



SALON 94

ROBERT
PRUITT

AD INFINITUM

S94



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Robert Pruitt's studio, 2020

The Beauty of Being, The Beauty Of Prospect

“All art is political.” That’s a saying from my bandmate in ONO, frontperson and visual artist travis—a seventy-four-year-old queer, Black veteran from Mississippi. “Otherwise, it’s just a pretty thing,” he explains. For Black artists like travis, and our bandleader P Michael Grego, being political isn’t an option. Being alive and Black in the United States is political in itself, and being joyous and Black in the United States is revolutionary.

Robert Pruitt’s work is alive, joyous, and often speculative, pulling from Black American life, history, science fiction, music, comic books, film, the natural world, and more. P Michael and I felt a kindred tug viewing Robert’s art, and news of the current exhibition sounded the siren of familiarity—for one, travis’ visual work appeared alongside Robert’s at a Hyde Park Art Center exhibition called *Interstellar Low Ways* back in 2006-2007, celebrating the life of visionary Saturnian jazz composer Sun Ra; for a second, our creations pull strands from a similar tapestry—a democratized rolodex of storytelling and artistic formats.

For me, this crystallized while watching the Samuel Delany documentary *The Polymath*. In undergrad, I took a class by poet, theorist, and recently-christened Guggenheim genius Fred Moten. Delany’s Dhalgren was the second book we read, and I became obsessed, so Fred leant me his copy of the doc. I was already a deep, deep nerd with science fiction, comic books, video games, etc, but had a weird qualm regarding my nerdship—a shame, a hesitancy. Seeing a titan like Delany in *The Polymath* not giving a shit about format was illuminating. I mean, he’s the coolest. The story is the story—if it’s good, and the medium tells it well, next question. Poof—shame gone. It’s all science fiction, anyhow.

Robert’s drawings operate similarly, interweaving tales spanning a massive, egalitarian continuum. They’re proud and cognizant of their DNA, meshing the beauty of being with the beauty of prospect. His art exhibits pride, boldness, limitlessness. Whether it’s a solar system colliding into a figure’s jewelry or clothing, a full-body space suit, the meshing of plant and person, or the head of a visored android held like a clutch, Robert’s art takes the day-to-day and opens the door to possibility.

His figures alone are evocative, but arrange them side by side and his universe opens. Like the best science fiction writers, Robert is an expert worldbuilder. The mundane saddles up to the cosmic, to the spiritual, to the ancestral. I hear music blaring off a reclining figure's phone. I feel the tightness and thickening blood in clenched fists. I smell the bittersweet body odor flaking off a dancer. In resplendent textiles, I read histories, observe the pilgrimage from plant to wearable.

Robert's drawings can be humorous, too, but that doesn't mean they're not serious. One figure's red poncho hides a cache of weapons—sharp ends and gun muzzles peeking out the bottom. In another, an absurdist unicycle/stool hybrid holds a man's head captive—its slender steel bars reminiscent of a jail. Robert constantly plays with and subverts expectations, making multiple viewings a must.

Most overtly, the work is an affirmation—an affirmation of Blackness, of inquisitiveness, of history, of nerdiness, of storytelling, of physicality, of life itself. Robert's figures and artwork are doorways into his universe and our shared history—if you bear witness, maybe you'll find the knob—if you listen, maybe you'll hear the choir.

by Jordan Reyes, December 2020

Robert Pruitt, *Ad Infinitum*
December 10, 2020 — January 9, 2021

Robert Pruitt's first solo exhibition with Salon 94 is on view from December 10, 2020 — January 9, 2021 at Salon 94 Freemans, 1 Freeman Alley. The exhibition is open to the public from Wednesdays - Saturdays, 12 - 6pm and by appointment.

