

ALLOUCHE GALLERY

OPERATION VARSITY BLUES

CURATED BY CHARLES MOORE

JUNE 5, 2021

Allouche Gallery presents “Operation Varsity Blues,” a group exhibition exploring the structural inequities of the American higher education system through the lens of the recent high-profile college admissions scandal. The exhibition features new, commissioned works by seven artists—Lindsay Adams, Debra Cartwright, Kevin Claiborne, Lindsey Brittain Collins, Alteronce Gumby, Lanise Howard, Jeffrey Meris, Raushan Rucker, Khari Turner, Telvin Wallace, and Esteban Whiteside—who are responding to the 2019 college admissions scandal of the same name wherein affluent families conspired to influence undergraduate admissions decisions at several top-tier American colleges and universities. “Operation Varsity Blues” is organized by author, art historian, and independent curator Charles Moore.

The U.S. Attorney’s “Operation Varsity Blues” investigation, findings, and subsequent indictments in this college admissions scandal revealed that dozens of wealthy, white parents—several of whom were celebrities—schemed and paid their way into schools by faking test scores and providing illegal financial contributions to administrators for their children’s entry into some America’s most prestigious schools. These admissions spots were often taken from niche sports teams, which should have gone to worthy students—in many cases Black or Brown students with vast academic potential. Though the situation largely faded from view during the global pandemic, 53 people were ultimately charged for their part in the conspiracy by the end of 2020. 33 parents, renowned universities like Yale and Stanford, and the mastermind behind the scandal—William “Rick” Singer, who collected \$25 million over a seven-year period—were all legally implicated. With this new window into the combined impact of money, power, and deceit in higher education, the admissions process was forever changed.

Against the backdrop of this scandal, in the past two decades, Black and Hispanic student attendance at Ivy League schools has steadily decreased. Affirmative Action attempted to balance the scales by righting the wrongs of inequality and segregation and offering Blacks in America a chance at upward economic mobility, yet decades later, the disparities between Black and White students at Ivy league schools are greater than ever. “Operation Varsity Blues” uncovers the ways greed and wealth work in tandem for privileged white families to excel at some of the nation’s most prestigious schools at the expense of the most vulnerable group in our society—Black and Brown youth.

The seven artists included in the exhibition—many of whom have faced discrimination at the same elite schools they attended at the onset of their careers—use this specific incident to reflect on wider, structural problems within the American educational system. The works on view will include paintings, works on paper, sculptures, and video installations, among other mediums, all of which question the promise that “all men are created equal” and the attainability of so-called “American dream.” These artists are not only directly responding to the admissions scandal itself, but also communicating their experiences with institutionalized racism as minorities studying on some of these very same elite campuses.

In his independent curatorial debut, Moore calls attention to the deep inequities in the American educational system, from high school and preparatory school through university. Speaking about this project Moore said, “As a Harvard graduate, I know firsthand the struggles and challenges African-American students face at the overwhelmingly white institutions they attend. This unique experience of existing within elite spaces informed my work on this exhibition and helped me tease out the themes of racial inequality specific to this scandal, which is yet another clear example of white people wielding their influence and power at expense of minority groups.” The show opens June 5 at Allouche Gallery in New York.

-Charles Moore



Lindsay Adams
Lindsay, 2021
Oil on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Lindsay Adams
Dr. George W. Adams Jr., 2021
Oil on canvas
60 x 48 inches

