

## BLACK PANTHER BREAKS BOUNDARIES

Ariel Saah

Guest Writer

The ensuing story of Black Panther splits along dueling ideologies. It starts up where Captain America: Civil War ended, with T'Challa (played by the dashing and talented Chadwick Boseman) assuming control of his country in the wake of his father's death. For decades, Wakanda's utopian spirit has flourished under secrecy and isolation from the outside world. Wakanda believes that if world powers discovered its technological and scientific genius, the

country would risk constant threat. Old fashioned isolationists, T'Challa's mother Ramonda (played by the elegant, talented and Oscar-less Angela Bassett) and Okoye (Danai Gurira), head of the king's women-only security team, the Dora Milaje—believe the country must continue as it has for centuries, in isolation, responsible for Wakanda, and Wakanda alone. Others, like W'Kabi (Daniel Kaluuya) and Nakia (played by the love of my life, Lupita Nyong'o), confidants to T'Challa, subscribe to a more pan-Africanist worldview. They—correctly—believe that Wakanda should use its advantages to aid the rest of Africa and the rest of the Black world. Nakia especially believes it is the country's duty to aid the less fortunate.

The cinematography of this film was absolutely breathtaking. The

... saw how evil he was—the what—but also you saw the why. Shuri (Letitia Wright) definitely stole the show in every scene she was in. Her humor and playfulness perfectly balanced her obvious brilliance in a way that just forces you love her. The relationship between Nakia and T'Challa was based on mutual respect and trust. T'Challa valued Nakia's advice and respected her as a person, a woman, an advisor, a warrior and the love of his life. Black Panther in an incredibly impactful film. It did an incredible job in representing groups who so seldom see themselves on the big screen. Black people are finally able to see themselves in roles other than slavery, Jim Crow or anything where they need a white savior. A blockbuster film with a massive budget, being made by a company with massive visibility showcasing black people in such different positive roles is definitely a win for the Black community.

Women, particularly women of color, even more particularly, black women, have found a heroine in Shuri. Shuri is only 16, yet she is widely known as the smartest person in Wakanda, and one of the smartest people in MCU. She is the face of the technological advancements of Wakanda, the most technologically advanced country. It's refreshing seeing women who the men go to for scientific help.

Africa was represented in a way that the Western world never sees—successful, rich, brilliant, and the most technologically advanced. Is it a coincidence that the most advanced country is an African country that has never been interfered in by white people? Spoiler—it's not.

# History in the making

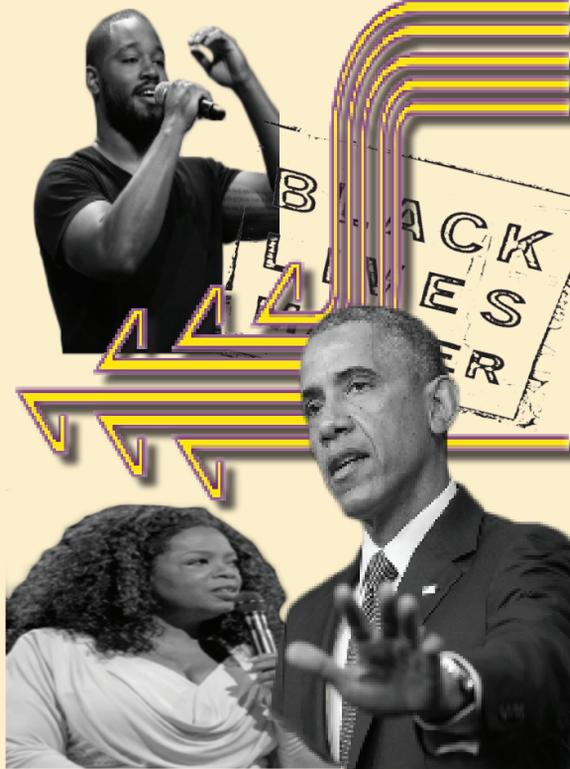
Amaeka Effiong  
Staff Reporter

Black History Month is a special time each year to look back on the remarkable accomplishments of Black people everywhere. It is easy to forget that some of these remarkable people are still living today and continue to make huge strides within the Black community and all over the world.

Ryan Coogler, director of *Black Panther*, is responsible for big changes that are taking place in the film industry. Since its release on Feb. 16, *Black Panther* has broken box office records and has become very popular within the Marvel fandom.

