

# albertz benda

**Robert Peterson: *Held Space***  
**JULY 9 – AUGUST 7, 2026**  
**ALBERTZ BENDA, NEW YORK, NY**



Robert Peterson. *Mother*, 2026. Oil on canvas  
60 x 48 inches. 152.4 x 121.9 cm. Framed dimensions:  
61 1/4 x 49 1/8 x 2 inches. 155.6 x 124.8 x 5.1 cm



Robert Peterson. *Finders Keepers*, 2026. Oil on canvas.  
40 x 30 inches. 101.6 x 76.2 cm. Framed dimensions:  
41 1/2 x 31 1/2 x 2 1/2 inches. 105.4 x 80 x 6.3 cm

**New York, NY** | albertz benda is pleased to present *Held Space*, Robert Peterson's third solo presentation with the gallery. On View from July 9 through August 7, the show centers on the transfer of life, care, and identity between people.

Robert Peterson writes:

“Through selective rendering, the figures reveal moments of giving and receiving, where growth occurs through touch, presence, and dependence. Unfinished areas signify both what is still forming and what has already been poured out, reflecting the quiet exchanges that shape us, often unnoticed but deeply felt. To be unfinished here is not to be lacking, but to be actively in use.

I made the decision to keep this exhibition intentionally limited to just four works, which is why we're presenting it as a spotlight show. With the positive early response to this new body of work, it felt important to move carefully and protect the intimacy and rarity of these pieces rather than overextending the series too quickly. There's something meaningful about allowing a body of work to remain concentrated at the moment it begins to resonate. The collectors who connect with these paintings early will own works from a very small and defining chapter of this evolution, before the series expands any further.

For example, in the painting *Finders Keepers*, my wife and I have been together since we were 13 and 14 years old, which means nearly every version of myself has existed beside her. Every chapter, every failure, every dream, every small victory, she has been there loving, supporting, encouraging and growing alongside me. There's something sacred about being witnessed by

someone for that long. And surprisingly, this painting is also about my children. As parents, we grow up believing we are the ones raising them, teaching them how to move through the world. But as time passes and they grow older, you begin to realize they were raising you too. In trying to pour love, wisdom and care into them, you slowly shed older versions of yourself. The selfish parts. The impatient parts. The immature parts. Parenthood has a way of reshaping you into someone softer, wiser and more aware of what truly matters. Maybe that's what love really is. A lifetime of finding pieces of yourself in the people God places in your path and somehow becoming more whole because of them.

This idea of connection can also be witnessed in *Finders Keepers* as it depicts a reflection on the quiet ways we inherit one another. The ways love, influence, memory and identity are passed hand to hand long before we have the language to explain them. *Finders Keepers* was inspired by a few of the relationships that quietly shaped my life from the very beginning. My older sister was the first person I remember looking at like she held the blueprint to cool. She had the music, the clothes, the confidence, the friends. Every now and then she'd let me borrow one of her cassette tapes to play in my room, and somehow those small moments felt larger than life. Looking back now, I realize she wasn't just sharing music with me, she was sharing pieces of identity, culture, expression and confidence."

## **ABOUT ROBERT PETERSON**

Lawton, Oklahoma based artist Robert Peterson (b.1981) has firmly situated himself within an art historical narrative of portraiture. His depictions of contemporary African American life celebrate diversity and address injustice. Set against minimal backdrops, these works meditate on the beauty of Black skin and the sensual qualities of paint through shifts in tone and color. Shades of blue emphasize the musculature of Peterson's subjects with a sense of tenderness. Peterson translates images of celebrities, community members, and his family with a naturalism that recalls the stylistic approach of editorial photography. Often directly addressing the audience, these figures are imbued with a quiet dignity that offers the viewer an opportunity to linger and reflect.

Peterson is recognized as the first African American ever to receive the title Artist of the Year in Southwest Oklahoma. In 2023, the United States Postal Service featured the artist's portrait of author Ernest J. Gaines on the 46th Forever Stamp in their Black Heritage Series. Recent exhibitions include Robert Peterson: Homecoming, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK and Reflections, albertz benda, New York, NY. His work can be found in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, OK; Weisman Museum of Art, Minneapolis, MN; Wichita Art Museum, Wichita, KS; and the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL.

## **ABOUT ALBERTZ BENDA**

Founded in 2015, albertz benda is a contemporary art gallery with an international program exploring material and textuality as well as cultural and social dialogues. Our Chelsea space is host to rotating exhibitions with an emphasis on solo presentations of emerging artists, new research into historical figures, and thematic group exhibitions. In 2021, the gallery expanded to a second location in Los Angeles. Featuring an evolving identity separate from our New York program, the LA space is realized within the context of a domestic setting, advancing new connections between visual arts, craft, and design.

Media Contacts:

Rachel Tretter / [rachel@albertzbenda.com](mailto:rachel@albertzbenda.com)