



## ***Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence*** **Receives \$1M Grant from Google.org**

Grant from Google.org provides eight weekends of free admission and support for vital public programming, including school and youth curriculum

### **Exhibition opens March 18**

Kehinde Wiley will mark the opening with a free artist talk at 1 PM.

SAN FRANCISCO – The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (the “Museums”) announced the receipt of their single largest grant in the institution’s history from a corporate foundation. Google.org, with support from Google Arts & Culture, has provided \$1 million in funding in support of the US premiere of the exhibition *Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence*, which will open at the de Young museum on March 18. The unprecedented grant will make the exhibition more accessible to Bay Area communities and enable the Museums to offer free admission to the exhibition on eight weekends. In addition, the grant supports a free audio guide, public programming such as a talk with the artist,

grief workshops, school and youth curriculum, an exhibition film, and an ongoing community engagement speaker series presented in partnership with LiveFree—an SF organization working to end the gun violence, mass incarceration, and the criminalization of Black and Brown people. The Museums will also partner with Google Arts & Culture to amplify the exhibition through the YouTube series “Art Zoom.”

*Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence* presents a monumental new body of work created against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the worldwide rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. Expanding upon American artist Kehinde Wiley’s *Down* series from 2008, *An Archaeology of Silence* meditates on the deaths of young Black people slain all over the world. The 25 works stand as elegies and monuments, underscoring the fraught terms in which Black people are rendered visible, especially when at the hands of systemic violence. *Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence* will be on view March 18–October 15, 2023, at the de Young museum in San Francisco. Claudia Schmuckli, Curator in Charge of Contemporary Art and Programming at the Museums of San Francisco, serves as curator for the presentation of the work at the de Young.

"We are deeply grateful to Google.org for their generous support of *Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence*", said Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. "The messages imbued in this work are urgent, and Google's support will enable us to open the exhibition to thousands of people who might not have been otherwise able to attend. Google.org's commitment to this exhibition is also allowing us to amplify our interpretative efforts—including the creation of a free audio guide, a film about the artist, a feature on Google Arts & Culture, and greatly expanded public programming."

"Over the past decade, Google.org has prioritized funding to organizations advancing racial justice, and we are proud to continue that work with support of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco's presentation of *Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence*", said Justin Steele, Google.org Director of Giving for the Americas. "We recognize the importance of making information about racial equity universally accessible and felt it was imperative we support increased access for communities who otherwise might not be able to experience this incredibly important exhibition."

**Free Weekends and Free Programming**

Thanks to Google.org's generous support of the exhibition. The Museums will welcome all visitors free of charge for the following eight weekends

Saturday–Sunday, March 18–19 (opening weekend)

Saturday–Sunday, April 15–16

Saturday–Sunday, May 20–21

Saturday–Sunday, June 17–18

Saturday–Sunday, July 8–9

Saturday–Sunday, July 29–30

Saturday–Sunday, August 19–20

Saturday–Sunday, September 16–17

In addition, there will be many opportunities for visitors to engage with free public programs, including an opening day talk with artist Kehinde Wiley, facilitated by the Museums' Curator in Charge of Contemporary Art and Programming Claudia Schmuckli on Saturday March 18 from 1 -2 pm in the Koret Auditorium at the de Young museum. An accompanying four-part conversation series will run throughout the exhibition, exploring its major themes, and connecting with current racial justice conversations.

Google.org's grant also supports a special series of workshops titled The Quiet Hours, a series of community undertakings and collective mournings, that will take place on May 27, August 5, August 19, and September 16 in the de Young's Piazzoni Murals Room from 1 - 2 pm. Paying homage to Black funerary practices, the series will be hosted by artist and professor Angela Hennessy and poet, author, and public theologian Marvin K. White.

**Film**

A new film, supported by the Google.org grant, will premiere to celebrate the opening of the exhibition. Exploring the life and work of artist Kehinde Wiley, the film, which shares a title with the exhibition, takes viewers on a journey from Wiley's upbringing in South Central Los Angeles to his ascent as one of the world's leading visual artists. It also features interviews with the artist, his twin brother Taiwo Wiley, and his close friend and fellow artist Mickalene Thomas. The film, directed by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco's Khamisi Norwood, is part of the Museums' original documentary series "FAMSF Presents." The film launch is scheduled for March 17 on the Museums' YouTube channel.

### **More about the Exhibition**

*An Archaeology of Silence* reconceptualizes the research Wiley did for his *Down* series, which featured a group of large-scale portraits of young Black men inspired by Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521–1522). Holbein's painting triggered an ongoing investigation into the iconography of death and sacrifice in Western art that Wiley traced across religious, mythological, and historical subjects. The paintings and sculptures in *An Archaeology of Silence* confront the legacies of colonialism through the visual language of the fallen figure. The resulting paintings of Black people struck down, wounded, resting, or dead, all referencing historical paintings of heroes, martyrs, or saints, offer a haunting meditation on the violence against Black and Brown people through European art historical references.