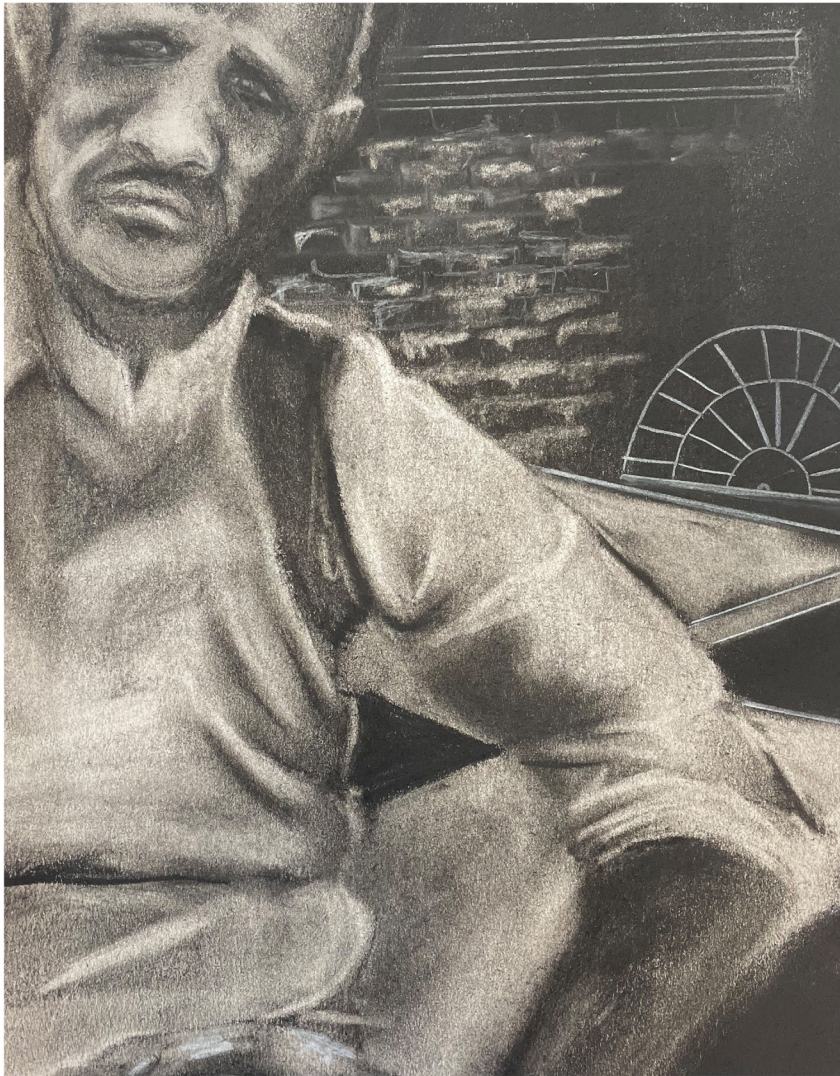


Lindsey Brittain Collins

Free Swipes From Ms. Kathy, 2021

Cut and pasted inkjet photograph, collage and acrylic polymer on canvas

72 x 120 inches (diptych)

