



## **SNAPSHOTS**

**HELENA WURZEL**

**FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 19, 2023**

**OPENING RECEPTION  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 6 - 8 PM**

(January 4, 2023 – Brookline, MA) Praise Shadows Art Gallery is thrilled to present *Snapshots*, a solo exhibition by Cambridge-based artist Helena Wurzel. A painter with a virtuosic talent for patterns and color, this presentation evokes her love for family, community, and female camaraderie. Those familiar with the streetscapes of Cambridge will immediately recognize the many scenes depicted on the sidewalks and around the city’s public spaces, where neighbors gather like extended family. An artist based in the Boston area for nearly 20 years, this is Wurzel’s most comprehensive exhibition to date.

*Snapshots* features a new body of work, predominantly oil on canvas with select new collage works on paper and intimately sized gouache on panel paintings. Wurzel emphasizes color to create a sense of mood, temperature, sunlight and the turning of seasons. This attunement to color, paired with scenes of the quietly quotidian – bike-riding, leaf-raking, dogs-walking – draw us deeply in her tight-knit Cambridge community of neighbors and friends. Her portraits are steeped in observation, often depicting the fleeting grace of moments from everyday life.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the self-portrait *My Ride*, in which Wurzel pauses on her bicycle in the middle of her street. Her body is directed toward the glow of the sun on the horizon, while her face is turned toward us, the viewer, and she gazes at us through dark sunglasses that reflect her right arm confidently grasping a bike handle. The road stretches behind her, leading to an illuminated yellow sky that frames her face like a halo. It is a golden Autumn day, with a canopy of New England foliage cascading around her and remnants of Ginkgo and Oak leaves scattered on the ground around her. Her self-possession as a subject reflects her confidence as a painter, and as a citizen within her community. This large-scale painting sets a tone for the exhibition: she’s taking us along on a ride.

In addition to Wurzel's bold use of color as a narrative device, her affection for patterns is one of the most joyful aspects of her practice. Her patterns create a visual texture that brings verve to the commonplace. Textiles worn by two women taking a stroll with a dog and a baby stroller at Cambridge's Fresh Pond bring warm life to a barren winter landscape. The tablecloth for a summer barbecue serves an elevated layer of excitement to an already mouthwatering smattering of food, while the water glasses further enhance and distort the tablecloth pattern.

Wurzel's generous offerings of color, patterns, and her loving depictions of the people in her community, are akin to the snapshots that capture the fabric of a time, a place, a moment. Like flipping through old albums, she stops time and makes us hear the sound of kids stomping on crunchy Autumn leaves, smell the crisp air on a daily walk with the family dog, and relax into the fond soft moments on the stoop with a neighbor.

### **About Helena Wurzel**

Helena Wurzel is a painter living in Cambridge, MA. She received an MFA in painting from Boston University in 2007 and is a two-time recipient of Massachusetts Cultural Council Grants (2010 and 2016). Her work has been featured on the cover of *New American Paintings*, and in multiple campaigns with the designer Kate Spade, as well as in designer Jonathan Adler's retail spaces in Los Angeles, Miami and beyond. For 15 years, until 2022, she taught painting full-time in the Boston area. Her work is in private and corporate collections throughout the United States.

### **About Praise Shadows Art Gallery**

Established in 2020, Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a commercial gallery space in the Boston area showing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. We believe that the art ecosystem is filled with untapped potential, and our work is grounded by partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship — exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, and original concepts that no one has ever tried before. Praise Shadows Art Partners advises artists and companies in the creative industries on strategic partnerships and marketing. Our work is local, global, and virtual.

[www.praiseshadows.com](http://www.praiseshadows.com)

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Helena Wurzel

*My Ride*

2022

Oil on Canvas

60" x 52.5"

Image courtesy of the artist and Praise Shadows Art Gallery