

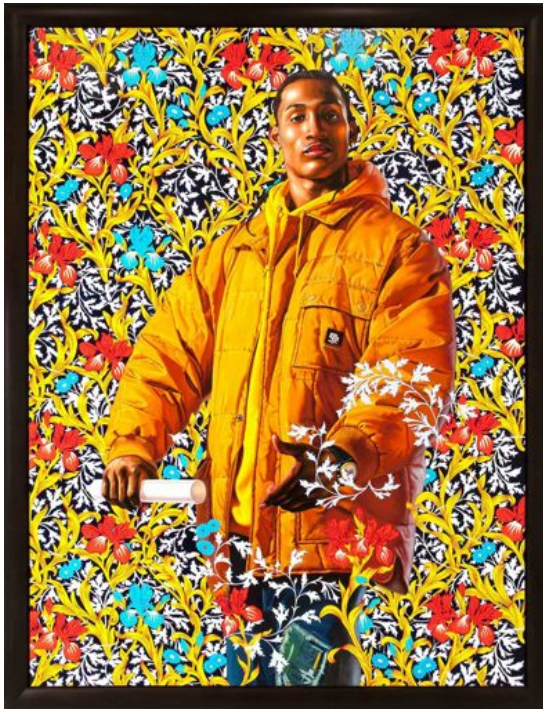
STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

Kehinde Wiley

The World Stage: Jamaica

15 October – 16 November 2013
Private View Monday 14 October, 6 – 8pm

11 & 25–28 Old Burlington Street, London, W1S 3AN, UK



Stephen Friedman Gallery is delighted to announce that it will host 'The World Stage: Jamaica', coinciding with Frieze London, Kehinde Wiley's first ever UK solo exhibition. Born in 1977, Wiley has already achieved international recognition for his highly naturalistic paintings of contemporary urban men adopting heroic poses directly referencing classical portraiture.

At Stephen Friedman Gallery, Wiley will continue his vast and celebrated body of work entitled 'The World Stage'. The exhibition features Jamaican men and women assuming poses taken from 17th and 18th Century British portraiture. This juxtaposition between the sitter and the art historical references reflects on the relationship between the island and her former colonial power. Wiley is restaging this history, transforming the race and gender of the traditional art-historical hero to reflect the contemporary urban environment. The subjects' proud posturing refers to both the source painting and the symbolism of Jamaican culture, with its singular people and specific ideals of youth, beauty and style. 'The World Stage' series has previously focused on Brazil, China, Israel, Nigeria, Senegal and Sri Lanka, with exhibitions held in museums and galleries in Europe and the USA.

Wiley embellishes his paintings with intricate, ornate backgrounds that contradict the sombre posturing of the subjects and allude to the bold styles of urban fashion. Pieces of these symbolic patterns overlay and entwine the figure, both harmoniously fusing and creating opposition between the two contrasting elements that form the work. In previous series, this decoration has been inspired by a fusion of period styles, ranging from Islamic architecture to Dutch wax printed textile and French Rococo design. In this new body of work, lavish patterning informed by the British textile designer William Morris surrounds the figures.

25–28 Old Burlington Street, London W1S 3AN

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The gallery will also present a film depicting Wiley's process as the project unfolds. The camera follows the artist on his research trips to London, visiting the National Portrait Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery and Brixton Market, and then onto Jamaica. There it follows him to underground dance halls, Negril beach and downtown Kingston as he searches for the models for his paintings.

For this project Wiley renders his subjects in exquisite detail, capturing a pose, a history and a culture. Jamaica is filtered through aspects of British history to create something wholly unique; disparate iconography, such as a contemporary tattoo and a William Morris wallpaper design, merge together to form equal parts of the narrative. The artist continues to redefine portraiture, cementing his status as one of the leading painters working today.

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977 in Los Angeles, USA) lives and works in New York, USA and Beijing, China. He will be the subject of a major solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, USA in 2005.

Solo exhibitions include; 'The World Stage: Israel', Boise Art Museum, Boise, USA (2013), travelling from The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, USA (2013) and The Jewish Museum, New York, USA (2012); 'Kehinde Wiley: Memling', Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona, USA (2013); 'Selected Works', SCAD Museum of Art, Georgia, USA (2011); 'The World Stage: Africa, Lagos-Dakar', The Studio Museum, Harlem, New York, USA (2008); 'Focus: Kehinde Wiley', Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, USA (2008); 'Kehinde Wiley', Portland Art Museum, Oregon, USA (2007); 'The World Stage: China', John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Milwaukee, USA (2007); 'Columbus', Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, USA (2006); 'Rumours of War', Deitch Projects, New York, USA (2005); 'Passing/Posing: The Paintings of Kehinde Wiley', Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, USA (2004); 'Faux/Real', Deitch Projects, New York, USA (2003);

Group exhibitions include; 'Face to Face, Wall to Wall', Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, USA (2014); 'Eye to L...3,000 years of Portraits', Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, USA (2013); '30 Americans', Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, USA (2013); 'Masculine / Masculine. The Nude Man in Art from 1800 to the Present Day', Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France (2013); 'From Then to Now: Masterworks of Contemporary African American Art', Cleveland Art Museum, Cleveland, OH (2010); '21: Contemporary Art at the Brooklyn Museum', The Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA (2008); 'Recognize: Hip Hop and Contemporary Portraiture', Smithsonian Institution National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C, USA (2008); 'American Art', National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland (2006); 'Down By Law', Whitney Museum of Art, New York, USA (2006).

Wiley's work features in the permanent collections of numerous prominent institutions including The Jewish Museum, New York; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn; Studio Museum, Harlem; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 6pm and Saturday, 11am - 5pm

For further details please contact Mary Tagg on +44 (0) 20 7494 1434, mary@stephenfriedman.com