While directing movies, Coogler makes it a point to reference Black social issues and place Black people in roles that have not been widely explored in the past. His actions are beginning to shift Hollywood's views on having more diverse casts in big productions and reveal the large success it could potentially bring.

Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, has made history in and out of office; one of the most obvious ways being that he was the very first Black person to become president of the United States. With that, Obama also passed a Health Care Reform Bill, put an end to the war in Iraq, terminated the al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, changed the torture policies that Bush established, upgraded the Food Safety System, made strides in renewable technology research, established more laws against hate crimes, enabled more health coverage for kids and even aided South Sudan in gaining independence. Obama did this all with a very low scandal count compared to the current administration, all the while receiving a tremendous amount of hate because of his skin color.



Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi are making history today as the founders of the international movement called Black Lives Matter (BLM).

BLM was founded in July of 2013 with the goal of uniting people from all over the world to protest police brutality against Black people, and other forms of systematic racism.

Garza, Cullors and Tometi were originally inspired to create BLM after the controversial Trayvon Martin case where Martin, a Black teenager, was wrongfully murdered.

Since their establishment, BLM has conducted several marches and rallies across the nation, and has gained many supporters from various ethnic groups.

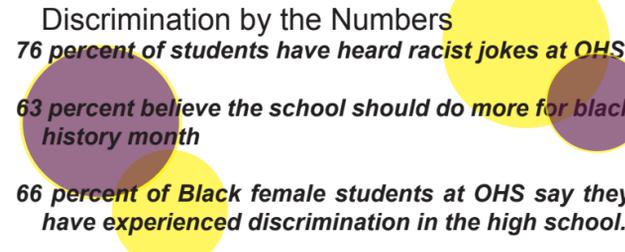
Oprah Winfrey, for example, is a bold woman who has always been persistent in speaking out against discrimination.

Throughout her life she faced many hardships because of the color of her skin, but still pushed forward.

In one instance, when she was starting out her career as a news anchor, her producers and coworkers encouraged her to get a nose-job and straighten her hair so that she would not look too 'Black'. However, Winfrey refused to do so and did not let racists in the industry prohibit her from becoming the successful and kind hearted woman that she is today.

Winfrey has spoken out for those without a voice on multiple occasions as well, like her recent #MeToo speech at the Golden Globe Awards. Winfrey also uses her wealth to benefit others through her foundations and selfless donations to charities.

One of her biggest projects, the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, has remained a stable source of education for young women in Meyerton, Gauteng, South Africa who may have otherwise lacked the opportunity to go to school. Winfrey continues to be an inspiration for those who are facing difficulties within themselves and reminds everyone to be proud of who they are.



Opinion  
Luis Borrero  
Editor-in-Chief

## Where's white history month?

Some will argue whether or not Black History Month should be celebrated at all. That is a whole other editorial; however, one thing that's for certain, the idea of a "white history month" is an unnecessary and silly joke.

To put any case to rest, the fact that the educational system teaches white history through the entirety of a standard K-12 curriculum refutes all opposition, as the American student body rarely lacks substantial knowledge of the background. But, of course, there are people who simply don't understand that.

A history so perpetual such as white history inevitably will have its flaws. That being said, white history includes the forcing of millions of indigenous people out of their land, the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans and the forced migration, labor and trade of 10.7 million Africans?

Yes, there are good things about white history, but, as the nation was founded and led by white people, the amount of things that can be highlighted would be excessive and honestly, pointless. Part of the reason we have Black history month is because that group is—and is still to this day—oppressed. So yes, we take a month of the year to celebrate

the boundaries that so many African Americans have broken, achievements that otherwise would not likely be celebrated as in depth as deserved. As a number of celebrities, companies, media outlets and even industries give light to Black history during February, I've personally found that I've learned more about the topic through the scope those institutions have, especially since our mandated education limits the amount of Black history included in the curriculum.

Black History Month in many cases is a month of pride for Black people all around the world—white people do not need any more pride; they, unlike Black people are not marginalized, and therefore do not need a tighter community between each other.

Ignorantly attempting to steal the spotlight from something which is rarely focused upon when you have the light for the entirety of the time is frustrating and plain embarrassing. White history month would be one of the worst stains on the country if ever implemented for any reason (I wholeheartedly doubt it would), and, seriously, you should just feel bad for yourself if you believe in it.