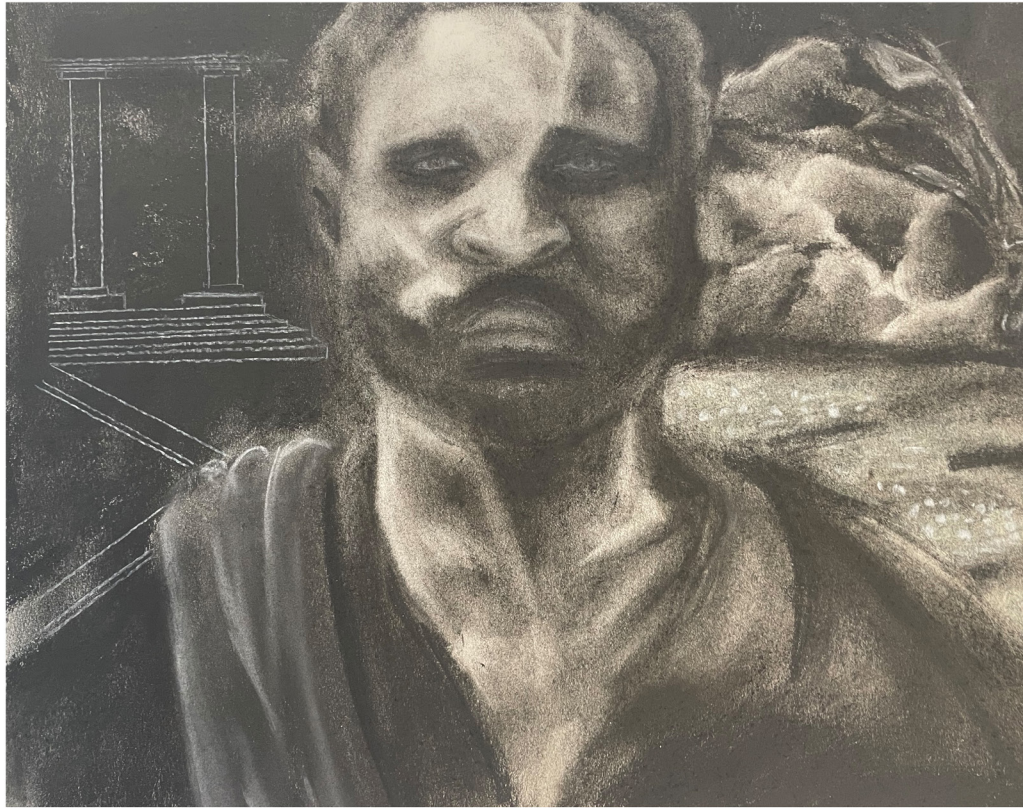


One morning in July, while the stars still shone in the sky, and nature so beautiful everywhere but most beautiful in Virginia, appeared her loveliest in the early morning light, there was born on Monticello mountain, in one of the cabins on the plantation of Mr. Jefferson, the subject of this historical sketch, as represented in No.1. So on July 4, 1928, Henry Martin made his debut into this cold world he no doubt thought little of the hundreds of young men he would know and serve later in life.

He sounds the bell in the rotunda four times everyday, calling Professors and students to and from lectures. He lived at Gildersleeve Cottage and when last year his home was ruthlessly destroyed, he moved to his present home, "La Maison" which is beautifully situation on the edge of the grove.

This then, is in brief the history of the eventful life of Henry Martin, one of the most faithful and trusted servants this institution ever has had or can have.

