

# St. Adelaide by Kehinde Wiley

## KS1 and KS2 (ages 5-11)

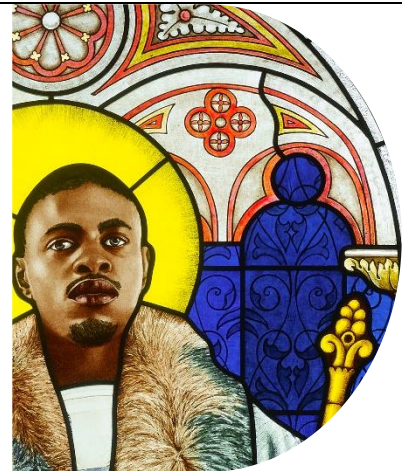
This resource has been compiled for art educators and teachers. It is based around a stained glass artwork titled *Saint Adelaide*, designed by Kehinde Wiley (b.1977) in the permanent collection of The Stained Glass Museum.

Sample activities are taken from our extended 'Portraiture, Power and Pride' session for schools and home educator groups. To find out more about our learning programme or to arrange a visit to the museum in person please visit [www.stainedglassmuseum.com/learning](http://www.stainedglassmuseum.com/learning) or contact [learning@stainedglassmuseum.com](mailto:learning@stainedglassmuseum.com)

### Learning Objectives:

#### Art and Design National Curriculum Aims

- Pupils are taught about great artists, architects and designers in history.
- Pupils are taught to analyse and evaluate their own work, and that of others, in order to strengthen the visual impact or applications of their work.
- Pupils know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms.



#### PSHE Association Learning Aims

- Pupils learn how we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing.
- Pupils learn strategies to develop assertiveness and build resilience to peer and other influences that affect both how they think about themselves and their health and wellbeing.

**Introduction: Let's look at the stained glass panel *Saint Adelaide* by Kehinde Wiley, which is in the collection of The Stained Glass Museum (Image 1).**

With a partner, look at Image 1 and think about the following questions.

- 1) What is the first thing you notice about this panel?
- 2) Who do you think Mark Shavers is?
- 3) What do you like about this panel?

### Background information on artist for the teacher to share with class at an appropriate level:

**Kehinde Wiley** was born in Los Angeles on 28 February 1977. He is an African American portrait painter based in New York City, who is known for his highly

naturalistic paintings of Black people, which often reference the work of European 'Old Master' painters. He was commissioned in 2017 to paint the official presidential portrait of former President Barack Obama.

Kehinde Wiley is a proud, black, LGBTQI / queer artist whose work is about racial equality. He looks at himself and wants the same level of representation everywhere.

Wiley's portraits often reference the paintings of Old Masters – taking the pose of a figure, usually a white sitter and replacing them with a Black man or woman. He often adds colourful patterned backgrounds to these portraits. In doing so Wiley's paintings blur the boundaries between traditional and contemporary modes of representation.

His portraits are often based on photographs of young black men or women, dressed in their own clothes. Wiley uses a process called 'street casting' to find sitters for his paintings – approaching individuals on the streets. He has also produced series of portraits in different locations across the world including Jamaica, China, Lagos and Dakar.

Through his ornate portraits Wiley aims to re-image Black men and women's depiction in art. The way he has his models pose, in similar positions and stances as the original figures in classical paintings, is meant to act as commentary for the historical power dynamic of African American men and white men.

In his recreation of old portraits, modern black men that he meets on the streets are taking the place of the original subjects, they are assuming their position or power. He paints them as people who are worthy of being noticed, rather than background elements or in subservient positions. Wiley is also creating a portrayal of African American men that is not often seen in the media today. Wiley challenges racist perceptions that have been continually pushed onto society. Rather than depict them as angry or tough, he creates portraits where the figures are dignified, confident, and at times vulnerable. The figures are in poses in ways that do not always align with what is considered masculine for black men today.

Wiley is best known for his oil paintings, but he has also made several sculptures and also stained glass artworks like *Saint Adelaide*.

**Main Activity: Comparing Kehinde Wiley's *Saint Adelaide* with *Saint Adelaide* by the old master Ingres (Image 2)**

Look at the two stained glass windows of *Saint Adelaide* by Wiley and Ingres. Ask your children to write down the similarities and differences between the two stained glass pieces.

Similarities may include:

- Same pose
- Similar patterns in the border, and architectural frame
- Both holding orb, sceptre, bible, and coin
- Both standing on a plinth with their name on
- Similar colours used

- Halo

Differences may include:

- Different style of clothes
- One is a man and one is a woman
- Mark Shavers is black and Saint Adelaide is white
- She has eyes closed and looking away and he has eyes open and looking forward
- Mark shavers doesn't have a crown
- Mark Shavers is holding the objects slightly differently

Children to work in small groups to discuss what they would choose to be wearing and holding if they were in this Saint Adelaide panel. Encourage them to think about objects that represent who they are, e.g., an object linked to a hobby or sport, belief, culture, favourite toy, book, etc.

Children use the outline provided below or sketch their own version of Saint Adelaide with themselves as the main person holding objects of their choice.

### **Plenary:**

Children to share their finished work with the class or small group explaining what they are wearing and holding and what that says about them.

### **Further activity suggestions:**

Children draw or take a photo at home of themselves in clothes they feel best represent them holding objects that mean something to them. Photos/drawings could be put onto a photocopy of the background of Wiley's *Saint Adelaide*.

Have a group discussion. Possible topics include:

- Identity and representation
- historic and contemporary portraiture
- symbolism in art
- Racism and stereotyping
- diversity and inclusion

### **Other Resources**

- [Saint Adelaide by Kehinde Wiley](#) (The Stained Glass Museum online Catalogue entry)
- [They're not too young to talk about race](#) (PDF)
- [Kehinde Wiley: Street Casting](#) (Video, 2:31 mins, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)



**Image 1**



Left: Kehinde Wiley (b.1977), *Saint Adelaide*, 2014, stained glass, 251 x 116 cm. © The Stained Glass Museum (ELYGM:2021.1).

Right: Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), *Saint Adelaide*, 1842. St. Ferdinand Royal Chapel, Notre Dame de Compassion, Paris.

## Image 2



THE STAINED  
GLASS MUSEUM