# Obamas reveal groundbreaking presidential portraits at national gallery

Lucy Potter  
Staff Reporter

In their new official portraits, former First Couple Barack and Michelle Obama are altogether gravitas, beautiful and current. The paintings—Mr. Obama's by Kehinde Wiley; Mrs. Obama's by Amy Serrano—are a much needed change from those of past Presidents and First Ladies.

Mrs. Obama sits calm, cool and serious in front of a striking blue background. Her gown, which dominates the painting, shows not only her iconic fashion sense and toned arms, but carries a larger message too. The geometric dress, part of the Michelle Smith spring 2017 Milly collection, was inspired, according to Smith, by a "desire for equality, equality in human rights, racial equality, LGBTQ equality."

On a background of vines and symbolic flowers, Kehinde Wiley

depicted Mr. Obama sans tie and relaxed, while still somber and intelligent, arms crossed and sitting. African blue lilies, jasmine and chrysanthemums appear in the vines, representing, respectively, his father's Kenyan heritage, his childhood in Hawaii and his political start in Chicago.

Though the portraits appear almost opposite each other—one muted and cool-toned, the other warm and bright; one with a plain background, the other's elaborate—they are brought together with the same pensive and serious gaze. Both Obamas are clearly thinking about big issues.

The portraits also totally encompass the public's view of each Obama. Barack looks intellectual and professional, but still somewhat relatable and casual. Michelle appears confident, serious, inspirational and stylish. And both paintings are contemporary and unrivaled, like the subjects themselves.

It isn't easy to think of any past Presidential or First Lady portraits

that created any excitement or intrigue, let alone ones that sparked discussion. After all, they all follow the apparent obligatory arrangement of a white guy or gal in a suit and tie or dress of his or her era in front of a realistic, official-looking office. Lirit Gilmore (10) commented on the change between past presidential portraits and the Obama's.

"The past paintings, they went up and everyone said, 'Okay, I guess every president gets a portrait,' and the paintings went up for everyone to see," Gilmore said. "But these new portraits, they've been in the news, they've been everywhere because they're such an interesting new take on the boring old paintings. This is our first black president, so that's cool as hell, and not only did they switch from white to black, but they've switched from plain to a really expressive new thing." But the first African-American

Presidential couple put a conscious effort into picking real, relevant portraitists to paint them. As predicted, Wiley and Serrano each made a groundbreaking and stunning art piece.

Both of the artistic geniuses are African-American as well and use their media to not only create wonderful, unique masterpieces, but to, as true artists do, spread a larger, important message. The artists have both confronted the politics of race consistently in their past work and have done so again in tactful ways in these new commissions. Gelani Scarlett (11) shared an opinion on the portraits.

"I think [the paintings] are very inspirational, especially when you look at them from the point of view of a black person," Scarlett said. "With their portraits, there's a much deeper meaning behind it because not only do so many kids and people of color look up to them, but it's nice to see that

people in the future will have so much respect for them."

Serrano's portraits tend to be subtle with, but not neglectful of, the political aspect (like Mrs. Obama's clever dress), while Wiley usually takes a more obvious route. Using black men or women to recreate iconic poses made by always-white subjects gets Wiley's main concept across: "Painting is about the world we live in. Black people live in the world. My choice is to include them."

Valerie Mercer, the Detroit Institute of Arts' curator of African American Art, spoke to the Detroit Free Press about the Obama's choice of artists.

"Being a curator and admiring the work of Kehinde Wiley and Amy Serrano, I feel especially proud and happy that Michelle and Barack Obama chose these African-American artists to do their portraits and to break with convention," says Mercer "Why would they want some of those boring, official portraits? They are making a statement as being very contemporary people ...

You choose artists like these for their distinct visions."

Serrano's Michelle Obama is comparable to her other works; a bright, solid background and an almost geometric human subject with muted colors. But, Wiley's, although sharing the same style as his other pieces, didn't seem to share the same idea behind it. However, the portrait does seem to share the same concept.

Wiley had Mr. Obama seated in a traditional, old wooden chair, like many past Presidents are sitting in for their portraits, but Mr. Obama isn't white like the other men, and he wasn't placed in a realistic, official-looking office. He was placed outside with Wiley's trademark background style: a highly vibrant, often floral, somewhat two-dimensional pattern.

It's monumental. The Obamas, the first black Presidential couple, have utterly unparalleled official portraits painted by two exceptional black artists; b; both of which advocate strongly for social change and are celebrated for the distinctive messages of racial equality in their work.