

SEANKELLY

Halperin, Julia "Kehinde Wiley Collaborates With Designer Riccardo Tisci to Create His First-Ever Paintings of Women," *ARTINFO*, April 20, 2012.

BLOUINARTINFO

Kehinde Wiley Collaborates With Designer Riccardo Tisci to Create His First-Ever Paintings of Women



Kehinde Wiley (Photo by Kwaku Alston)

Kehinde Wiley has made a name for himself painting African-American men in heroic poses in front of bright, Baroque backgrounds. The consistency and vividness of his style has made him one of the more sought-after — and collectible — young artists working today. But for his first exhibition at **Sean Kelly Gallery**, which signed the artist to its roster last year, Wiley will make a departure. For the first time, he will paint a series of women.

The exhibition, "An Economy of Grace," features portraits of African-American women Wiley cast on the streets of New York City. But rather than paint them in their own clothes, as Wiley has done in the past with his male subjects, the artist collaborated with **Givenchy's Riccardo Tisci** to design six unique dresses for the models. (Before they began work on the gowns, Wiley and Tisci spent hours walking through the galleries of the Louvre for inspiration.)

The subjects' poses are based on historical portraits of aristocratic women by artists such as **Jacques-Louis David** and **Thomas Gainsborough**. "I am painting women in order to come to terms with the depictions of gender within the context of art history," Wiley said in a statement. "This series of works attempt to reconcile the presence of black female stereotypes that surrounds their presence and/or absence in art history, and the notions of beauty, spectacle, and the 'grand' painting."

The creation of the series is chronicled in a forthcoming documentary directed by filmmaker **Jeff Dupre**. In addition to following the collaboration between Wiley and Tisci, the film will share the personal stories of the young women chosen as models for the paintings.

"An Economy of Grace" opens at Sean Kelly Gallery on 528 W 29th Street in New York on May 5.