For press inquiries please contact sophie@companyagenda.com

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Robert Pruitt
Aloe Vera, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 20)
SOLD

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Detail view, *Aloe Vera*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
Who me?, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 22)
SOLD

S94



Detail view, *Who me?*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
*Untitled (Red Mask,
White Shoes)*, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on fabric-dyed paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 31)
SOLD

S94



Detail view, *Untitled (Red Mask, White Shoes)*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
*Ratio So Outta
Control*, 2020

Carbon pencil and paste on coffee washed paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 33)
On Reserve

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Robert Pruitt

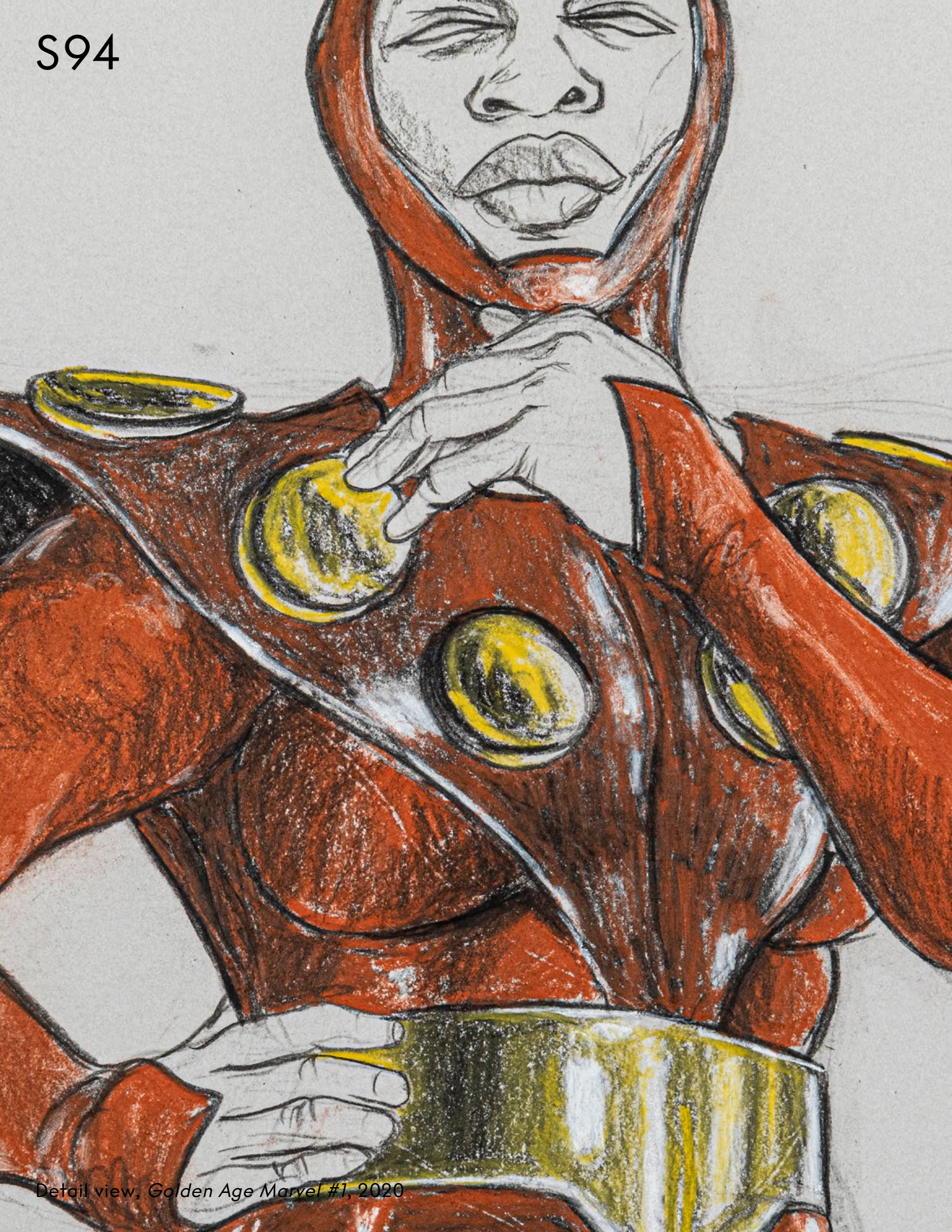
Golden Age Marvel #1,
2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper

34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 28)

SOLD

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Detail view, *Golden Age Marvel #1*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
We Dem Boyz, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 34)
SOLD

S94



Detail view, *We Dem Boyz*, 2020

A photograph of a bookshelf filled with books, a Stormtrooper helmet, and a stack of papers. The top shelf features a Stormtrooper helmet on the left, a stack of papers in the center, and a row of books on the right. The middle shelf is dominated by a large stack of papers on the left, a black bag in the center, and more books on the right. The bottom shelf shows a large stack of books on the left, a black bag on the right, and more books on the far right. The books are of various sizes and colors, and the overall scene is a dense collection of literary and pop culture items.