Debra Cartwright
Henry Martin (excerpt from University of Virginia's Corks and Curls 1890), 2021
Burnt cork, charcoal and pastel on newsprint
14 x 11 inches



What student of medicine at the University of Virginia, or who has ever attended this school, does not remember him as represented in cut 2. To those unacquainted with the 'Doctor' I would say that he is the Janitor of the Dissecting Hall. His occupation has so much to do with death and the dead that he has become as callous and free from that feeling of awe of a dead body as ever did undertaker or executioner.

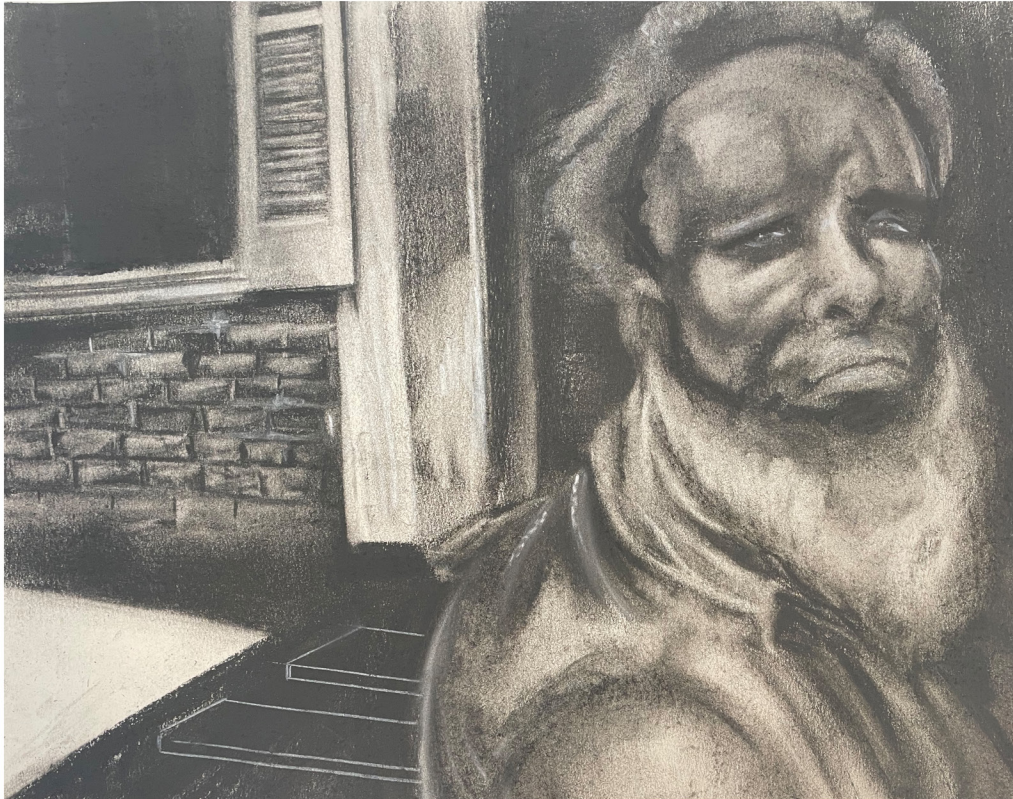
My space allows the mention of but one more of the many peculiarities of Dr. Fawcett, and this is the firm belief that nobody can get an M.D. without having given him a 'little sump'um' for a Christmas gift. Such are a few of the eccentricities of the queerest character I have ever met.

