



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **THE FRICK PITTSBURGH UNVEILS SLAY: ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI & KEHINDE WILEY**

**First-of-its-kind Exhibition of Two Masterpieces of the Same Subject Painted 400 Years Apart Explores Critical Questions of Identity, Power, and Inequality**

Pittsburgh, PA, April 8, 2022 — The Frick Pittsburgh today announced the highly anticipated April 16 opening of **SLAY: Artemisia Gentileschi & Kehinde Wiley**, a first-of-its-kind exhibition pairing two masterpieces of the same subject painted 400 years apart — the first by Artemisia Gentileschi, arguably the most successful female painter of 17th-century Italy, and the second by Kehinde Wiley, the internationally celebrated Black American contemporary artist. Both paintings depict an Old Testament war story in which the heroic Jewish widow Judith beheads the Assyrian General Holofernes and thereby saves her city and the Israelites from destruction.

Co-organized by the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and The Museum Box, and coordinated at the Frick by Chief Curator Dawn R. Brean and noted art historian Kilolo Lockett, the juxtaposition of these monumental works raises critical questions of identity, power, inequality, oppression, and what constitutes self-defense in an unjust war. Alone, each work of art exists as an essential destination for art lovers. Together, they spark vital questions and serve as catalysts for conversation.

“We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to showcase these two extraordinarily powerful masterworks in a never-before-seen pairing,” said Elizabeth E. Barker, Ph.D., executive director of The Frick Pittsburgh. “Great works of art, like these two paintings, take us outside of ourselves and have the power to change the way we see the world. When we discuss a work of art with others, the experience can be even richer and more meaningful. This is one reason why museums are playing an increasingly essential role in fostering discourse and can even serve as agents of social change,” she continued.

“The future of museum curating is collaborations. It’s essential for ensuring multiple perspectives are represented, that there are multiple avenues through which visitors can engage with the ideas behind the artworks,” said Ms. Brean. “Kilolo Luckett was the ideal partner for presenting this exhibition. She cares immensely about the potential for museums as safe spaces for generative dialogue. Her insights and perspectives have made the show that much more powerful.”

“These two artists, their journeys and their stories are vastly different. And yet there is so much in common in their experiences,” said Ms. Luckett. “We are programmed to look at differences in an unhealthy way; the exhibition is an opportunity to think differently — and to heal and grow together.” **SLAY** will remain on view at The Frick Art Museum through July 10, 2022. Admission is free.

## **EXHIBITION-RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

The Frick will offer an array of exhibition-related programming including **Exploring SLAY: In-gallery Conversations**, up-close explorations of the exhibition’s two massive paintings, on Thursdays and Saturdays, April 21–July 9, at 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. Admission is free for the gallery conversations, however space is limited. **SLAY** programs begin on Tuesday, April 12 with a virtual investigation of the story of Judith and Holofernes led by Hebrew Bible scholar Caryn Tampler-Rosenau. Details regarding the full slate of exhibition-related public programs is available at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](https://www.thefrickpittsburgh.org).

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Artemisia Gentileschi** (Italian, b. Rome 1593 – d. Naples c. 1653) was one of the most ambitious and influential female painters of Baroque Italy. Born into an elite circle of artists in Rome, Artemisia was the daughter of Orazio Gentileschi, a major follower of the revolutionary painter Caravaggio. Artemisia gained experience working in her father’s studio from a young age. In 1611, Agostino Tassi, an acquaintance and collaborator of her father’s, raped 17-year-old Artemisia. She endured a grueling and

public trial during which she was tortured to verify her testimony. Following the trial, Artemisia married Florentine painter Pierantonio Stiattesi, and left Rome for Florence to embark on her independent career. In 1616, she became the first woman to gain admittance to the Accademia del Disegno. Moving between Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples, and London, Artemisia built a reputation for her inventive portrayals of female heroines. Her uniquely female perspective has led to the celebration of Artemisia as a modern feminist icon.

**Kehinde Wiley** (American, b. Los Angeles, CA, 1977) is a painter best known for his hyper-realistic portraits of Black men and women, including his 2018 portrait of former President Barack Obama. Using the visual vocabulary of European Old Master paintings juxtaposed with contemporary culture, Kehinde interrogates societal notions of race, gender, identity, power, and representation. Born in Los Angeles to an American mother and Nigerian father, he earned his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and his MFA from the Yale University School of Art. Kehinde's work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, and the National Portrait Gallery in London.

## **ABOUT THE LENDERS**

Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith and Holofernes*, c. 1612-1617, is part of the collection of the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, an art museum located in the Palace of Capodimonte, a grand Bourbon palazzo in Naples, Italy. One of the largest museums in Italy, the museum is the prime repository of Neapolitan painting and decorative art, with several important works from other Italian schools of painting, and some important ancient Roman sculptures.

Kehinde Wiley's *Judith and Holofernes*, 2012, is in the collection of the North Carolina Museum of Art. Located in Raleigh, The North Carolina Museum of Art's collection spans more than 5,000 years, from antiquity to the present. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, under the auspices of Governor Roy Cooper; an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, guided by the direction of Secretary D. Reid Wilson; and led by Director Valerie Hillings.

## **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND TOUR**

**SLAY: Artemisia Gentileschi & Kehinde Wiley** is organized by the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and The Museum Box. Following its presentation at The Frick Pittsburgh, the exhibition will travel to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, where it will be on

view from July 19 – October 9, 2022. The tour will conclude at the North Carolina Museum of Art, where the exhibition will be presented from October 22, 2022 – January 15, 2023.

### **EXHIBITION CATALOGUE**

A 120-page illustrated hardcover exhibition catalogue will be available for purchase at the Frick Museum Store (\$30; \$27 for Frick members). Titled **Gentileschi/Wiley: Two Paintings of Judith 400 Years Apart**, it features essays by art historian Dr. Eleonora Causa D’Auria, and Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary Art, North Carolina Museum of Art, Linda Johnson Dougherty.

### **ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH**

Located on the estate of 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick, The Frick Pittsburgh offers authentic experiences with art, history and nature that inspire and delight. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds are warmly welcomed to explore The Frick Art Museum, offering world-class collections of European art and Chinese porcelain alongside an active schedule of temporary exhibitions; Clayton, the Frick family’s French château-style mansion (remodeled by architect Frederick J. Osterling in the 1890s); the Car and Carriage Museum; and a large working greenhouse designed by architects Alden & Harlow—all nestled on six acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens in Pittsburgh’s East End. Amenities include an Education Center, the Frick children’s playhouse (also designed by Alden & Harlow), The Café at the Frick, and the Grable Visitor Center, which houses the Frick Museum Store. Information about The Frick Pittsburgh is available online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org).

**For additional information or images, please contact Kaitlyn Clem, Marketing and Communications Associate, at 412-342-4025 or [KClem@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:KClem@TheFrickPittsburgh.org).**

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