A photograph of a bookshelf filled with books, including a Stormtrooper helmet, a stack of papers, and various comic books. The shelf is dark wood and holds a variety of items. On the left, a white Stormtrooper helmet sits next to a stack of papers and a small yellow object. The books are arranged in several rows, with some standing upright and others stacked horizontally. Titles visible include 'JUBBLE COSMOS', 'JEWELS OF ANCIENT NUBIA', 'THE LIGHT ENTER', 'THE GORDON GIFT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS', 'LITTLE SIMON', 'TRON', 'HISPAI INDOER', 'EAST OF WEST', 'HICKMAN', 'DRAGON', 'GUT IT CALLOUT', 'LOBIS', 'RUBENS, REMBRANDT, AND DRAWING IN THE GOLDEN AGE', 'KNOCK HOW TO READ SUPERHERO COMICS AND WHY', 'THE SUMMER', 'HOW TO DRAW NOIR COMICS', 'BLACK CHANT', 'DAVE GIBBONS', 'THE GREG GATE READER', 'FLYBOY 2', 'BLACK RELIGION AND BLACK RADICALISM', 'THE MIGHTY MARVEL COMICS STRENGTH AND FITNESS BOOK', 'THE GOD OF WHISPERS', 'NEW GODS', 'MAKING COMICS', 'SCOTT McCLLOUD', 'THE SHANE', 'ADVENTURES IN WILD SPACE', 'EMERGES ELEGITZ', 'THE MIGHTY MARVEL COMICS STRENGTH AND FITNESS BOOK', 'THE GOD OF WHISPERS', 'NEW GODS', 'MAKING COMICS', 'SCOTT McCLLOUD', 'THE SHANE', 'ADVENTURES IN WILD SPACE', 'EMERGES ELEGITZ'. A black cable is coiled on the right side of the shelf. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

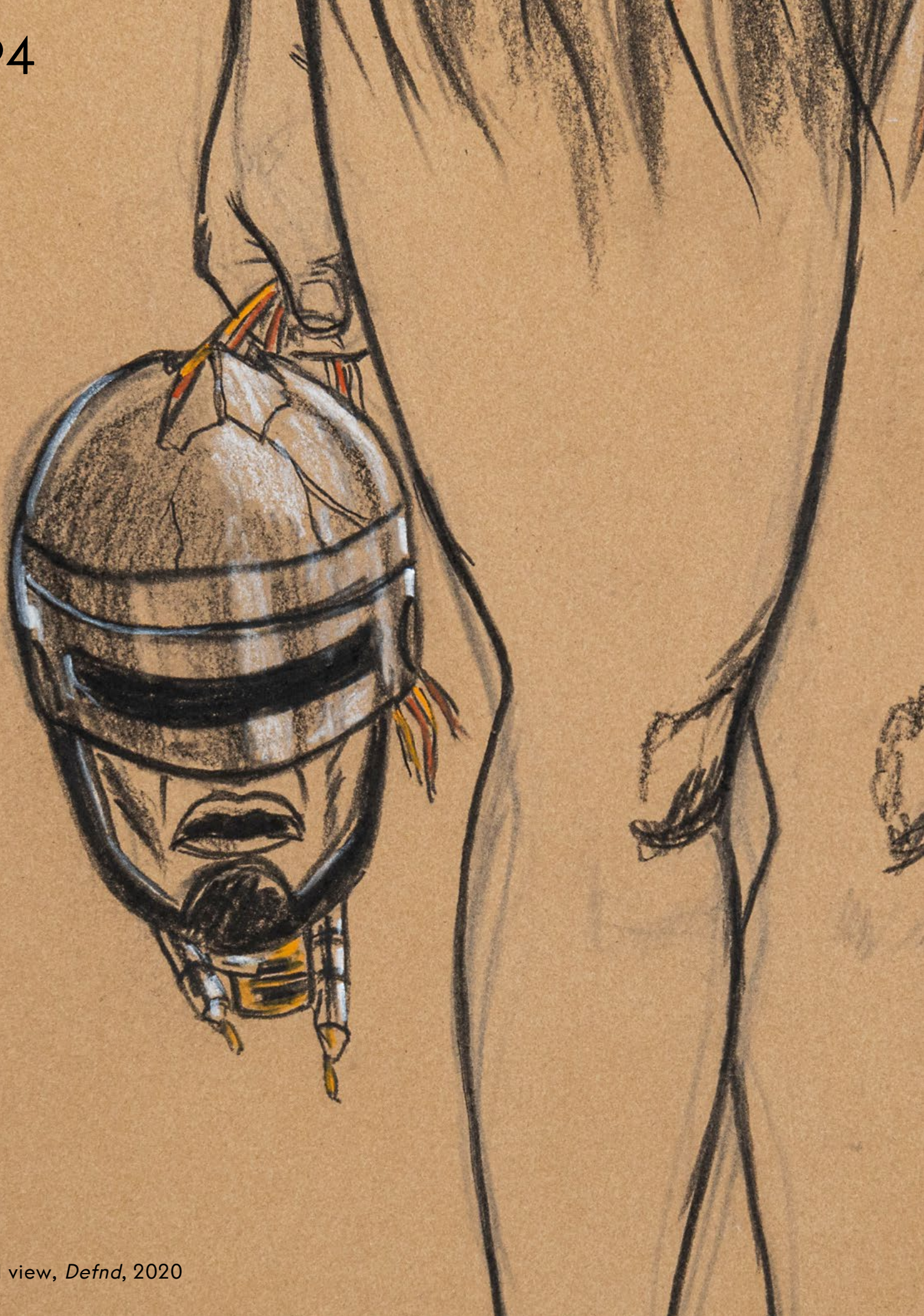
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Robert Pruitt
Defnd, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 66 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 24)
SOLD

