

# Lamar Peterson

## *Left Foot, Right Foot*

April 29 through June 12, 2021

Fredericks & Freiser is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by **Lamar Peterson: *Left Foot, Right Foot***. With an active studio practice for more than twenty years, Peterson works in bright colors, subversive framing techniques, and bold figuration. Peterson's new compositions represent a shift in the painter's approach brought on by the Black Lives Matter protests and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, Peterson was unable to access his studio for months. The artist drew regularly as means of process and creating. Peterson, who lives in Minneapolis less than a mile from where George Floyd was murdered, took up walking as a regular outlet. The artist's adopted ambulatory practice was more than exercise. Rather, it became a mode of observing and processing: all over the world, people gathered to mourn, work through pain, and demand a better future. Merging the sublime with the quotidian, Peterson's exuberant works explore transformation, disfiguration, and fragmentation.

Peterson's paintings are "pseudo self-portraits" that capture a modern legacy of the flâneur. In one painting, a Black man in a yellow shirt ambles through the park. Trailing behind the figure, or perhaps disintegrating behind him, are smaller versions of himself. In other paintings, the same figure is repeated over and over again with only slight differences in outfit and orientation. This figure is always mid-stride, walking freely or aimlessly, projecting at once agency and disquietude. Sometimes the negative space between his legs is colorfully amplified as if by an invisible flashlight. Peterson's companion paintings called *The Poets* depict Black men with mouths agape and verbal utterances projecting outwards. Painted before Floyd's murder, *Version 1* gestures towards legacies of spoken word poetry and hip hop as Peterson depicts a man in profile whose vocalizations are portrayed through frenetic colors and lines against a black background. *Version 2* was painted after Floyd's death during a groundswell of political uprising and grief. Peterson captures this energy and pain, as his figure faces the audience but looks beyond us. His words cannot be contained by the frame and spill out on either side of him. Some words are caught in the man's mouth as he forms them, while most are imaged as bright colors with dramatic, comic-book-black lines within a white speech bubble, which itself lies atop a blue and black foundation. This maneuver calls to mind Zora Neale Hurston's famous exclamation: "I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background."

Peterson's candy-colored palette and deceptively simple compositional moments belie the works' rich, emotional subtext. The result is a brilliant tension between the emotive possibilities of color, composition, and subject matter. The vocal spurts of these works capture a perturbing and relentless anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Angst and anger boils over. At once words feel like the only recourse and, yet, not enough. The artist has developed a visual language that combines the legible

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thrust of figuration with the productive opacity of abstraction. Peterson captures how passionate bursts and despondent wandering are all part of processing persistent trauma.

## **About the Artist**

Lamar Peterson (born 1974 in St. Petersburg, Florida) received his MFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 2001. He has had previous solo exhibitions at The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York; Rochester Arts Center, Minnesota; Orlando Museum of Art, Florida; University Art Museum at SUNY, Albany; Deitch Projects, New York; and Franklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN. He has exhibited in numerous group shows including the Fifth International SITE Santa Fe Biennial 2004, Santa Fe, NM; The Drawing Center, New York, NY; Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY; and the Yale University Art Gallery New Haven, CT. Most recently, he was included in "Good Pictures" at Jefferey Deitch, New York curated by Austin Lee. Peterson is Assistant Professor of Drawing & Painting at the University of Minnesota. This is his seventh solo exhibition with Fredericks & Freiser.

**Fredericks & Freiser** is located at 536 West 24th Street, New York, NY. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm. During the COVID 19 pandemic, capacity will be limited, large groups will not be accommodated, and private appointments can be made for individual viewing. For more information, please contact us by phone: (212) 633 6555, or email: [info@fredericksfreisergallery.com](mailto:info@fredericksfreisergallery.com). Visit us on Instagram, [@fredericksandfreiser](https://www.instagram.com/fredericksandfreiser).