



CHARLES WHITE (1918-1979)

Patience Y

Signed lower middle, "Charles White '71"
charcoal, paint, and wax crayon on paper
51 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. (56 7/8 x 47 x 2 1/2 in.)
130.81 x 100.33 cm (144.46 x 119.38 x 6.35 cm)
1971

41088

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, New York

The African American painter, printmaker, and teacher Charles Wilbert White was born in Chicago. He attended The Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York City. White taught at the George Washington Carver School in New York from 1943 to 1945 and was artist-in-residence at Howard University in Washington, DC, in 1945.

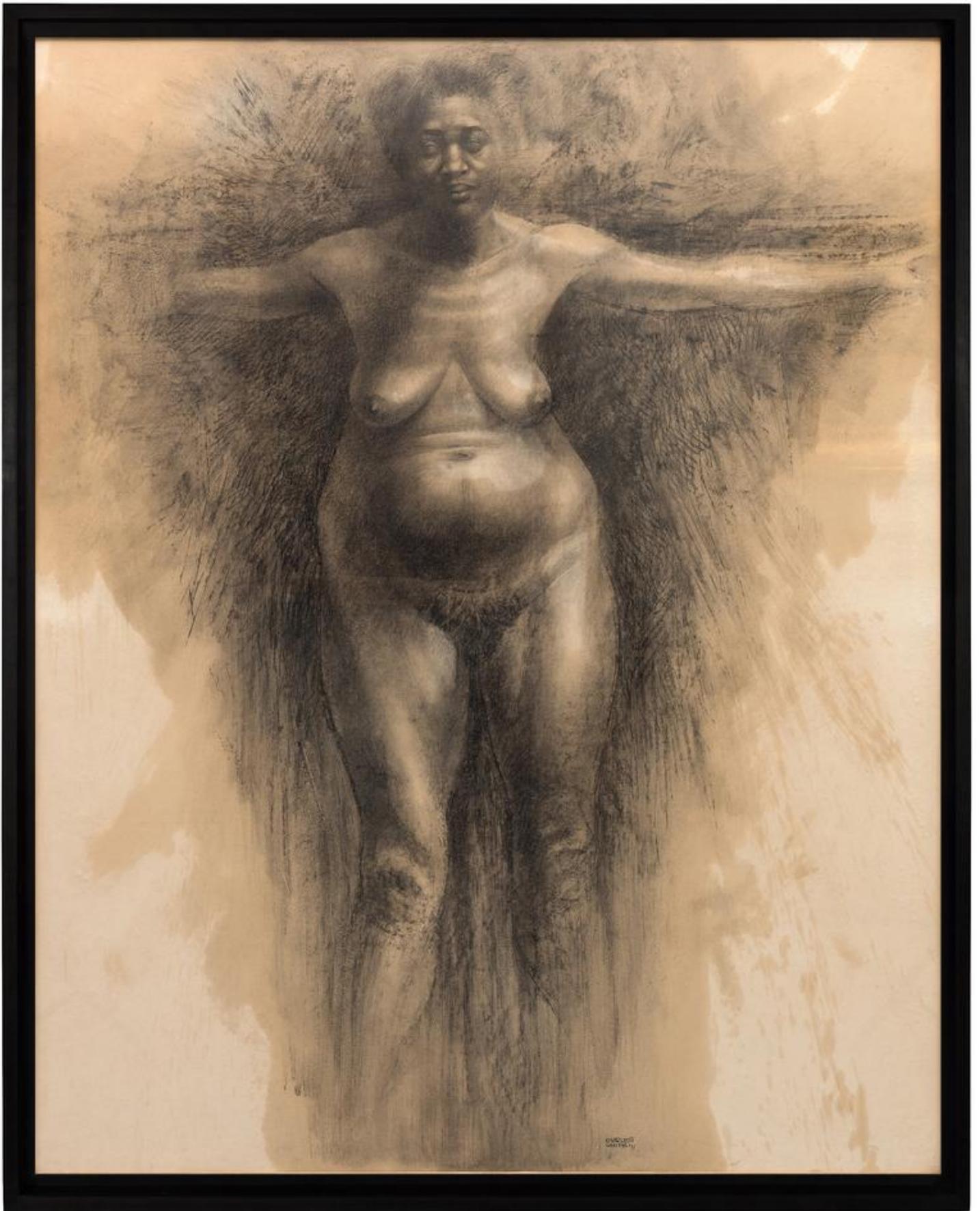
The artist executed several murals in various cities throughout the United States, many under the sponsorship of the WPA. His work shows the influence of the styles of the leading Mexican muralists, reflecting his study with David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera at the Taller de Gráfica Popular in Mexico. In 1940 the Associated Negro Press commissioned a mural for the Chicago Public Library. He completed another at the Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1943 and, late in his career, at the Mary McLeod Bethune Library in Los Angeles. His works, as seen on this videodisc, frequently feature the strong, stylized forms of African-American figures set against flattened, faceted "walls." The fragmented settings may contain private and public imagery, for example urban structures that are small in scale, making the large figures all the more prominent, monumental, and expressive.

"Art must be an integral part of the struggle," Charles White insisted. "It can't simply mirror what's taking place. ... It must ally itself with the forces of liberation." Over the course of his four-decade career, White's commitment to creating powerful images of African Americans—what his gallerist and, later, White himself described as "images of dignity"—was unwavering. Using his virtuoso skills as a draftsman, printmaker, and painter, White developed his style and approach over time to address shifting concerns and new audiences. In each of the cities in which he lived over the course of his career—Chicago, New York, and, finally, Los Angeles—White became a key figure within a vibrant community of creative artists, writers, and activists.

White's far-reaching vision of a socially committed practice attracted promising young artists, including many artists of color, and he became one of the 20th century's most important and dedicated teachers. Acclaimed contemporary artists David Hammons and Kerry James Marshall were among his many students: as Marshall reflected, "Under Charles White's influence I always knew that I wanted to make work that was about something: history, culture, politics, social issues. ... It was just a matter of mastering the skills to actually do it."

(NGA, MoMA)

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CHARLES
WHITE '71









