

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Natalie Wadlington: *Front Yards, Back Yards*
September 9 – October 8, 2022
albertz benda, New York

Opening Reception:
September 9, 2022 | 6:00-8:00 PM



Natalie Wadlington. *Backyard with Orange Tree*, 2022. Oil on canvas. 72 x 144 inches | 183 x 366 cm

New York, NY: albertz benda is thrilled to announce *Front Yards, Back Yards*, Natalie Wadlington's first solo exhibition in New York opening on September 9. *Front Yards, Back Yards* extends the domestic explorations that characterized the artist's recent solo presentation at Dallas Contemporary. By spanning drawing, sculpture, and painting, Wadlington employs multiple approaches for immersing viewers in a complex web of relationships between self and other, human and non-human, momentary instance and painterly representation.

Highly stylized narrative scenes combine evocative symbols with personal experience and explore an innate connection to the animals with whom we share domestic space. Fenced in suburban settings recall the backyards in which the artist spent her adolescence while figures are modeled on her own body. Each portrayal is simultaneously autobiographical and transcendent. They resonate on a personal level while speaking to universal feelings of anxiety, excitement, discovery, and fear.

Currently based in New York, Wadlington has been living and working in East Texas for the past several years. She channels the state's kaleidoscopic skies in this latest body of work. In each composition, Wadlington explores a mood or feeling through palettes drawn from the expansive and ever-changing Texas skyscape. In *Front Yard with Crepe Myrtle*, sunset's brilliant colors are refracted across the canvas. Warm orange-pink tones glow on a figure's skin, a bright pink tongue hangs out of a panting puppy's mouth as dusk's imminence is foreshadowed by purple

hues landing on the sidewalk. Discrete instances convene to reveal an atmosphere of melancholic peacefulness experienced at day's end.

Sunsets feel particularly poignant for Wadlington who appreciates this transitional time for its "in-betweenness." Her work reflects this liminal quality in fleeting, momentary events that are deliberately captured in pigment to be made permanent. Complex perspectival shifts pivot between flatness and depth. Backyards are both wild and domesticated, known and unknown.

In recent works, the artist depicts humans passively — they lounge, curl up, or lay prone upon the ground—in contrast to the more expressive, energetic animals accompanying them. Interactions between humans and animals go beyond language, relying instead upon a deep sense of intuition or spiritual connection.

Thick textural layers of oil paint forge suggestive tactile links— such as the shaggy cat fur scraped into the surface of *House Outside of Town*. She extends this physicality with a selection of ceramic creatures developed over the past year. Working with high fire clay, Wadlington sculpts a selection of life-size insects that seem to crawl across the gallery walls; a seated dog wears a brindle coat 'knitted' out of clay. Brought together, these works invite us into the artist's private sphere, offering access to her observations of the living, breathing world around us.

ABOUT NATALIE WADLINGTON

Natalie Wadlington (b. 1992, Modesto, CA) completed her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in May of 2020 and was a resident fellow at Ox-Bow School of Art and Artist Residency in 2019. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at museums including, but not limited to: Dallas Contemporary, Texas; Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit; and Bellevue Arts Museum, Seattle. She has been featured in publications such as *New American Paintings* and *Juxtapoz*. The artist lives and works in New York, NY.

ABOUT ALBERTZ BENDA

Founded in 2015, albertz benda is a contemporary art gallery with an international program exploring material and textility 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 historic 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.

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