

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLEON PETERSON: MR. SINISTER  
MARCH 3, 2021 – APRIL 2, 2022  
ALBERTZ BENDA, NEW YORK



Left: *Blinded by the Light*, 2022. Acrylic on Canvas. 72 x 72 inches, 182.88 x 182.88 cm  
Right: *Listen You Fuckers*, 2022. Acrylic on Canvas. 14 x 14 inches, 35.56 x 35.56 cm

NEW YORK, NY: albertz benda is thrilled to present Cleon Peterson: *Mr. Sinister*, the artist's first solo show in New York, on view from March 3 to April 2, 2022. In this exhibition, Peterson will premiere a new series of allegorical paintings that investigate mechanisms of power, fantasy, and morality.

Peterson's practice is rooted in his personal experiences with addiction, incarceration, social inequity, and stigmatization. He is known for his distinctive illustrative style in which stark, monochromatic figures appear entangled and attenuated, their bodies caught in moments of rage, brutality, and mercy. His depictions of violence are deployed as visual metaphors through which to examine conformity and submission in both the individual and society at large.

These new acrylic paintings showcase an evocative symbolism rendered in Peterson's signature palette of red, grey, white, and black. Moving fluidly across Peterson's metaphorical dreamscapes, a ghostly clown and a figure in an authoritarian uniform personify concepts of immorality and morality, history and power. Their clashes and embraces, left open to interpretation, challenge facile binaries of right and wrong, black and white.

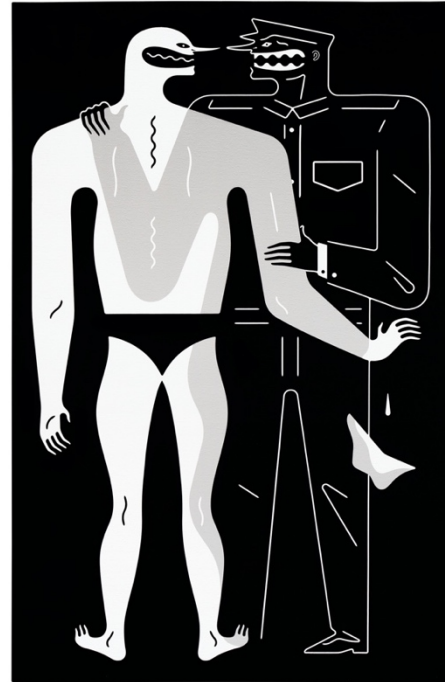
In *Ghost Arrives at His Bitter End*, Peterson imagines how episodes from the past can be selectively chosen to bolster authoritarian arguments and justify abuses of power in the present. The two crouching white figures, locked in the dark expanse of history, are unleashed into the present by an imposing black figure donning a bureaucratic uniform.

**albertz benda**

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A third character appears cackling and masked in *Listen you Fuckers as* he reflects our cynical gaze and implicates us in the exhibition's archetypal drama. In the words of the artist, "I started the show to tell a story of misunderstanding between two moral sides and how that space has many grey areas. As I worked, I realized that a third perspective was missing: modern man or the cynical voyeur. And how that fear-based perspective bleeds into all of our human experiences, how we see ourselves, how we see others, and how we define our personal and social duties within the world."

Strikingly austere yet expressive, these paintings mark a dramatic new chapter of Peterson's career and a deepening of his ongoing practice. Addressing violence in less explicit terms than his previous work, this exhibition presents a dystopic visual vocabulary with which to reexamine our disturbing current age. *Mr. Sinister* galvanizes our awareness of the oppressive structures that can bend and break our societies.



*Brotherhood* 2022. Acrylic on Canvas  
18 x 28 inches. 45.72 x 71.12 cm

#### **ABOUT CLEON PETERSON**

Cleon Peterson was born in 1973 in Seattle, Washington. He earned a BFA from the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California and an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Recent exhibitions by Peterson include 'Rose Béton Biennale' at Musée des Abattoirs, France (2020); 'The Shadow of Men' at Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2018); and Lasco Project at Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014) among many others. He will have his first solo show with albertz benda in March 2022.

#### **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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