

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

BETH CAMPBELL: MY POTENTIAL FUTURE PAST **March 5 to September 4, 2017**

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *Beth Campbell: My Potential Future Past*, Campbell's first museum survey. This exhibition will present three interrelated bodies of work, the *Potential Future Drawings* series (1998–present), *Mobiles* (2006–present), and the *Future Past Drawings* series (2014–present).

Campbell's practice ranges from drawing to sculpture and installation, and centers on an extensive exploration of the potential latent within everyday experience. She exploits the "what ifs," channeling those life choices that shape who we think we want to be or who we might really become. In Campbell's world, objects are personified, rooms multiply, mirrors become portals, and streaming thoughts predict future outcomes. She exposes the inherent beingness underlying daily phenomena through a manipulation of reality, an externalization of internal sensations, and a deft employment of humor, ultimately challenging our perception of the human dimension.

In 1998, Campbell introduced her now-acclaimed *Potential Future Drawings* series, channeling the Surrealists to give tangible shape to interior monologues. She begins with an event in her own life, and then uses a diagrammatic system to create a latticework of potential outcomes for mass acceptance and wide success, while also tapping into our general fear of ultimate failure and crushing embarrassment. The mobiles inspired by the formal acceptance of these mind maps, and appear like chandeliers, or vascular or root systems, function as abstract drawings in space as seen in *My Mother's House* (2016). Comprised of bent steel and wire, some in taut primary colors, they vary in size—from body size to architecturally scaled—and cast shadows and create pulsating optical patterns that mime the circulatory matrix of her drawings. The *Future Past Drawings* series, initiated in 2014, includes the newest work in the exhibition. All the drawings in this series are on black paper and, like the *Potential Future Drawings*, they operate as a flowing feed; reflecting back and looking forward, they conflate personal and historical experience, in the end considering how subjectivity reshapes the past to condition the future.

Beth Campbell (b. 1971, Illinois) received her BFA from Truman State University in 1989, her MFA from Ohio University in 1997, and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1997. Her work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, among others. She lives and works in New York City.

A full-color, soft-cover scholarly publication will be available during the exhibition.

Organized by Amy Smith-Stewart, curator, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum.

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Generous funding for *Beth Campbell: My Potential Future Past* is provided by Bart McDonough and Cheryl Horner.

Major funding for exhibitions is provided by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts; the Anna-Marie and Stephen Kellen Foundation; and Crozier. Additional support is provided by Hotel Zero Degrees, Danbury.



Beth Campbell, *My mother's house*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist and Kate Werble Gallery, New York.

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