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Press Release

Book Release: 'Amy Sherald: The World We Make'

The first substantial monograph on Amy Sherald, one of America's defining contemporary portraitists, 'The World We Make' provides unique insight into the artist's work and practice

To be released on 11 October 2022 accompanying the artist's first solo show in Europe at Hauser & Wirth, London



This major publication—the first widely-available monograph on Amy Sherald—accompanies the artist's exhibition at Hauser & Wirth London in fall 2022, marking Sherald's first solo show in Europe and her largest to date with Hauser & Wirth. Significant, newly commissioned texts include an art historical analysis by Jenni Sorkin, a mediation on the aesthetics and politics of Sherald's portraiture by Kevin Quashie, and a conversation between the artist and Ta-Nehisi Coates. Beautifully reproducing Sherald's recent paintings with an attention to their poignant details, this publication also illustrates a wide selection of earlier work alongside the essays and includes a series of in-the-studio photographs by Adam Kremer that provide an intimate glimpse into Sherald's process and practice.

Acclaimed for her paintings of Black Americans that have become landmarks in the grand tradition of portraiture, Sherald renders her subjects in a realist style in everyday settings. In her new body of work, she continues this practice while confronting the Western—and specifically American—canon through allusions to significant historic images and themes. In their varying contexts, clothing, expression and positions, the individuals portrayed all maintain a captivating sense of mystery that draws viewers' attention to the sitters' interior life. It is precisely this interiority that Sherald seeks to portray with the grisaille skin-tones in which she renders her subjects.



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The monumental work 'For love, and for country' (2022), which graces the book's cover, exemplifies Sherald's critical approach to Western traditions of portraiture. Recreating Alfred Eisenstaedt's iconic photograph, 'V-J Day in Times Square' (1945), which shows an American sailor kissing a woman in Times Square, New York City, Sherald replaces the white heterosexual couple with a Black male couple. Subverting the iconic pose, the artist addresses the fight for queer representation and participation in public space, prompting reflection on the enduring inequalities and discrimination in the U.S. government and society, more widely.

Extensively illustrated, the book begins with a presentation of new portraits that span nearly 100 pages of luminous details. Homing in on her subjects' specific features and exemplifying Sherald's mastery of vibrant color, this publication honors her devotion to the particular. Jenni Sorkin's essay, 'Stopped in Time,' situates Sherald's oeuvre in art history, addressing the artist's typical use of grisaille and her investigation of concepts of representation. Cultural scholar Kevin Quashie's 'In Praise of Mere Beauty' astutely describes modes of identification at play in Sherald's extraordinary ability to portray Black bodies. Adam Kremer's photographic documentation of Sherald's studio accompanies the exhibition preparations offering an intimate glimpse into Sherald's daily studio life. Finally, Sherald's conversation with acclaimed author Ta-Nehisi Coates provides personal insight into the painter's creative process, drives, and way of thinking.



About Hauser & Wirth Publishers

Artists' voices, exceptional art, scholarship, design and bookmaking are at the heart of Hauser & Wirth Publishers' program, which has been helmed by Michaela Unterdörfer since 2005. Books are critical gateways to new ways of thinking and seeing; they provide vital, lasting records of artists' works and ideas and the discourse they inspire. This is why publishing has been a cornerstone of the gallery's activity since its founding and why Hauser & Wirth Publishers has grown to become a leading imprint for unique, object-like books that encourage an understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art. With the special access granted by artists to their writings and archives, Hauser & Wirth Publishers often brings new and overlooked aspects of an artist's creative practice into focus. Our backlist offers a robust program that comprises artists' books, artists' writings, biographies, monographs, surveys, exhibition catalogs and collectors' perspectives.

Hauser & Wirth's publishing activity extends back to 1992, from where it steadily flourished through partnerships with reputable imprints such as Hatje Cantz, JRP|Ringier, Snoeck, Steidl, Thames & Hudson and Yale University Press, before publishing independently under its own imprint. Based in Zurich and New York City, Hauser & Wirth Publishers commissions titles that we believe are keystone resources and references related to the artists represented by the gallery and beyond. Our titles are distributed worldwide via Distributed Art Publishers and Buchhandlung Walther König.



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'Amy Sherald: The World We Make'

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With contributions by Jenni Sorkin, Kevin Quashie and Ta-Nehisi Coates

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Caption and courtesy information:

Cover: For love, and for country, 2022

Amy Sherald in the studio with
'For love, and for country' (2022)

Stylist: Law Roach

© Amy Sherald

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Photo: Kelvin Bulluck

Amy Sherald, To tell her story you must
walk in her shoes, 2022

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Photo: Joseph Hyde