



In these toxic times, art can help us transform and give us a sense of purpose. This story begins with my seeing the Confederate monuments. What does it feel like if you are black and walking beneath this? We come from a beautiful, fractured situation. Let's take these fractured pieces and put them back together.

—KEHINDE WILEY

In *Rumors of War*, Wiley draws from a series of paintings he created in the early 2000s. Inspired by the history of equestrian portraiture, Wiley replaced traditional white subjects depicted in large-format paintings with young, African American men in street clothes. At that time, these works were a reaction to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly two decades later, Wiley's new public sculpture is an important reminder that violence continues not just in the Middle East but every day on the streets of this nation. *Rumors of War* also offers an exquisite example of how to imagine and develop a more complete and inclusive American story.

Wiley's career has focused on addressing and rectifying the absence of black and brown men and women in our visual, historical, and cultural narratives. His subjects range from individuals the artist encountered while traveling around the world to many of the most renowned African American figures of our generation, including President Barack Obama.

Wiley's work powerfully repositions black youth within the classical European tradition of power and status. With *Rumors of War*, he expands this concept while directly engaging the national conversation around monuments and their role in perpetuating incomplete histories and inequality.

This work takes its inspiration from the statue of Confederate Army General James Ewell Brown "J.E.B." Stuart created by Frederick Moynihan in 1907. As with the original, the rider strikes a heroic pose while sitting upon a muscular horse. However, in Wiley's sculpture, the figure is a young African American dressed in urban streetwear. Proudly mounted on its large stone pedestal, the bronze sculpture commemorates African American youth lost to the social and political battles being waged throughout our nation.



While this is Wiley's first monumental public sculpture, it is a continuation of his career-long investigation of representation, race, gender, and power.

Kehinde Wiley, American, born 1977, *Rumors of War*, 2019, Bronze with stone pedestal, Purchased with funds provided by Virginia Sargeant Reynolds in memory of her husband, Richard S. Reynolds, Jr., by exchange, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, Pamela K. and William A. Royall, Jr., Angel and Tom Papa, Katherine and Steven Markel, and additional private donors, 2019.39