



**For Immediate Release**  
March 9, 2015

**The Fabric Workshop and Museum**  
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Southwark School seventh-grade students, in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum's Onsite Studio Program, Philadelphia. *Plant to Portrait: Selfie Portraiture in the 21st Century*, 2014. Hand screen-printed with mordants, natural hand-dyed cotton fabric. 84 x 84 inches. Photo credit: Carlos Avendaño.

## **Plant to Portrait: Selfie Portraiture in the 21st Century**

**The Fabric Workshop and Museum Onsite Studio Program  
Public Reception: Friday, March 13, 2015 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm**

*Plant to Portrait: Selfie Portraiture in the 21st Century* is a collaborative art project between The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) Onsite Studio Program and the seventh-grade students at Southwark School in Philadelphia. The outcome of this collaboration is a large-scale, hand screen-printed and dyed textile with a photo documentation of the seventh grade class at Southwark School. Major funding for this project is provided by the Coby Foundation Ltd.; Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation; and the Louis N. Cassett Foundation. Please join FWM and the students and faculty at Southwark School at the public reception for *Plant to Portrait: Selfie Portraiture in the 21st Century* to celebrate this project on Friday, March 13th, 2015 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm for this work that is installed at Southwark School.

FWM conducts the Onsite Studio Programs that brings contemporary art practices into Philadelphia public schools. The program nurtures creativity and cognitive abilities, involving participants in team-building activities and collaborative communication skills that meet the Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standards. FWM, along with Southwark art teacher Aaron Kalinay and school administrators, designed a ten-week project from October 3 to December 19, 2014 that integrated art with other academic subjects including history, biology, chemistry, mathematics, and writing.

Over the course of FWM's residency through its Onsite Studio Program at Southwark School, seventh-grade students participated in eight workshops and two field trips to FWM. During these workshops, the students were introduced to the history of photography with a strong focus on portraiture and documentary photography, and its relevance to the digital selfie that is prevalent today. The students were asked to consider: *What does a portrait say about you?* and *How would you like to be remembered?* This dialogue prompted them to envision how one can convey his or her identity through portraiture. The students, using digital cameras, photographed each other, thus producing 81 portraits.

FWM has a long history of utilizing screen printing as a contemporary art medium with a strong focus on fabric printing. The Onsite Studio Programs incorporate these processes into their collaborations. These 81 digital portraits, through a

photographic technique, were transferred to a screen mesh (a form of stenciling) and hand screen-printed onto fabric using an 18th-century textile printing method that uses a mordant (metal) as a way to fix the printed image to the fabric. When dipped into vats of concentrated liquid plant dye, the mordant in the fabric-printed portraits respond by revealing many beautiful hues of color. Once these dye colors were made—examples of the dyes include plants such as madder (red), logwood (purple), weld (yellow) and the insect cochineal (magenta)—students could dip and combine two or more colors to create new colors. Natural dyes and sustainable production methods are having a resurgence in the textile industry. The Southwark seventh-grade students were introduced to textile production and the history of natural and synthetic dyes.

### **On-site Studio Project Coordinators**

#### **The Fabric Workshop and Museum**

Christina Roberts, Head of Education  
Andrea Landau, Project Coordinator  
Shelby Donnelly, Teaching Artist  
Ryan Parker, Teaching Artist

#### **Southwark School**

Andrew Lukov, Principal  
Aaron Kalinay, Art Teacher

### **Vimeo link to Southwark video**

<https://vimeo.com/119897450>

### **Funding**

Major funding for this project is provided by the Coby Foundation, Ltd.; Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation; and the Louis N. Cassett Foundation.

### **About The Fabric Workshop and Museum's Education K-12 On-site Studio Programs**

The Onsite Studio program extends art-making activities that take place through the Apprentice Training Programs and its Artist-in-Residence program to the school environment. A FWM-trained teaching artist works with a class of school students (K-12) and their teacher, meeting once each week over a period of six weeks, to facilitate a collectively designed hand screen-printed fabric. Two of these meetings will take place at FWM, the first focusing on screen-printed repeat design and exploring FWM's current exhibition and the final visit to print the students' collaborative design with assistance from the teaching artist. The finished project will be a 15-yard hand screen-print that derives from the schools' curricula and is designed by students. When possible, FWM provides bus grants to defray the cost of schools' transportation to the Museum. Please email [tours@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org](mailto:tours@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org) for more information.

### **About Southwark Elementary School**

Southwark Elementary School promotes a safe and supportive environment that respects the diverse student population and the community it serves. The purpose of the school is to educate the whole child and to challenge students to reach their fullest potential in all academic areas in order to become productive members of society. Southwark Elementary School strives to provide a rigorous, standards-driven curriculum that is student-centered and geared towards developing critical thinking skills.

### **About The Fabric Workshop and Museum**

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is the only museum of its kind, offering internationally renowned artists the resources to create new work in experimental materials. Artists come from all media—including sculpture, installation, video, painting, ceramics, and architecture—and use FWM's facilities and technical expertise to create works of art that they could not create on their own. Research, construction, and fabrication occur onsite in studios that are open to the public, providing visitors with the opportunity to see works of art from conception to completion. FWM's permanent collections include not only complete works of art, but also material research, samples, prototypes, and photography and video of artists making and speaking about their work. Access to the creative process provides visitors with a point of entry into understanding challenging works of contemporary art. FWM offers an unparalleled experience to those young and old, including the most significant artists of our time, students, and the general public.

The programs of The Fabric Workshop and Museum are supported by Agnes Gund; Amy Stone, Art Ancora; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Arcadia Foundation; The Barra Foundation; Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation; Claneil Foundation; The Coby Foundation, Ltd.; The Dedalus Foundation, Inc.; Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation; E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation; Edna W. Andrade Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation; The Honickman Foundation; Independence Foundation; Institute of Museum and Library Services; The Judith Rothschild Foundation; Knight Foundation; LEF Foundation; LLWW Foundation; Longwood Plantation Foundation, Inc.; Louis N. Cassett Foundation; Mondriaan Foundation; Museums Connect<sup>SM</sup> made possible by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and administered by the American Alliance of Museums; National Endowment for the Arts; New Millennium Charitable Foundation; The New York Community Trust; Nimoy Foundation; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage; The Philadelphia Cultural Fund; PNC Foundation; PNC Arts Alive; Public Funds from the Netherlands Cultural Service; The Quaker Chemical Foundation; Samuel S. Fels Fund; Individual Trustee Discretionary Grant, of the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation; Uplands Family Foundation; and the Board of Directors and Members of The Fabric Workshop and Museum.

For more information, or to request images, please contact Michele Bregande, Assistant to the Directors – Public Relations, at [michele@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org](mailto:michele@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org), or 215.561.8888.

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