

Stephen Friedman Gallery

The Independent
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Sabrina Barr
19 November 2019

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The painting by artist Kehinde Wiley was unveiled in February 2018.



Image: Instagram/@michelleobama

Michelle Obama has paid a visit to the portrait of her husband, Barack Obama, that hangs in the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

The former US first lady was present at the gallery for the American Portrait Gala, a biennial event that raises funds for the museum's exhibitions.

While at the historic art museum, Michelle was photographed standing

next to the famed portrait of the 44th US president, which shows him sitting on a chair with his arms folded against a bright backdrop of foliage as he stares into the eyes of the viewer with a self-assured confidence.

Michelle shared the photograph on Instagram, in which she is wearing a yellow couture gown by Italian fashion house Schiaparelli.

The picture, which was captioned with a sole heart emoji, has garnered more than 1.4m likes and thousands of praiseworthy comments for the couple.

"How amazing is that to see your husband's portrait on display!!! Love them both!!" one person wrote.

"You'll never know just how much you are missed," another commented.

Someone else described the painting as a "beautiful portrait of a good man, whose decency and compassion will forever make him a cut above the rest".

The portrait of Barack was painted by Nigerian-American artist Kehinde Wiley.

The painting was commissioned in 2017 and unveiled in February 2018, on the same day that a portrait of Michelle, by American painter Amy Sherald, was also revealed.

Wiley and Sherald were the first black artists to paint official portraits of a US president or first lady for the National Portrait Gallery in DC.

Following the reveal of her portrait, Michelle wrote on Instagram that as a young girl, she "never could have imagined this moment".

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“This is all a little bit overwhelming, especially when I think about all of the young people who will visit the National Portrait Gallery and see this, including so many young girls and young girls of colour who don't often see their images displayed in beautiful and iconic ways,” she stated.

During her attendance at the American Portrait Gala, Michelle presented Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda with the Portrait of a Nation Prize.

“The awardees of the Portrait of a Nation Prize reflect the mission of the National Portrait Gallery as handed down by Congress in 1962 by having made an impact on America's history and culture,” said Kim Sajet, director of the portrait gallery.