

# THE NEW YORKER

## GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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ART

### Alex Dodge

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The characters in this Brooklyn painter's new works, at Klaus von Nichtssagend, seem to float in a desolate virtual space. Their blue-to-white gradient backgrounds are actually inspired by a technique that predates digital design: Dodge studied traditional woodblock printing in Japan and borrows the *bokashi* cross-fade technique to create his illusions of otherworldly pictorial depth. The seamless, textureless expanses contrast with the artist's hallmark raised patterns of stencilled oil paint (imagine laser-cut fondant), lending his works a strange heft. Dodge's subjects—catlike animals in bespoke onesies, a figure in a Muppet-esque costume, another tiptoeing beneath a patchwork quilt—seem to have stepped out of cartoon narratives. But their comic qualities are almost overwhelmed by their implicit menace, underscored by the uncanny gravitas of the featureless realms they inhabit.

—Johanna Fateman