*An Archaeology of Silence* contains some of the largest paintings and sculptures Wiley has created to date, as well as some of the smallest. The series uses scale to elevate the people depicted to heroic status, generally absent from the depictions of the recumbent or fallen figure in Western art (including those that Wiley's works have been based on). It marks an important departure in the artist's work which, with the notable exception of *Down*, has been primarily concerned with verticality and elevation, projecting Black youth into positions of power and grace by painting them into compositions inspired by canonical Western portraits such as Anthony van Dyck's *Charles I at the Hunt* (1636) or Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1801), among many others.

### **About Kehinde Wiley**

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 European 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 to remain muted.

In 2018 Wiley became the first African American artist to paint an official US presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery after former US 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 US 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 the 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 more than 50 public institutions around the world. He lives and works in Beijing, Dakar, and New York.

### **Opportunities for Free Admission**

Google.org will support eight weekends of free admission for visitors to the exhibition and the de Young museum for visitors. This is in addition to free admission to the de Young and Legion of Honor for Bay Area residents on Saturdays supported through a generous grant from Diane B. Wilsey, as well as free admission to all on the first Tuesday of the month. In addition, medical and food assistance recipients and California library card holders enjoy free admission during museum hours through the Museums for All and Discovery & Go programs. More details here.

### **Respite Room**

*Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence* features paintings and sculptures that force viewers to confront their relationship to and complicity in systemic violence against Black people. Throughout the run of the exhibition, the museum's Textile study center adjacent to the exhibition will be utilized as a space of respite with the primary aim of practicing care for visitors during and after their visit.

### **Exhibition Organization**

*Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence* is organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Presenting sponsors: Ford Foundation and Google.org. Major support is provided by Dagmar Dolby. Generous support is provided by The Harris Family, Charles and Brandi Hudson, Nion McEvoy and Leslie Berriman, Paul L. Wattis Foundation and Sonya Yu. Additional support is provided by the Adamolekun Family, Lisa Blackwell, Quinn Delaney and Wayne Jordan, Delvecchio and Kelly Finley, Bryan and Tara Meehan, Elaine Mellis, the Plexo Foundation, Soho House, Lisa and Jim Zanze, and the Contemporary Support Council.

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### **Visiting \ de Young**

Entry to *Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence* will be included in general admission to the de Young museum, with free admission for San Francisco Bay Area residents every Saturday, generously provided by Diane B. Wilsey.

The de Young Museum is open Tuesday–Sunday, 9:30 am - 5:15 pm. For more information, please visit [famsf.org](http://famsf.org).

### **Google.org**

Google.org, Google's philanthropy, brings the best of Google to help solve some of humanity's biggest challenges combining funding, product donations and technical expertise to support underserved communities and provide opportunity for everyone. We engage nonprofits, social enterprises and civic entities who make a significant impact on the communities they serve, and whose work has the potential to produce scalable, meaningful change.

### **LIVE FREE**

LIVE FREE is a justice network of thousands of organizers, faith leaders, directly impacted families, and organizations working to reimagine public safety and increase civic engagement. We build power and agency in communities to eradicate gun violence, mass criminalization, and mass incarceration. LIVE FREE sees a world where every person is safely and peacefully connected to community, free of the systemic constraints that undermine freedom. For more information on LIVE FREE, visit [www.livefreeusa.org](http://www.livefreeusa.org).

### **About Contemporary Art and Programming at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco**

Established in 2016, the Department of Contemporary Art and Programming (CAP), led by Claudia Schmuckli, has distinguished itself through an innovative and dynamic program of commissions, exhibitions, and interventions in dialogue with the Museums' historical sites, architecture, and permanent collections. As the only department not delineated by either medium or geography, CAP presents and collects works in all mediums and across geographies that incite dialogues, embrace a multiplicity of perspectives, and shed new light on both the past and the present. Reflecting a commitment to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and forward-looking dialogue, CAP highlights pressing societal issues and concerns through its programs and acquisitions.

### **About the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco**

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco oversee the de Young museum, located in Golden Gate Park, and the Legion of Honor, in Lincoln Park. It is the largest public arts institution in San Francisco, and one of the most visited arts institutions in the United States.

The de Young originated from the 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition in Golden Gate Park and was established as the Memorial Museum in 1895. It was later renamed in honor of Michael H. de Young, who spearheaded its creation. The present copper-clad landmark building, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, opened in October 2005. Reflecting an active conversation among cultures, perspectives, and time periods, the collections on view include American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts from the 17th to the 21st centuries; arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas; costume and textile arts; and international modern and contemporary art.

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco respectfully acknowledge the Ramaytush Ohlone, the original inhabitants of what is now the San Francisco Peninsula, and acknowledge that the Greater Bay Area is the ancestral territory of the Miwok, Yokuts, Patwin, and other Ohlone. Indigenous communities have lived in and moved through this place over hundreds of generations, and Indigenous peoples from many nations make their home in this region today. Please join us in recognizing and honoring their ancestors, descendants, elders, and communities.

Image credit: Kehinde Wiley, *Morpheus (Ndeye Fatou Mbaye)*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 93 5/8 x 144 1/8 in. (237.8 x 366 cm). © 2022 Kehinde Wiley. Courtesy of the artist and Templon, Paris – Brussels – New York. Photo: Ugo Carmeni.: Ugo Carmeni.