

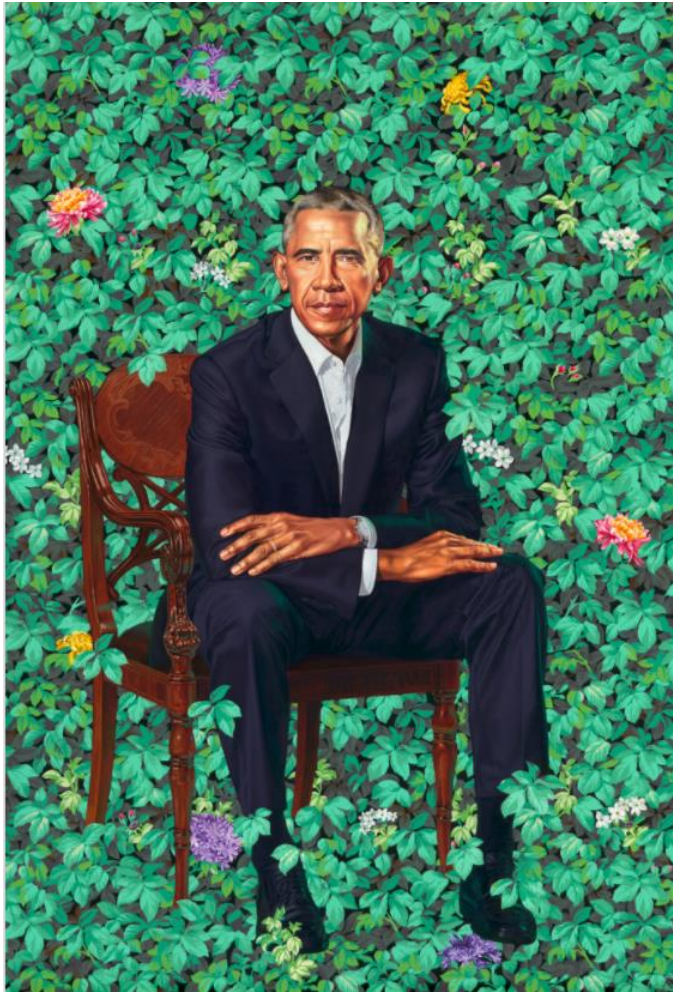
# 50 National Portrait Gallery

50 EYE-OPENING YEARS

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**Condensed credit information:** Barack Obama by Kehinde Wiley, oil on canvas, 2018. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. The National Portrait Gallery is grateful to the following lead donors for their support of the Obama portraits: Kate Capshaw and Steven Spielberg; Judith Kern and Kent Whealy; Tommie L. Pegues and Donald A. Capoccia.

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**Dimensions:**

Canvas: 84 1/8 x 57 7/8 in.

Frame: 92 1/4 x 65 3/4 in.

**Label:**

**Barack Obama born 1961**

*Forty-fourth president, 2009–2017*

Barack Obama made history in 2009 by becoming the first African American president. The former Illinois state senator's election signaled a feeling of hope for the future even as the U.S. was undergoing its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. While working to improve the economy, Obama enacted the Affordable Care Act, extending health benefits to millions of previously uninsured Americans. Overseas, he oversaw the drawdown of American troops in the Middle East—a force reduction that was controversially replaced with an expansion of drone and aviation strikes. Though his mission to kill al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden was successful, his pledge to close the Guantanamo prison went unrealized.

Artist Kehinde Wiley is known for his vibrant, large-scale paintings of African Americans posing as famous figures from the history of Western art. This portrait does not include an underlying art historical reference, but some of the flowers in the background carry special meaning for Obama. The chrysanthemums, for example, reference the official flower of Chicago. The jasmine evokes Hawaii, where he spent the majority of his childhood, and the African blue lilies stand in for his late Kenyan father.

Kehinde Wiley (born 1977)

Oil on canvas, 2018

Gift of Kate Capshaw and Steven Spielberg; Judith Kern and Kent Whealy; Tommie L. Pegues and Donald A. Capoccia; Clarence, DeLoise, and Brenda Gaines; The Stoneridge Fund of Amy and Marc Meadows; Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker; Catherine and Michael Podell; Mark and Cindy Aron; Lyndon J. Barrois and Janine Sherman Barrois; The Honorable John and Louise Bryson; Paul and Rose Carter; Bob and Jane Clark; Lisa R. Davis; Shirley Ross Davis and Family; Alan and Lois Fern; Conrad and Constance Hipkins; Sharon and John Hoffman; Daniel and Kimberly Johnson; John Legend and Chrissy Teigen; Eileen Harris Norton; Helen Hilton Raiser; Philip and Elizabeth Ryan; Roselyne Chroman Swig; Josef Vascovitz and Lisa Goodman; Michele J. Hooper and Lemuel Seabrook III; The Skylark Foundation; Cleveland and Harriette Chambliss; Anna Chavez and Eugene Eidenberg; Carla Diggs & Stephen M. Smith; Danny First; Peggy Woodford Forbes and Harry Bremond; Stephen Friedman Gallery; Sean and Mary Kelly, Sean Kelly Gallery; Jamie Lunder; Joff Masukawa and Noëlle Kennedy Masukawa; Derek McGinty and Cheryl Cooper; Robert and Jan Newman; The Raymond L. Ocampo Jr. and Sanda O. Ocampo Family Trust; Julie and Bennett Roberts; Paul Sack; Gertrude Dixon Sherman; Michael and Mary Silver; V. Joy Simmons, MD; Andrea Lavin Solow and Alan P. Solow; John Sykes; Galerie Templon; Henry L. Thaggert III

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