

Temporary exhibition / Garden Gallery
From 26 September to 14 January 2024

KEHINDE WILEY. A MAZE OF POWER



© Kehinde Wiley

Curatorship

Sarah Ligner, Head of the Historical and Contemporary Globalization Collection at the musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac.

In dialogue with the artist Kehinde Wiley and Galerie Templon.

Scénography

Atelier Maciej Fiszer

Upon the invitation of the musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Kehinde Wiley unveils exclusively, in Paris, a series of portraits of African heads of state – an exploratory project around the representation of power on which the painter has been working confidentially since 2012.

It was during the first Black presidency in the United States that artist Kehinde Wiley, whose work reinterprets pictorial representations of power and prestige through the tradition of portrait painting, began to question the meaning of presidential leadership. In 2012, he imagined an unprecedented series of portraits of African heads of state. Over the past 10 years, he has traveled the continent, to meet various leaders – whose names are kept confidential until the opening of the exhibition. He discussed with each of them the history of aristocratic, royal and military portraiture in 17th to 19th century Europe in order to develop, in consultation, a composition that illustrates the singular view of each leader on what it means to be a contemporary African leader.

« The challenge and the vocation of this exhibition around African presidents is to examine the phenomenon of power on the continent, by putting it into perspective in relation to the Western world, and the way in which power relations are traditionally placed there. »

Kehinde Wiley

The confidentiality of this project does not allow the visuals of the works to be distributed before the inauguration.

The accessibility of the exhibition was made possible by the sponsoring of



The portraits designed reflect the distinctive cultural elements of each State, thus highlighting the immense diversity of the African continent, and reveal the identity of an individual through the double prism of the artist and his model. These paintings lay bare the contours of the ego, the diversity of possibilities in terms of taste or discernment, as well as the different communication strategies relating to the construction of an image, both personal and public. The artist aims to reveal the unspoken heritage of each Head of State. This body of work is accompanied by a film presenting the working method and the artist's travels across the continent to meet his models.

From this pictorial work is born an in-depth investigation on the staging of power through portrait, as well as on the maze of choices within which the artists and models, just like the heads of state of contemporary Africa, must make their way.

Biography of the artist

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, Los Angeles) is an American artist best known for his portraits that render people of color in the traditional settings of Old Master paintings. Wiley's work brings art history face-to-face with contemporary culture, using the visual rhetoric of the heroic, the powerful, the majestic and the sublime to celebrate Black and brown people the artist has met throughout the world. Working in the mediums of painting, sculpture, and video, Wiley's portraits challenge and reorient art-historical narratives, awakening complex issues that many would prefer remain muted.

In 2018 Wiley became the first African-American artist to paint an official U.S. Presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Former U.S. President Barack Obama selected Wiley for this honor. In 2019 Wiley founded Black Rock Senegal, a multidisciplinary artist-in-residence program that invites artists from around the world to live and create work in Dakar, Senegal. Wiley is the recipient of the U.S. Department of State's Medal of Arts, Harvard University's W.E.B. Du Bois Medal, and France's distinction of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters. He holds a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute, an MFA from Yale University, and honorary doctorates from the Rhode Island School of Design and San Francisco Art Institute. He has held solo exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally and his works are included in the collections of over 60 public institutions around the world. He lives and works in Dakar, Lagos and New York.

The exhibition is produced in collaboration with the Galerie Templon.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Garden Gallery
From 26 September to 14 January 2024

Musée du quai Branly–Jacques Chirac
37 quai Branly, 218 et 206 rue de l'université
75007 Paris
T. +33 1 56 61 70 00

#KehindeWiley
www.quaibrantly.fr

More information available on social networks:



OPENING TIMES

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday
from 10:30 am to 7:00 pm
Thursday from 10:30 am to 10:00 pm
Closure every Monday.

PRESS CONTACTS

Claudine Colin Communication

Alexandre Holin
alexandre@claudinecolin.com
Inès Masset
ines@claudinecolin.com
T. +33 1 42 72 60 01
www.claudinecolin.com

musée du quai Branly–Jacques Chirac
presse@quaibrantly.fr

MUSEUM COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Myriam Simonneaux

Director of communications
myriam.simonneaux@quaibrantly.fr

Lucie Cazassus

Deputy director of communications
Head of media relations
lucie.cazassus@quaibrantly.fr

Christel Moretto

Media Relations Officer
christel.moretto@quaibrantly.fr