



The Fabric Workshop
and Museum

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The Fabric Workshop and Museum Presents
Jessica Campbell: Heterodoxy

October 6, 2023–March 24, 2024
Press Preview: Thursday, October 5



Jessica Campbell, in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia. "Heterodoxy" (Process Image), 2023.
Photo credit: Carlos Avendaño.

Philadelphia, PA, August 8, 2023 — The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is pleased to present *Jessica Campbell: Heterodoxy*, on view from **October 6, 2023 to March 24, 2024**. The exhibition and discussion series explores Heterodoxy, the secret feminist debate club that gathered in New York from 1912 until 1940. With a nod toward "Polly's," the Greenwich Village restaurant on MacDougal Street in

which early meetings of Heterodoxy took place, Campbell's exhibition will take the form of a gathering space and archive, outfitted in a tufted rug environment.

Working outside the centers of power, Heterodoxy gave its members a safe forum to confront issues relevant to their time and advocate for change with other passionate, thoughtful women. The club brought together members from diverse professional fields, political alignments and personal backgrounds to debate issues that remain remarkably relevant today such as voting access, the right to an abortion and access to birth control, sex education, universal child care, public health, and prison reform. No records were kept to allow members complete freedom to speak their minds, although the New York Tribune published a story about the club in the mid-1910s, impressed that Heterodoxy could function with no written bylaws. Counted among its dozens of members was the physician Sara Josephine Baker, the first woman to receive a doctorate in public health, whose successful campaigns for preventative treatment among impoverished immigrant communities in New York significantly reduced infant mortality and blindness; the cartoonist Lou Rogers, whose satirical works between 1912 and 1922 advanced the causes of women's suffrage and access to birth control; and Beatrice M. Hinkle, who developed a feminist practice of psychoanalysis that promoted the self-actualization of women through research conducted with members of the club.

Campbell, in collaboration with the FWM Studio, is creating sixteen hand-tufted rugs (4 x 10' each). Adorned with floral motifs referencing a photograph taken of Heterodoxy member Ami Mali Hicks in her Greenwich Village studio, the tufted rugs will be installed vertically to cover the gallery walls as hanging tapestries. Three custom designed pine tables (30" x 8') along with an eclectic arrangement of wooden chairs will support the gathering of up to two dozen visitors, each seated on a screenprinted fabric cushion that carries forward the floral language of the gallery walls. Mirrored windows of tinted plexiglass inset within the walls and tables will, upon illumination, reveal to the public a series of artworks and interpretations of historical documentation relating to the club and its members. One such artwork, a scalloped doormat made of overlapping painted felt pieces stitched together, was constructed as directed by Ami Mali Hicks' book, "The Craft of Hand-Made Rugs," published in 1936 amid a revived interest in generational crafts that did not require industrial equipment. Other displays will reveal facsimiles of documents selected by the artist through visits to the library and archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the American Philosophical Society, both located in Philadelphia.

"We are very excited for audiences to experience this exhibition," says DJ Hellerman, FWM's Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs. "With each residency, our Studio transforms itself to work with new materials and develop new skills to help artists realize an experimental vision. In working with Jessica Campbell, we took on tufting—a first for the Workshop—and developed a new mode of presentation for the artist, whose research-based practice has brought forth rich histories that speak to our time. The results are an incredibly compelling invitation to engage with the important work of the Heterodoxy movement as a way to think about how we can work towards necessary social change today."

Campbell, as a visual artist and cartoonist, explores the ways in which combinations of seemingly disparate media, subject matter, and tone can, together, act as tools for research and the production of knowledge. Her works in *Heterodoxy* expose the everyday experiences that reveal both current and historical misogyny. Campbell is particularly interested in how both Heterodoxy's strategy of interdisciplinary dialogue and the dissolve between the personal and professional could be implemented today as a way of generating creative solutions to vital social issues.

As part of this presentation, the public will be invited to engage in a public lecture series featuring speakers who address salient issues of our time and those debated by *Heterodoxy*. A publication featuring exhibition documentation, comics by the artist, and an essay about the group will be produced in conjunction with the exhibition.

Heterodoxy is organized by Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs DJ Hellerman, and Project Technician Allen West in collaboration with the artist and the FWM Studio team.

About Jessica Campbell

Jessica Campbell is a multidisciplinary artist and author working in comics, fibers, painting, drawing, and performance. Drawing on a wide range of influences, including science fiction, art world politics, and her evangelical upbringing, Campbell explores ways to reflect heterogeneity through a combination of disparate media, subjects, and tone. Whether through cartoony depictions or the use of unorthodox material, her work often wields humor as a device to help one come to terms with its darker subject matter.

Campbell is the author of three graphic novels, including *RAVE* (Drawn and Quarterly, 2022), *Hot or Not: 20th Century Male Artists* (Koyama Press, 2016) and *XTC69* (Koyama Press, 2018). Her comics have been published by *MoMA*, *The New Yorker*, and *Hyperallergic*, among other publications. Her *Chicago Works* show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2018–2019) was reviewed in *Art in America*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Juxtapoz*. Other solo and two-person exhibitions include *Field Projects*, New York (2019); *Roots & Culture*, Chicago (2015), and *La Galerie Laroche/Joncas*, Montreal (2012–2013). Her work has been included in group shows at the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, WI (2022); The Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (2022); Richard Heller, Los Angeles (2019); the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario (2019); the ICA, Baltimore (2018); Monique Meloche, Chicago (2017); and was included in *Chicago Comics: 1960s to Now* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2021). She is represented by Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL.

About The Fabric Workshop and Museum

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art museum devoted to the creation, presentation, and preservation of innovative works of art. Its mission—*Collaborating with artists, revealing new possibilities*—embodies a 45-year commitment to helping artists experiment with the expressive possibilities of a broad spectrum of new materials and techniques. Through its renowned Artist-in-Residence Program, FWM provides artists at all stages of their careers with the opportunity to collaborate with its studio staff and take their work in fresh and often unexpected directions. FWM presents large-scale exhibitions, installations, and performative work, utilizing innovative fiber and other media including sculpture, installation, video, painting, photography, ceramics, and architecture. Founded in 1977, FWM brings this spirit of creative investigation and discovery to an eager audience, broadening access to art and advancing its role as a catalyst for innovation and social connection.

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