

Basic Detail Report



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Title: Jaavon & the Unknown Gentleman

Date: 2011

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@296f3

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: "Jaavon and the Unknown Gentleman" was commissioned by the New Britain Museum of American Art as a contemporary commentary on the Colonial-era work "Gentleman with Attendant" by Ralph Earl. The resulting painting is the first in a new series that focuses on identity. Kaphar explains: "Much of black history recorded in Western art is summarized visually by three roles: enslaved, in servitude, or impoverished. But beyond this limited social order lies a people of dignity and strength, whose survival is nothing less than miraculous. Within the context of 19th-century paintings most black characters play, at best, secondary roles in the composition. The implication of hierarchy through compositional positioning (that is, figures in the composition) is a fundamental theme explored in this piece. In many paintings from this period the prototypical image of a black person was as a slave or servant, just outside of illuminated areas of importance. The characters in the shadows were there to add balance to the overall composition and emphasize, or accentuate, the status of the "important" character being painted. Dimensions: 26 x 18 in.