

ARTFORUM

Jules de Balincourt

ARNDT & PARTNER

Zimmerstrasse 90-91

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While a recent move to Germany has inspired some notable shifts in content, the paintings in "Accidental Tourism and the Art of Forgetting," Jules de Balincourt's first European solo show, retain the artist's strident use of color and characteristically refined naïveté. Distancing himself from the American political and historical themes that marked his earlier work, Balincourt introduces outlandish scenarios, showing locations from Berlin and other places that might have been discovered by an "accidental tourist" traveling around Europe. But this is not documentary painting; rather the work depicts fictional narratives painted in varying styles that often merge the real with the realm of dreams. In the impressive and monumental work *Untitled (Diptych)* (all works 2006) and others, Balincourt builds his pictorial space out of predominantly tectonic forms. At the same time, he is progressively moving away from the representational and towards the abstract, occasionally linking the intermediate zones by floating text (*P.C.H.*). On a formal level, Balincourt moves between a reductive two dimensionality (*Untitled (Black Map)* and *California Precontact*), landscapes with dramatic perspective and panorama-like depth (*Glacial Aesthetics*), surreal fadeouts (*Ulrich from the North*), and the sentimentally strange (*Protest Island* and *New Sensitivity*). The broad range of motifs and formal differences that constitute this deliberately disparate spectrum are held together by the artist's relaxed style of painting, producing an odd, open-ended cosmos that Balincourt fills with precisely articulated emotions.

—Jens Asthoff