Debra Cartwright

Dr. Fawcett (excerpt from University of Virginia's Corks and Curls 1890), 2021

Burnt cork, charcoal and pastel on newsprint

11 x 14 inches



The Cut No. 3 here produced of John Twine will recall to the mind of the University student of the last forty years this venerable landmark whose alternate vocations of either dispensing kindling wood or purchasing old clothes made him more or less familiar to all. His chief characteristics are his deferential and respectful manners and his unswerving attention to his own advantages.

The sole purpose of his stay now on earth is to better fit himself for the glory he is sure awaits him elsewhere and which is the continual theme of his conversation, even while engaged in amassing for himself treasures on earth.

Debra Cartwright

John Twine (excerpt from University of Virginia's Corks and Curls 1890), 2021

Burnt cork, charcoal and pastel on newsprint

11 x14 inches

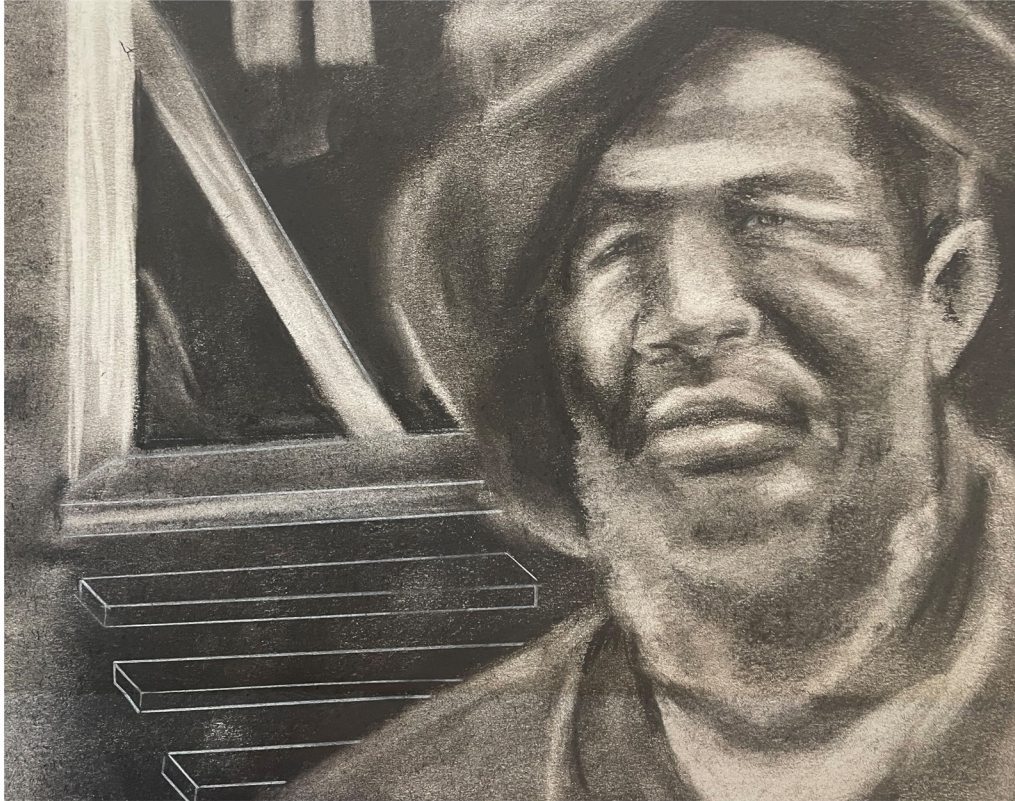


Of the many odd and picturesque characters of the negro race that are to be met with everywhere around the University, but that are now fast passing away before the superior intellectual culture and proud assertion of equal rights on the part of their descendants, Berkeley Bullock is one of the best known and most generally liked by all the students.

No one that has ever come into contact with Berkeley can forget his appearance, his manner, and his habits. He is a medium sized weakened little man of perhaps fifty with bandy legs and stopping shoulders. His face is furrowed deep by the plough of time, not a little aided by care.

It is evident that he is never certain of his pay and is always haunted with a gnawing fear that the frolicsome students may even make away with his house.

Debra Cartwright
Berkeley Bullocks (excerpt from University of Virginia's Corks and Curls 1890), 2021
Burnt cork, charcoal and pastel on newsprint
11 x 14 inches



In a volume such as CORKS and CURLS is designed to be, describing as it does the salient features of life in the University at large, as well as the personal idiosyncracies of the individuals who are factors in that life, there would surely be a certain sense of incompleteness about the edition of 1890 if the subject of this sketch was by some unhappy caprice of fate passed over.

Men may come and men may go, but the world goes on forever. Generations of students have come within the classic shades of this, our alma mater, and after a stay devoted to study, have gone forth to battle with lifes problems and perplexities, each carrying away memories of this old darkey, who when separated by time and distance grows to be all the more esteemed and when at last he will go to tthat undiscovered country from whose borne no traveller returns, legions of alumni in every clime will heave a sigh while musing of the days of the long ago in which poor old Peter played a prominent role so replete with sincerity, loyalty and devotion.

