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Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Amy Sherald presents new and recent work for her first major solo museum exhibition at CAM.**



Amy Sherald, *What's precious inside of him does not care to be known by the mind in ways that diminish its presence (All American)*, 2017. Oil on canvas, 54 x 43 inches. Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

**March 26, 2018 (St. Louis, MO)** - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents new and recent paintings by Amy Sherald, the artist's first major solo museum exhibition, on view May 11 through August 19, 2018. Until her recent commission to paint the official portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama, Sherald's subjects have been of African Americans she encountered during the routines of her day. Although the Obama portrait steps outside of the quotidian that has been central to Sherald's practice, Michelle Obama, not unlike the people Sherald meets in the grocery store, is the first member of her family to be the subject of a painted portrait. Whether the subject is famous or unknown, Sherald's practice emphasizes the power of a black person's image as seen in a gallery or museum, her portraiture rendering a transformative vision. Her art is a reflection on blackness, or as she says, "My paintings hold up a mirror to the present and reflect real experiences of blackness today and historically, in everyday life and within the historical art canon."

The portraits will be on view in CAM's Front Room gallery. Sherald paints staged narratives and constructed identities. She renders her subjects with the deft draftsmanship of American realism, and sometimes embellishes them with fantastical props and colorful costumes. An obvious care is taken with each portrait:

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10-8 Thu & Fri  
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CAM is free. Visit often!

how a prop is held, the style and fit of clothing, the contrast or complement of colors. With skin-tone cast in Sherald's signature gray-scale, and the figures set against a color-field background, the artist makes "versions of ourselves that thrive when extricated from the dominant historical narrative."



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During the opening weekend of the summer exhibitions, Sherald will meet with young artists from New Art in the Neighborhood, CAM's nationally acclaimed art program for local teens. In conjunction with the exhibition, a Museum publication will include an in-depth interview with the artist and Lisa Melandri, along with images of the works. Following the CAM exhibition, *Amy Sherald* will travel to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, in September 2018, and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta, in January 2019.

The exhibition and catalog are presented by Jane and Bob Clark. Additional support is provided by Ann Ruwitch and John Fox Arnold.

*Amy Sherald* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Lisa Melandri, Executive Director.

**Amy Sherald** (b. 1973, Columbus, Georgia) lives and works in Baltimore. In 2018, Sherald's official portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama was unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. Sherald will receive the Driskell Prize for African-American Art from the High Museum in 2018. In 2016, Sherald was the first woman to win the Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition grand prize; an accompanying exhibition, *The Outwin 2016*, has been on tour since 2016 and opened at the Kemper Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, in October 2017. Sherald has had solo shows at venues including Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago (2016); Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore (2013); and University of North Carolina, Sonja Haynes Stone Center, Chapel Hill (2011). Group exhibitions include *Fictions*, Studio Museum in Harlem (2017–18), *Southern Accent*, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham (2016), which traveled to Speed Museum of Art, Louisville (2017); and *Face to Face: Los Angeles Collects Portraiture*, California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2017). Public collections include Embassy of the United States, Dakar, Senegal; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; The Columbus Museum, Columbus, Georgia; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri; and Nasher Museum of Art, Durham. Sherald was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Sherald received her MFA in Painting from Maryland Institute College of Art (2004) and BA in Art from Clark Atlanta University (1997), and was a Spelman College International Artist-in-Residence in Portobelo, Panama (1997).

## Related Events

### Artist Talk

Thursday, May 10, 6:30 pm

### Press & Patron Preview

Friday, May 11, 10:00–11:00 am  
Join artists and curators for an exclusive introduction to the exhibitions. *RSVP to Eddie Silva at 314.535.0770 x313.*

### Opening Night

Friday, May 11  
Member Preview                   6:00–7:00 pm  
Public Reception                   7:00–9:00 pm

**About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis**

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents, supports, and celebrates the art of our time. It is the premier museum in St. Louis dedicated to contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, CAM provides a thought-provoking program that reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape. Through the diverse perspectives offered in its exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives, CAM actively engages a range of audiences to challenge their perceptions. It is a site for discovery, a gathering place in which to experience and enjoy contemporary visual culture. CAM is located in the Grand Center Arts District.



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