

# William T. Christopher

## Study for *Contemplation of the Mask*, 1960-1963

William T. Christopher (1924-1973)

Graphite and white chalk on dark olive Canson paper stapled to a thin gold-painted wooden board

Christopher and his partner, George Tooker, were both dedicated to the Civil Rights movement. The harsh realities of American racism and Christopher's empathy with African Americans motivated him to turn toward political activism and a new direction in his art beginning in the 1960s. In 1963, Christopher dedicated his paintings and writings, including the artist's *King Series*, of which *Contemplation of the Mask* is part, to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights movement. In these paintings, he used props, including masks and mirrors, in order to convey narratives of oppression and resistance. Christopher and King met in 1964 at Boston University, where the artist's *King Series* was on view at the University's library, and again the following year, when Christopher and Tooker participated in the March for Voting Rights from Selma to Montgomery.

**NOTE:** The original Study for *Contemplation of the Mask* will be on view June 6 through August 20 and the original Drawing for *The Mammon Alterpiece* will be on view August 21 through November 2.

Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Gift of Carola B. and H. G. Terwilliger