Debra Cartwright

Uncle Peter (excerpt from University of Virginia's Corks and Curls 1890), 2021

Burnt cork, charcoal and pastel on newsprint

11 x 14 inches



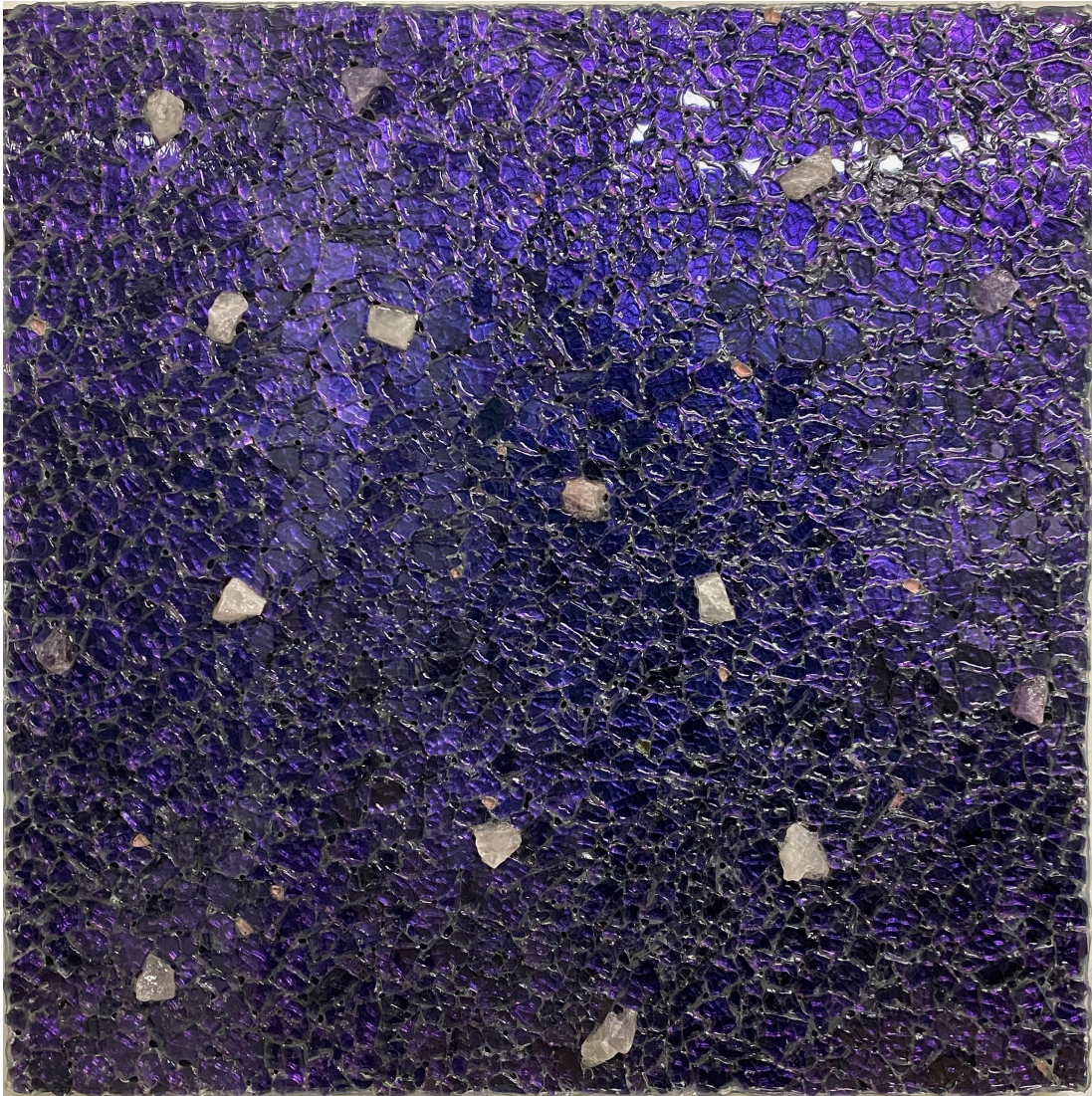
Kevin Claiborne
Sacrifice, 2021
Oil, oil stick, acrylic on wood panel
60 x 48 inches



Kevin Claiborne
Endgame, 2021
American flag, acrylic, tape, matches, velcro on wood panel
40 x 32 inches



Kevin Claiborne
Gambit, 2020
Acrylic, paper and spray paint and NYPD Barricade
32 x 38 inches



Alteronce Gumby
Higher Learning, 2021
Gemstones, glass and acrylic on panel
24 x 24 inches



