

## THE WORK OF SEVERAL LIFETIMES

### ARTIST STATEMENT BY MARIO MOORE

The Work of Several Lifetimes is a series I created as a Princeton Hodder Fellow, in honor of my father and other blue-collar workers. For this exhibition, I set out to meet Black men and women who work in and around Princeton University and let the process unfold from our interaction. The etchings in particular were generated from the first interaction I had with each person. Using those sketches I created of them from life during casual conversations, I wanted to go back to the source to create these pieces.

I knew that whatever I created for this series would walk a tight line between the expectation of how Black people are seen in blue-collar jobs versus the true representation of them—making them visible. Generally, portraits at elite institutions are created to represent owners, donors, deans, presidents and scholars. But I wanted to ask the question what positions garner such attention and how could painting contribute to conversations on who deserves to be recognized.

My hope is that the work I created has explored a sense of power and individuality. I redefine the colonial gaze for the subjects I paint, allowing them to look directly out in an unflinching stare. I believe that all of the work gives insight into each individual that is more complex, more nuanced than at first glance.