

# NATHALIE KARG

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

James English Leary *Hoi Polloi*

October 31 – December 14, 2018

Opening Reception: Friday, November 2, 6-8pm

*Hoi Polloi*, James English Leary's first exhibition with Nathalie Karg gallery, presents eleven new paintings from the artist's most recent body of work.

Ten wooden silhouette-shaped panels contain interloping shapes and transversing bodies. In some works, narrative is winnowed to a single gesture: a crosstown foot, an elbow-in-the-orgy, a nose inquiring towards a windowsill pie. In others, colliding forms creep insidiously at the periphery, like dawning realizations or suppressed thoughts, leaving exposed the panel's veneered wood ground—a wreck-room (or Woodie station-wagon) of the mind. The projection of body parts onto, into and through the profile silhouettes—and the containment of depicted space within actual space—enact camp-psychological satires of interpretation and self-knowledge.

The exhibition's title, *Hoi Polloi*, Greek for "the people" (or in the strictest sense "the many"), likely comes to English scholars through the 5th-century B.C. Funeral Oration of Pericles who invoked it approvingly and in contrast with 'hoi oligoi' ("the few") in praising Athenian democracy. It has since come to possess a decidedly negative connotation and is used to signify the working class, the herd of commoners, the masses, the great unwashed, the plebeians or "plebs", the 'canaille', the proles (as in "the proletariats"), the rabble, the riffraff, the lower order, the mob and the dregs of society.

**James English Leary** (born 1982 in Chicago, IL) is a New York-based artist. He received his B.F.A. from Cooper Union in 2004. His paintings enact concrete comedies out of the medium's component parts to satirize follies of the mind and body. He is a Tiffany Foundation Award recipient and a Robert Rauschenberg Foundation resident. Leary's works have been exhibited nationally and internationally, including the Whitney Biennial, the Liverpool Biennial, *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1 and the Sundance Film Festival. He is a founding member of The Bruce High Quality Foundation. Leary teaches at The Cooper Union School of Art.