

ROBERTS & TILTON

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Kehinde Wiley

The World Stage: Haiti

September 13 - October 25, 2014

Press Preview: Saturday, September 13th, 4 - 6pm

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 13th, 6 - 8pm

Roberts & Tilton is pleased to announce *The World Stage: Haiti*, the latest chapter in Kehinde Wiley's global survey of countries and their respective cultures. As with previous installments of *The World Stage*, Wiley examines a nation's socioeconomic conditions and culture through the everyday lives of its people, always in the context of the issue of advancing globalization.

In the minds of most, Haiti has never sparked quick associations with tranquility or beauty, and rarely as a travel destination. On the contrary, its modern history, fraught with poverty and corruption and ravaged by a devastating natural disaster, relegated it to a seemingly perpetual Third World status.

Yet, Kehinde Wiley found beauty in Haiti bringing it to the forefront by creating his own beauty pageants, in the long tradition of pageant culture native to the region. In previous *World Stage* iterations, Wiley conducted his castings on the streets. With *The World Stage: Haiti*, he employed a different approach specific to the culture: open calls on the radio, posters around the streets of Jacmel, Jalouise and Port-au-Prince culminating in beauty pageants. Across the Caribbean, pageants serve as mass entertainment events, allowing locals to do more than exhibit poise, talent and physical beauty; pageants are a manifestation of collective cultural values. Wiley's pageant winners were chosen randomly rather than through a judging process. By showing the pageant contestants paintings of European masters on which the new works would be based, Wiley deepened the connection between both place and era.

Haiti's colonial past, under Spanish and French rule before a revolt by slaves led to independence, figures strongly in Wiley's current body of work. He draws from the art history of those colonizing powers, summoning parallels across time and geography. Likewise, Haiti's rich and varied religious traditions, as well as its traditional crafts and decorative arts, inform Wiley's modern chronicle of life and culture. The backgrounds of the paintings incorporate images of vegetation found on Haiti such as okra, brought first to the island from Africa, and sugarcane, a food product that was broadly exploited as a cash crop during slavery.

The World Stage: Haiti includes 12 paintings. Past segments of *The World Stage* have included Jamaica, France, Israel, Brazil, Lagos & Dakar, China, and India/Sri Lanka. This exhibition will mark Wiley's fifth solo show with Roberts & Tilton.

Kehinde Wiley was born in Los Angeles, received a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute in 1999, and a MFA from Yale University in 2001. His paintings are in the collections of over forty museums including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, California), Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles, California), Hammer Museum (Los Angeles, California), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), Seattle Museum of Art (Seattle, Washington), and at the Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, New York) to name a few.

5801 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD CULVER CITY, CA 90232 T 323.549.0223 F 323.549.0224
WWW.ROBERTSANDTILTON.COM INFO@ROBERTSANDTILTON.COM

In February 2015, Kehinde Wiley will mount *A New Republic*, a mid career retrospective exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (Brooklyn, New York) traveling to four venues. Wiley has had solo museum exhibitions at The Phoenix Art Museum (Phoenix, Arizona), the Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, Ohio) the Portland Art Museum (Portland, Oregon) The Jewish Museum (New York, New York), The Studio Museum in Harlem (New York, New York) as well as others. His work has been the subject of ten monographs to date. Wiley is currently working on multiple projects including a monumental painting for a commission with ART in Embassies for the new United States Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Publication

Kehinde Wiley The World Stage: Haiti

Published by Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, California

Format: Hardcover, 11.5 x 8.75 inches/29 x 22 cm

Essays by M. Cynthia Oliver, PhD and Mike Rogge

English/Haitian Creole, 64 pages, 40 color images

ISBN: 978-0-9914889-2-6

Available through DAP, Spring 2015

Film

A documentary film, *Kehinde Wiley The World Stage: Haiti* charts the artist's journey to Jacmel, Jalousie and Port-au-Prince. The film will be screened at Roberts & Tilton during the exhibition.

To preview, please visit <http://www.robertsandtilton.com/artists/wiley/haiti30-video.php>

Edition

An edition will be published to benefit Ciné Institute located in Jacmel, Haiti. Ciné Institute's goal is to educate Haitian artists in film and sound engineering to retain their culture and create artwork, which reflects Haitian history and culture. Details forthcoming. For additional information regarding Ciné Institute, please visit <http://www.cineinstitute.com>

Media Partner **FLAUNT**

Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00am – 6:00pm.

For additional information, please contact Mary Skarbek at mary@robertsandtilton.com or 323.549.0223.

Roberts & Tilton is located between Fairfax Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard.

Parking is available on the street and at Dunn Edwards located 1/2 block east of the gallery.