



August 2004

***Infinite Mobility: Paintings by Kehinde Wiley, First Museum Exhibition of Critically Acclaimed Artist, on view October 8, 2004 through February 5, 2005, at Brooklyn Museum***

**Media Preview October 7, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

The first museum exhibition of the critically acclaimed painter Kehinde Wiley, whose portraits of African American men combine elements of hip-hop culture with an Old Master's influence, will be presented in *Infinite Mobility: Paintings by Kehinde Wiley*, on view October 8, 2004, through February 5, 2005, at the Brooklyn Museum.

The Museum recently added to its permanent collection with the purchase of Wiley's *Passing/Posing*, a cycle of four large-scale oil paintings surrounding a 25 by-10-foot ceiling painting of seemingly tumbling break-dancers; the life-size heroic figures mingle fantasy and realism.

The works in *Infinite Mobility: Paintings by Kehinde Wiley* incorporate a range of art historical and vernacular styles, from French rococo to today's urban street. Wiley collapses history and style into a unique contemporary vision. He describes his approach as "interrogating the notion of the master painter, at once critical and complicit." He makes figurative paintings that "quote historical sources and position young black men within that field [of power]."

The vividly colorful paintings, often with ornate gilded frames, depict young black men—in sweatshirts, sports jerseys, or baseball caps turned backward—posed in a manner reminiscent of Renaissance artists such as Tiepolo or Titian, and adorned with baroque or rococo decorative patterns.

"I use French rococo influences, with its garishness and vulgarity, to complement the flashy attire and "display of material consumption" evident in hip-hop culture, which mirror the same baroque sensibilities that permeated European Renaissance painting," said Wiley.

Using models recruited from the Harlem neighborhood where he worked, Wiley's portraits examine the aestheticizing of masculinity and the use of supercharged color, iconography, and ornamentation to reflect the garishness of hip-hop culture and capitalism. By applying the visual vocabulary and conventions of glorification, history, wealth, power, and prestige to subject matter drawn from the urban fabric in which he is embedded, Wiley presents these young men as both heroic and pathetic, autonomous and manipulated.

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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Wiley is a New York-based artist who was born and raised in Los Angeles. He earned a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MFA from Yale University. From an early age he was influenced by eighteenth-century British masters and the artists of the Royal Academy. Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable were two of his favorites. Among his contemporaries he cites Kerry James Marshall, Betty Saar, Lisa Yuskavage, and Glenn Ligon as influences.

In the spring of 2001, Wiley moved to New York to participate in the Artist-in-Residence Program at the Studio Museum in Harlem. On his way to the museum one day, he noticed a piece of litter on the sidewalk that turned out to be a police wanted poster with the picture of a young African American man. He took it home and tacked it to the wall, where it hung for a year, ultimately becoming the motivation for many of his paintings.

*Infinite Mobility: Paintings by Kehinde Wiley* is organized by Tumelo Mosaka, assistant curator in the Brooklyn Museum's Department of Contemporary Art. A full-color catalog will accompany the exhibition.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Admission:**

Contribution \$6; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$3. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

**Directions:**

**Subway:** Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. **Bus:** B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

**Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.