

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

Culture Whisper  
Kehinde Wiley exhibition, National Gallery  
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## CULTURE *Whisper*

### Kehinde Wiley exhibition, National Gallery

Kehinde Wiley's new exhibition is set to reimagine the drama of Romanticism in London's National Gallery.



Image; Film still from "In Search of the Miraculous," 2021. © Kehinde Wiley. Courtesy of Stephen Friedman Gallery and Galerie Templon.

Perhaps best known for his official portrait of Barack Obama, American artist Kehinde Wiley always has his eye trained on history and its legacies. His paintings reposition people of colour in traditionally European genres, casting them centre stage in poses that are usually the preserve of white saints and dignitaries. In doing so, he readdresses the imbalance of Western art history, which has all too often marginalised black narratives. His upcoming exhibition in the Sunley Room of the National Gallery will explore Romanticism in a fresh light, reinterpreting this dramatic genre through film and paintings.

Romanticism was an 18th-century artistic movement that explored man's relationship to nature through the representation of sweeping vistas, and often included human figures as a way to heighten the sense of scale – think the brooding landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich or the churning seas of Turner. For this project, Wiley has enlisted the help of black Londoners he met while exploring the area around the National Gallery, in a project that will continue to bring people of colour to the fore, while exploring the awe-inspiring grandeur of the romantic landscape.



Kehinde Wiley. Photo: Abdoulaye Ndao

Wiley is no stranger to London. Last year, at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, he launched an exhibition of portraits of women he met on the streets of Dalston, each one backdropped by brightly coloured floral motifs inspired directly by the designs of William Morris. The show was titled *The Yellow Wallpaper* in reference to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist text of the same name. The National Gallery provides the perfect venue for Wiley's next UK-based venture, an exhibition which promises to be as dramatic as it is thought-provoking.

Kehinde Wiley at the National Gallery runs from Friday 10 December 2021 – Monday 18 April 2022.