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**Matthias Noggler**  
**Consecrated by human use**  
**18.1. - 3.3.2018**

For his first solo show at Galerie Emanuel Layr, Matthias Noggler (born 1990 in Innsbruck) presents a series of eight new gouache paintings on paper, in pale wooden frames.

Noggler's paintings confront the viewer with adjoining scenes lacking any hierarchy or reading order. Reminiscent of look-and-find children's picture books, but also the work of Pieter Bruegel, the scenes are dense and overlapping. Caricatured figures from diverse socio-cultural milieus are crammed together in close quarters. Highly detailed painted surfaces and body parts draw the gaze across emblems of contemporary media and consumer culture, producing different connections between the individual figures and their activities. Although ultimately the figures seem less individualized than stereotyped, interchangeable, functioning more as just exemplars.

The spaces and environments in which these figurative constellations occur allude to end-times visions and dystopic scenarios founded on societal realities such as financial crises, social welfare cuts and not least the daily task of neoliberal self-optimisation. For example, a recurring hand appears in the foreground of the picture, like the kind that navigates particular actions in first-person video games, referencing the artificial imagery of post-apocalyptic computer games. Other imagery is borrowed from across greater historical distance: the grotesque everyday depictions of people working out or camping, and particularly doing supposedly nothing – like waiting, watching, or smoking cigarettes – call to mind early Renaissance Italian painter Vittore Carpaccio. Carpaccio's paintings feature an absurd, at times even macabre view of everyday situations occurring simultaneously within a picture, just as Noggler uses synchronized actions and gestures to structure the pictorial space of his paintings.

The impression of layering and superimposition of bodies, objects and scenarios is supported by Noggler's distinctive use of intense colour. Specific shades reappear in different images. As a result, the colour scheme is not just autonomous but an important organizing element. The contrast between the ornamental stylized surfaces in conjunction with strong colour on the one hand, and the visual levelling of figure and ground on the other, create a psychedelic effect. The Chicago Imagists are an important reference point in this context. They were a loose group of artists in the USA in the 1960s known for their surreal imagery and engagement with underground and local folk traditions. Autonomous from the New York art scene of the time, the Chicago Imagists distanced themselves from High Modernism and Minimalism, choosing to focus instead on Outsider Art, Folk Art and other *trash treasures*.

In the sense of a kind of confrontation with the abject and socially ostracised, the exhibition title *Consecrated by human use* suggests a post-human social critique. Accordingly, Noggler's painting on the invitation card depicting four dogs at a conspiratorial meeting, already envisions a world without humans.