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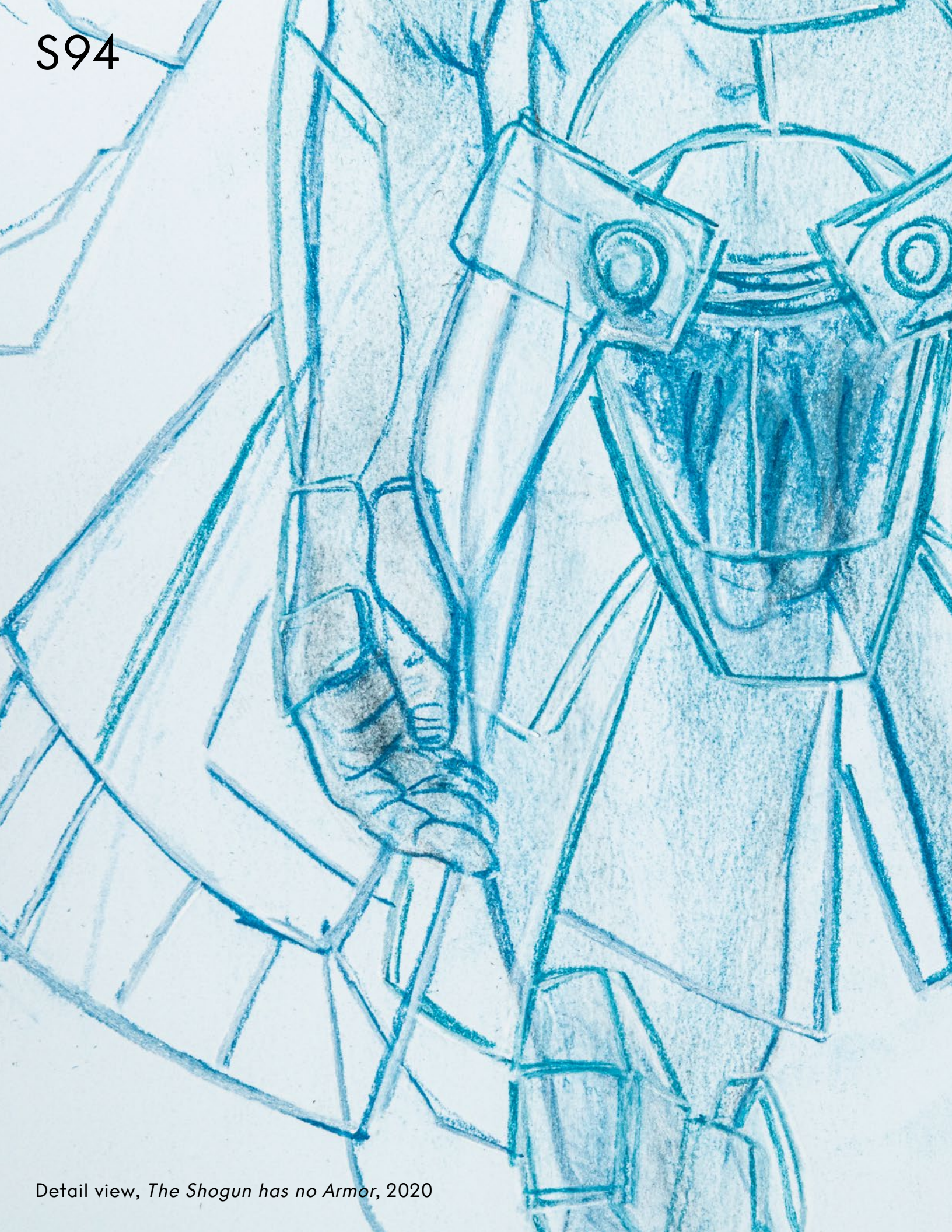
S94