Lanise Howard
A Moment of Clarity, 2021
Oil on canvas
60 x 60 inches



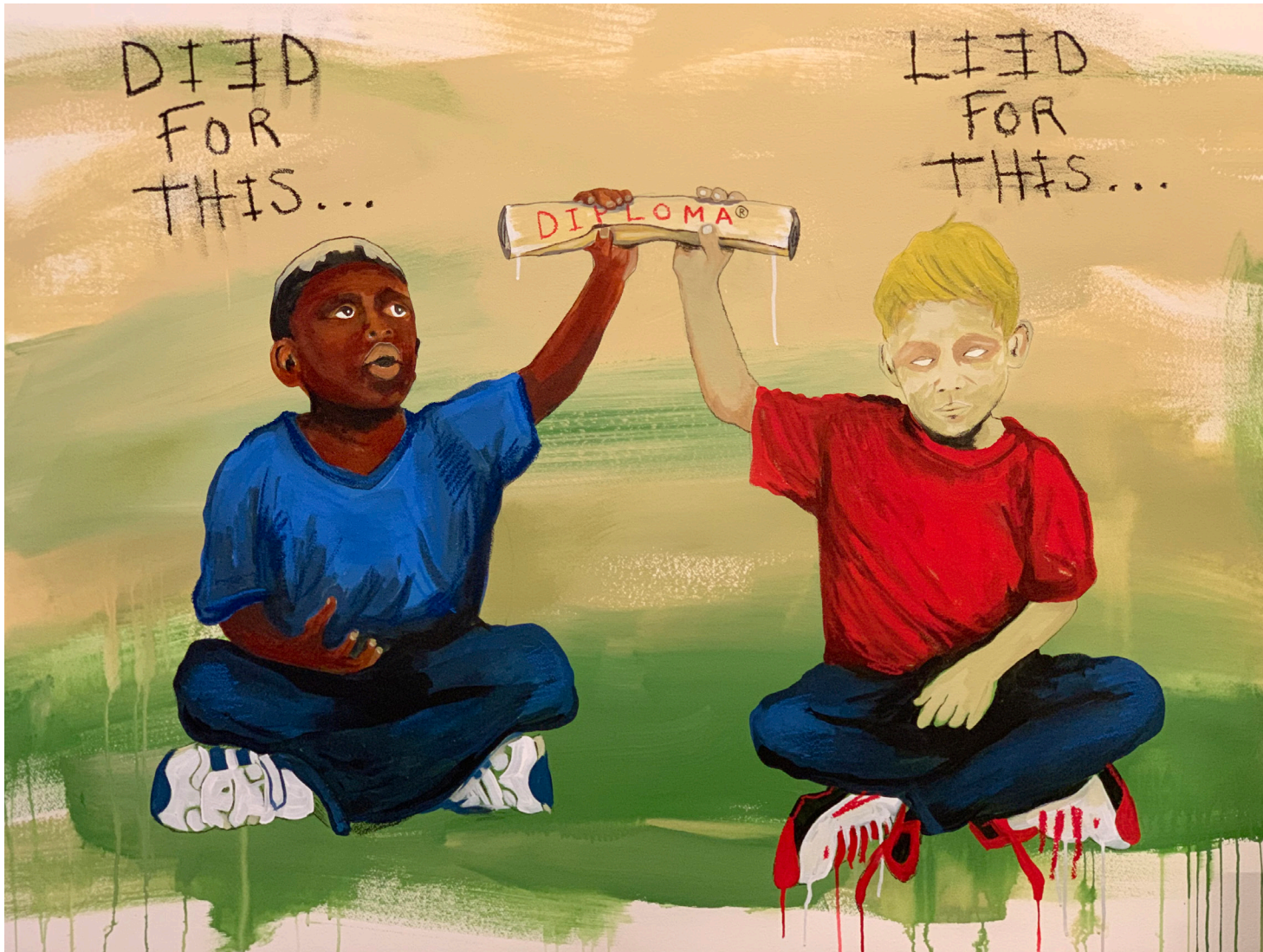
Jeffrey Meris
I, Used To Be (Study I), 2021
Plaster particles on roofing paper, double sided adhesive tape
36 x 24 inches



Jeffrey Meris
I, Used To Be (Study II), 2021
Plaster particles on roofing paper, double sided adhesive tape
36 x 24 inches



Jeffrey Meris
The Heart of a Warrior is Not For Sale, 2001-2021
Columbia University graduation robe, felt
Various dimensions



Robert Moore
Degrees of Separation: Admissions of Education, 2021
Acrylic, charcoal, soft pastel, oil pigment stick on arches paper
40 x 60 inches



Robert Moore

A Failed System: To Be or Not To Be, 2021

Acrylic, spray paint, oil pigment, charcoal on unprimed belgium linen

48 x 42 inches



Rashaun Rucker
I Wear The Other When It Is Convenient, 2021
Graphite drawing
50 x 38 inches



Malaika Temba

What It Means To Be Shrouded, 2020

Fabric silkscreen, disperse dye, digital embroidery, spray apint, wax crayon, chiffon

18 x 5 ft (width variable - as wide as 10 ft)



Khari Turner

Debt, 2021

Acrylic, ink, sand, Coast of Senegal and Ghana water, Pacific Ocean water, water from Lower Manhattan docks, Lake Michigan and Milwaukee River water

60 x 144 inches



Khari Turner

Such a Bright Student, 2021

Acrylic, oil, charcoal, ink, sand, Coast of Senegal and Ghana water, Pacific Ocean water, water from Lower Manhattan docks, Lake Michigan and Milwaukee River water

