

# TEMPLON



KEHINDE WILEY

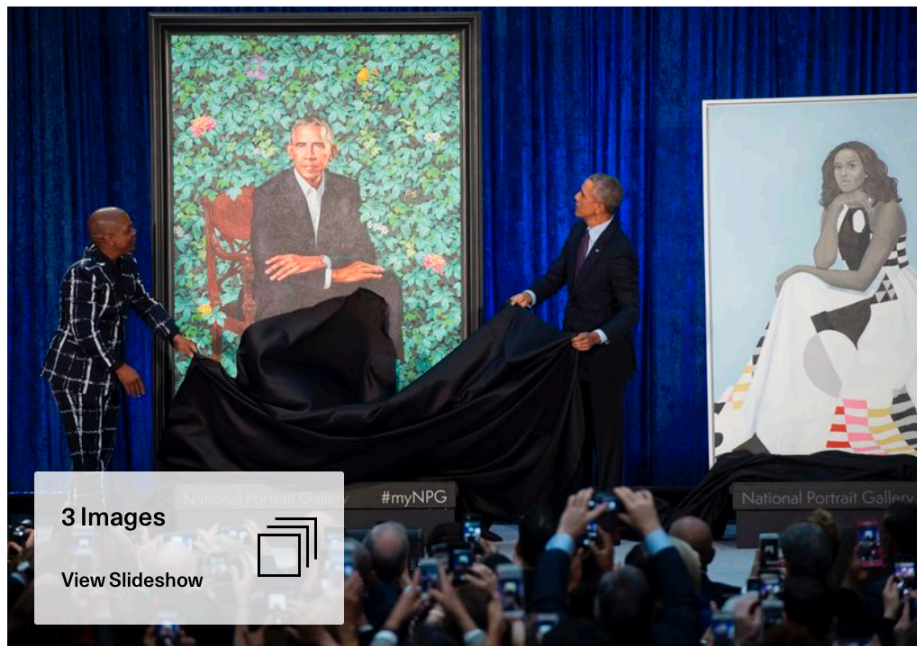
*ARTSY.NET*, 16 December, 2019



As the decade comes to a close, it's an apt time to reflect on the most memorable moments that inspired, shaped, and shook the art world. These moments brought art to the forefront of global conversations and shed light on greater cultural trends affecting artists, artworks, or the art market. They started with artists, institutions, or forces beyond the art world, and either ignited enduring practices or movements, heightened conversations around race and representation in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, or forced museums to reckon with their ties to power and money. These moments illuminate collective values and concerns, unearthing complex notions with which we continue to grapple. Through and through, we see powerful cultural shifts centered in the art world that changed lives and influenced global economies.

## The unveiling of the Obama portraits

February 2018



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Kehinde Wiley's portrait of President Barack Obama and Amy Sherald's accompanying portrait of First Lady Michelle went far beyond the norm for presidential portraiture; they created a new form of populist art and brought black portraiture to the forefront of a national conversation around race and representation.

The paintings were unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., in February 2018 to great fanfare: It was not only the first time a portrait of an African American president had been unveiled, but the first time a black artist was selected to paint a presidential portrait.

The portraits became a cultural phenomenon, but their influence extended into the art world, as well; they signaled a renewed cultural interest in black artists, which has manifested itself in more solo museum and gallery shows for black artists. Although artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Tschabalala Self have sold record-breaking works at auction, works by black artists still tend to be vastly undervalued on the market, showing how far the art world has to go to correct historical biases.