Robert Pruitt
*The Shogun has no
Armor*, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 21)
SOLD

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Detail view, *The Shogun has no Armor*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
Diamond Princess,
2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
26 1/2 x 34 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 27)
SOLD

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Detail view, *Diamond Princess*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt
*Man with
Headdress*, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 26)
SOLD

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Detail view, *Man with Headdress*, 2020

S94



Robert Pruitt
Untitled (Vessel),
2020

Carbon pencil, conté, collage and gold leaf on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 32)
SOLD

S94



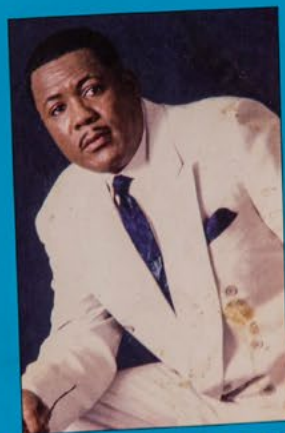
Detail view, *Untitled (Vessel)*, 2020

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Robert Pruitt: Women

The Studio Museum in Harlem
July 18–October 27, 2013



"Where Beauty Softens Your Grief"

LSC-2850 STEREO

CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN
Gould: Sp
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Chicago Symphony Or
MORTON Gould conduct

tighten up

The Heliocentric Worlds of

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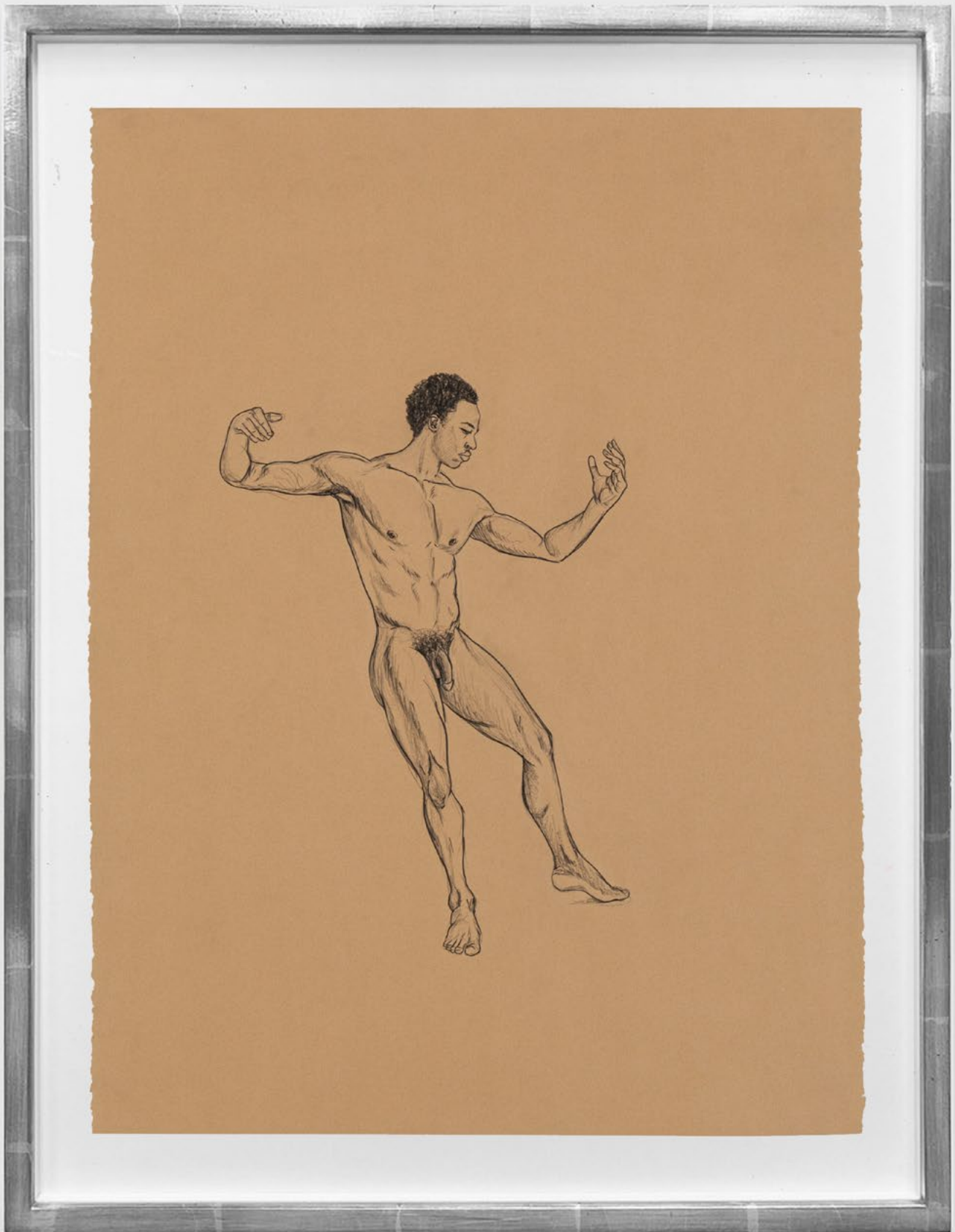
Robert Pruitt
North Carolina,
2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 23)
SOLD