72 x 72 inches



Telvin Wallace
Invisible Man, 2021
Oil on canvas
40 inches round



Telvin Wallace
Light and Truth, 2021
Oil on linen
30 x 24 inches



Esteban Whiteside
Ameritocracy 101, 2021
Acrylic, wax crayon and oil stick on canvas
72 x 72 inches
Courtesy of Richard Beavers Gallery

SATTEST PREP

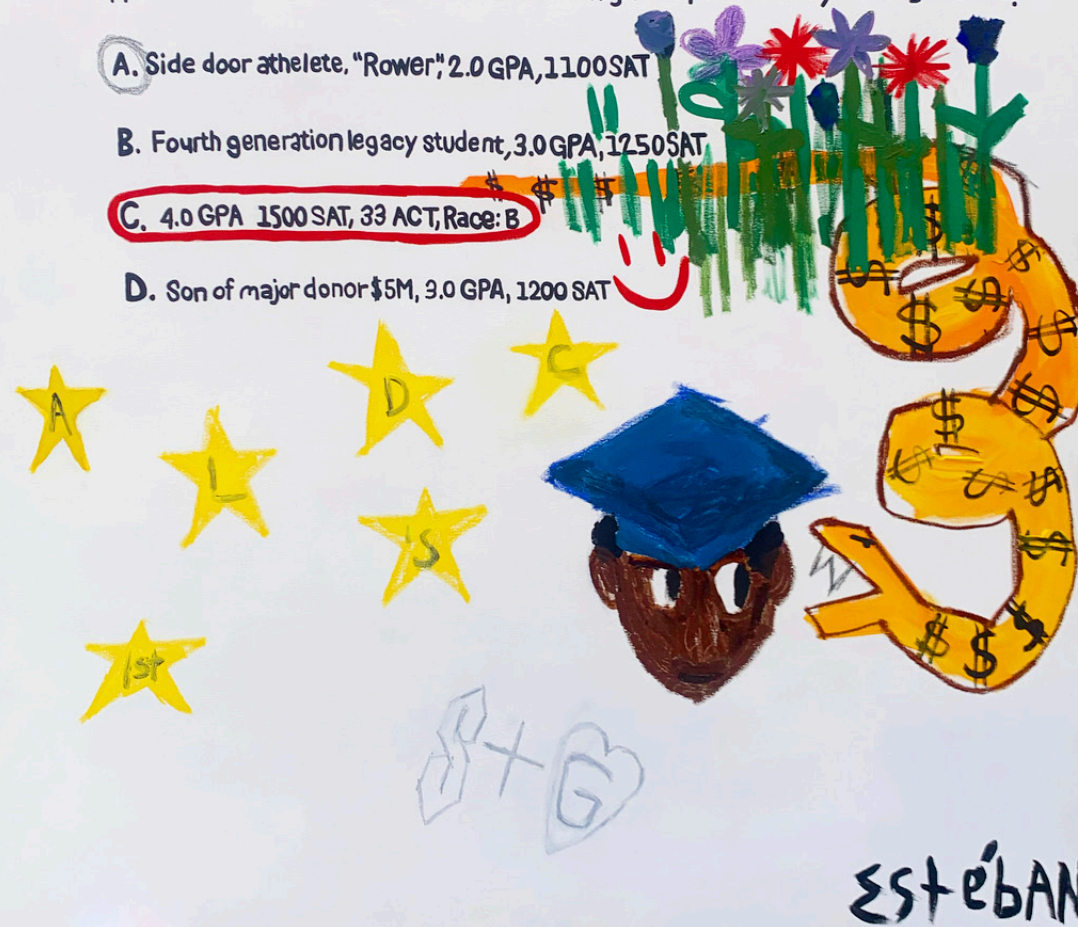
~~52~~ The incoming class at Yale University has three spots available. Out of the four applicants listed below, which one has the highest probability of rejection?

A. Side door athlete, "Rower", 2.0 GPA, 1100 SAT

B. Fourth generation legacy student, 3.0 GPA, 1250 SAT

C. 4.0 GPA, 1500 SAT, 33 ACT, Race: B

D. Son of major donor \$5M, 3.0 GPA, 1200 SAT



Esteban Whiteside
Last Question Got Me, 2021
Acrylic and wax crayon on canvas
60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of Richard Beavers Gallery