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#Pride30: Portrait artist Kehinde Wiley is creating art – and history

New York-based portrait artist Kehinde Wiley was chosen by former President Barack Obama to paint his official presidential portrait.

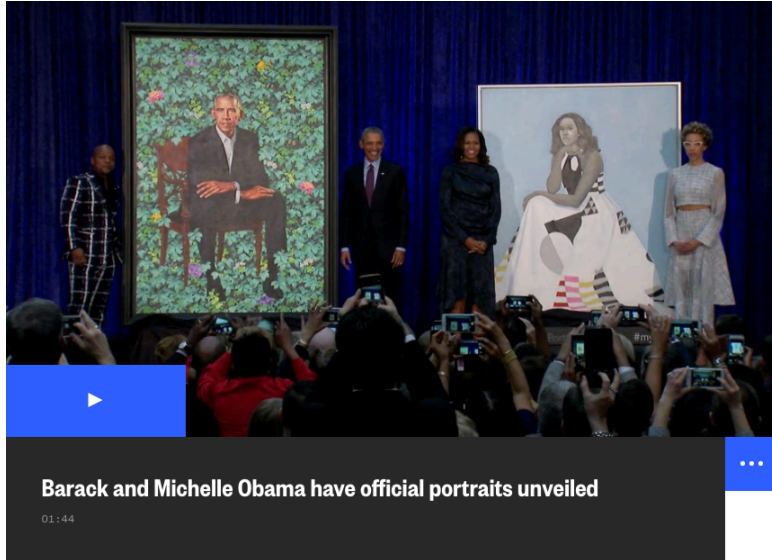
by Tim Fitzsimons / May.31.2018 / 11:31 AM ET



— Artist Kehinde Wiley attends the Planned Parenthood's 2018 Spring Into Action Gala in New York on May 1, 2018. Dimitrios Kambouris / Getty Images

Portrait artist Kehinde Wiley is best known for his vibrant, large-scale paintings of African-Americans. The Los Angeles native, now based in New York, said he draws inspiration from “classical European paintings of noblemen, royalty and aristocrats.”

Wiley’s status in the art world rose meteorically after he was chosen by former President Barack Obama to paint his official presidential portrait. Unveiled in February, the portrait now hangs in the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington.



Wiley, along with Baltimore-based artist Amy Sherald, who painted former First Lady Michelle Obama's portrait, are the first African-American artists to create Smithsonian-commissioned portraits of a former president and first lady.

"The ability to be first African-American painter to paint the first African-American president ... it doesn't get any better than that," Wiley said during the portrait's unveiling.

Wiley's work will be on display across the country this year. A full listing of his current and future exhibitions can be found [here](#).