Detail view, *North Carolina*, 2020

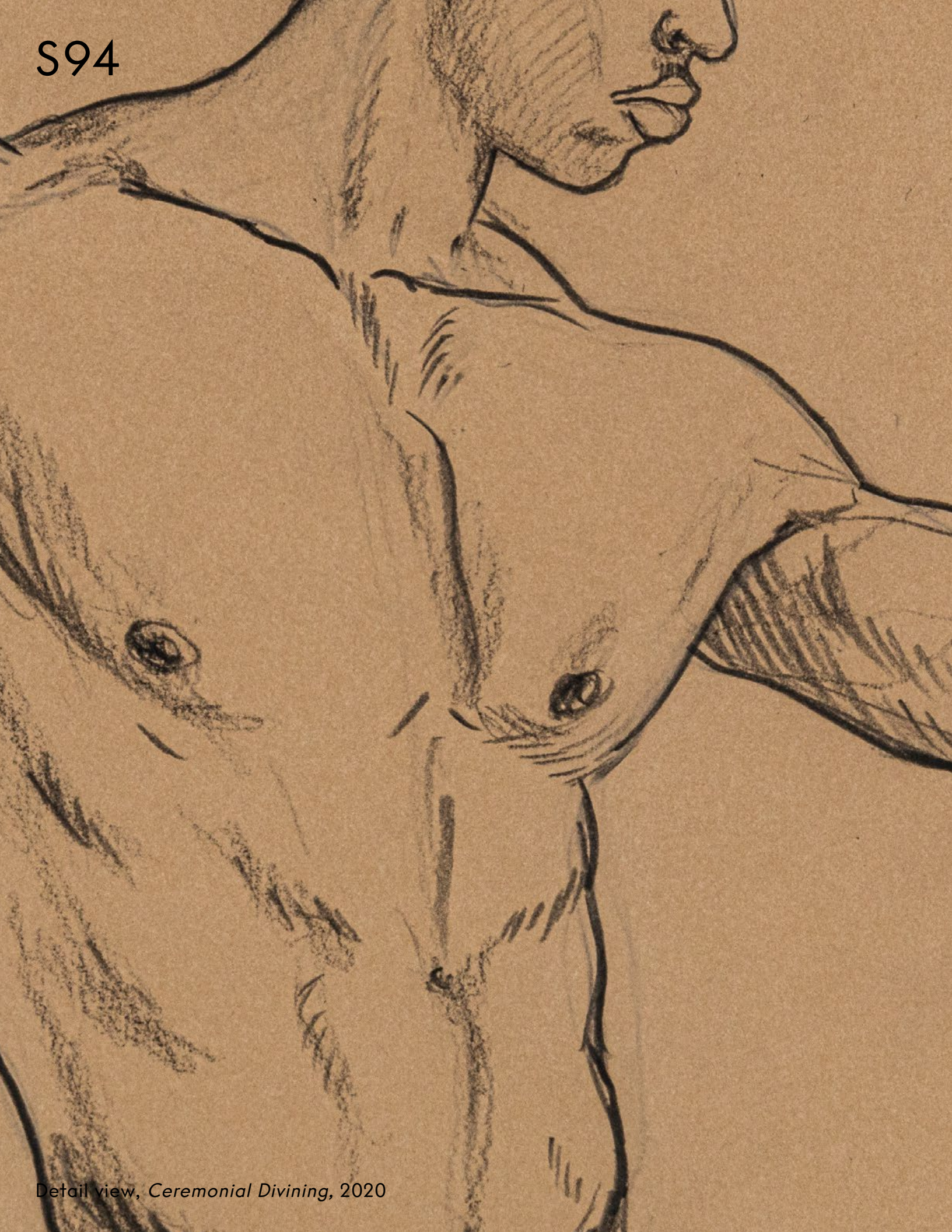
S94



Robert Pruitt
*Ceremonial
Divining*, 2020

Carbon pencil on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 19)
\$10,000

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Robert Pruitt
2piece, 2020

Carbon pencil, collage and gold leaf on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 25)
SOLD

