perú.

- "One World United by Art". International Airport of Puebla, Mexico - Art International Gallery, International Collective Exhibition. February 26 - March 29

### **LIVE PAINTING PERFORMANCES: full list available upon request - 200 plus live painting shows/ concerts in 5 countries**

**Benjamin Swatez has performed on stage with:** Luc & the Lovingtons, Jason Mraz, Rickie Byars Beckwith, Agape International Choir, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Bushwala, Eric Benet, The Makepeace Brothers, Brett Dennon, Matty & Avasa Love, Rocky (Ghana), Panache Desai, Tchakare Kanyembe (Portugal)...

**Locations/ Events/ Venues such as:** The Museum of the Americas, Puerto Rico – National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, Nassau - The Filmore, San Francisco - The Roxy, Hollywood - Raj Fest\*, LA – Agape International Spiritual Center\*, Culver City – The Nectar, Seattle – Lovefest\*, Seattle - Freedom Awards 2010, LA – Doe Bay Music Festival, Orchas Island – Gratitude Cafe, LA – La Plaza, Colombia – France – Portugal - Germany. *\*Performed at the venue more than once*

**Tours with Luc & the Lovingtons:** The Goodness Tour, Friendship Tour, Adventure Tour, Welcome to My House Tour

**INSPIRATIONAL PUBLIC SPEAKING & PRESENTATIONS:**

Rhythm & Joy Festival, Los Angeles - Hands Full of Hope, Tunuyan, Argentina - Omai International Symposium III, Barquisimeto, Venezuela - Baricharte United for the Arts MAI Colombia, Barichara, Colombia - The School of Arts, Barquisimeto, Venezuela - UCLA University of Barquisimeto, Venezuela. Benjamin Swatez - Inspirational Speaker and Solo Exhibitions - Cadiz Theatre World foundation MAI Colombia, Bogota, Colombia...

**Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles - Rhythm & Joy Festival, Los Angeles - Omai International Symposium II, Pitalito, Colombia, Omai International Symposium I, Sinaloa, Mexico, Omai Goodness Tour International Art Convention – Puerto Rico**

**HONORS, RECOGNITIONS & PUBLISHINGS:** *Full List of newspaper articles, art reviews, radio interviews and television interviews are available upon request: Israel, India, Nepal, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, United States of America, Bahamas*

- **AWARDED CERTIFICATE OF HONOR AND MERIT** - "Colors and Dreams" - "Colores y Suenos" - International Art Exhibition - Barracas Art Gallery/ Galeria de Arte Barracas - Mendoza Capital, Argentina / **AWARDED CERTIFICATE OF HONOR** - "Asher - Vida" International Art Exhibition - Gallery: Biblioteca Popular Naciones Americas - Allen Provincia de Rio Negro, Argentina/ **AWARDED CERTIFICATE OF HONOR** - The Museum of Contemporary Art of Huila (MACH) – Colombia/ **Honorary Guest of the State of Mendoza** - Presented by the municipality of Tunuyan, Mendoza, Argentina/ **Honorary Guest of Vadodara, India** – Presented by the city Mayor/ **Best Painting of the International Exhibition of Catalunya.** "I am Life" by Benjamin Swatez. BCM Art Gallery - Barcelona, Spain.

- Published in book: Arte Euro Americano 2014 - Argentina

- Published in book: Antalogia de Produccions Textuales, Ano IV: 2014 - Peru

**COUNTRIES TRAVELLED, LIVED AND/ OR WORKED IN: 61 Countries/ 35 countries art related**

\*Democratic Republic of Congo, \*Uganda, \*South Africa, \*Argentina, \*Brazil, \*Chile, \*Peru, \*Colombia, \*Venezuela, \*Panama, \*Nicaragua, \*El Salvador, \*Guatemala, \*Mexico, \*Cuba, \*USA, \*India, \*Nepal, \*Palestine (West Bank), \*Israel (Jisr az Zarqa + Wāḥat as-Salām/Neve Shalom), \*Jordan, \*Greece, \*Italy, \*France, \*Spain, \*Portugal, \*Germany, \*Denmark, \*Ecuador, \*Bahamas, \*Puerto Rico, \*Kenya, \*Tanzania, \*Rwanda, \*Canada, England, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Monaco, Luxemburg, Sweden, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Russia, Cjeck Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Montenegro, Honduras, Belize, Bolivia, Dubai, Thailand, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Paraguay  
*\*Countries where I have had art shows, led creative therapy projects, painted live in concert and/or mural(s)*

**EDUCATION:**

**2021:** Masters/PhD student at European Graduate School – Switzerland – PhD in Peace Building? Conflict Resolution through Art

**1999 – 2001, 2003 – 2004:** University of California, Davis, USA – Graduated w/ BA in Fine Arts: Painting & Photography

**2001 – 2002:** Lund Universitet, Sweden – Studied Scandinavian Ecological Architecture & Child Development

**Fall 2002:** University of California, Santa Barbara, USA – Studied Art Studio & Art History

**Winter 2003:** UC Santa Cruz ext. Sierra Institute, Guatemala & Belize – Studied Anthropology, Marine Biology & Botany

**OTHER:**

- Co- Producer - "Colors of Love". *Post production faze* - A Documentary film spanning 5 years, following Benjamin Swatez around the world sharing art therapy with the underrepresented. "Countless conflicts around the world have stolen the childhood away from our next generation. Every child has the right to be a child." Filmed 20 hours in India, 40 hours in Central Africa, 10 hours in Argentina, 20 hours in Israel

- Co – director of the documentary, "Revival - *A Documentary about Hope*". Sharing the freedom of expression from the youth on the streets - Sarajevo, Bosnia. Sponsored by the European Cultural Foundation. Showed in Film Festivals across Europe, Represented Amnesty International, Denmark, and Bosnian Federal Television.

- Professional Soccer Player in Copenhagen, Denmark. Played high level soccer for 14 years.
- Professional Fire Performer from 2002 to present in circuses, discos, bars, street performances & a Spanish bull arena
- Lived with Indigenous Tribes throughout the world as an anthropological study – Ceremonial Leader & Reiki Master.
- Healing retreat leader for three years in the Amazon Jungle, leading over 200 people, side by side with Kofan medicine elders in Colombia and Shipibo Medicine elders in Peru – The Mythic Voyage & The Odyssey – Reiki Master/ Ceremonial leader/ Translator