S94



Detail view, 2piece, 2020

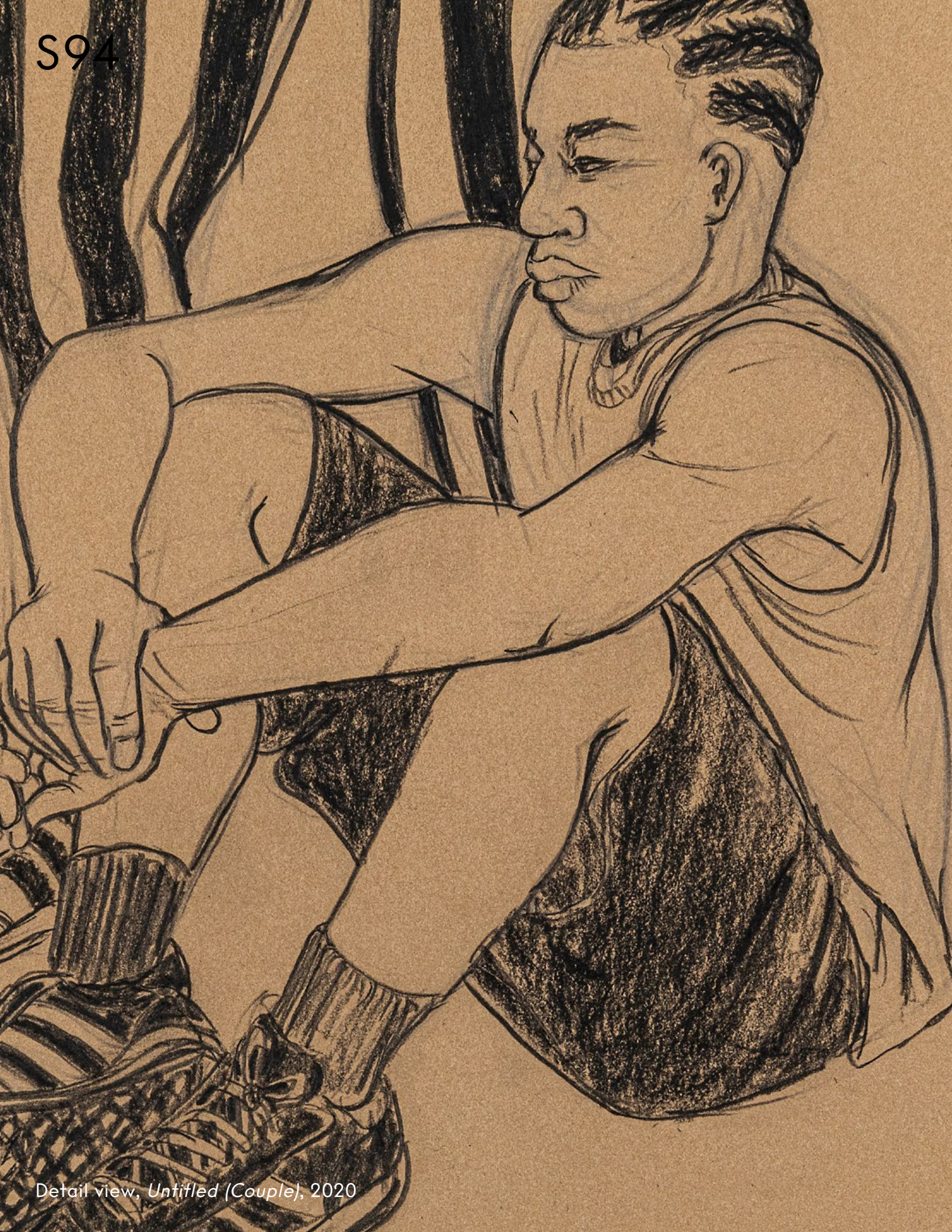
S94



Robert Pruitt
Untitled (Couple),
2020

Carbon pencil on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 29)
SOLD

S94



Detail view, *Untitled (Couple)*, 2020

S94



Robert Pruitt
Ad Infinitum, 2020

Carbon pencil and pastel on paper
34 x 26 1/2 x 1 5/8 inches (86.4 x 67.3 x 4.1 cm) (Framed)
(RoPr 30)
\$10,000

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The photograph captures a dense and eclectic wall installation in Robert Pruitt's studio. At the top left, a large painting depicts a Black woman reclining in a landscape with figures in the background. Below it hangs a vintage-style brass hairbrush. To the right, a blue and white graphic poster features a stylized female symbol and the word "EXPOSITOR". Further right, a black and white photograph shows a person in traditional attire. In the center, a silver foil-wrapped humanoid figure stands prominently, holding a small green object. Behind it, a Sony cassette tape labeled "MAHALIA JACKSON" is visible. To the left of the foil figure is a poster titled "How To Love A Black Woman" by Muntu Mwaminifu, which includes a photo of a couple. To the right of the foil figure is a poster from the "here & now" series at the California African American Museum. Various other items are scattered around, including a small statue of a person's head, a potted plant, and a piece of fabric with a geometric pattern. The overall composition is a rich tapestry of cultural references and personal artifacts.

The photograph captures a dense and eclectic wall installation in Robert Pruitt's studio. At the top left, a large painting depicts a Black woman sitting, her body rendered in dark tones with red highlights. Below it hangs a vintage-style brass hairbrush. To the right, a blue and white graphic poster features a stylized female symbol and the word "EXPOSITOR". Further right, a black and white photograph shows a person lying down. In the center, a silver foil-wrapped humanoid figure stands prominently, holding a small green object. Behind it, a Sony cassette tape labeled "MAHALIA JACKSON" is visible. To the left of the foil figure is a poster titled "How To Love A Black Woman" by Muntu Mwaminifu, which includes a black and white photo of a couple. To the right of the foil figure is a poster from the "here & now" series at the California African American Museum. Various other items are scattered around, including a small statue of a person, a potted plant, and a piece of fabric hanging from the top right. The overall composition is a rich, layered representation of cultural identity and artistic expression.

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They are primarily streams of consciousness studies that allow me to work out ideas for future drawings, play with a range of references and influences, and exercise my preoccupations with the figure, Science Fiction and Race. They happen quickly, usually no more than a day, though I periodically go back and rework some of them. Where my practice usually consists of larger scale images that derive from research based origins, these smaller works come from an experiential process that is centered on my own enjoyment of drawing.

— Robert Pruitt