

PRESS RELEASE

Victoria Miro

Jules de Balincourt *Stumbling Pioneers*

Private View 6 – 8pm, Thursday 14 April 2016

Exhibition runs 14 April – 14 May

Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1 7RW



*Jules de Balincourt studio, works in progress, February 2016
Photo Lee Tyler Thompson*

Victoria Miro is delighted to announce *Stumbling Pioneers*, the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Jules de Balincourt, which explores the frontier as a charged concept in contemporary culture. Painted on return to his hometown Los Angeles after a 20-year interval, these works road-trip through the mythic and geographically sprawling metropolis with an eye for man's uncertain relationship with his environment.

Perched on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, Los Angeles has, since the pioneering age, been the limitless repository of America's dreams of the frontier, of desires that saturate the sunsets, freeways, canyons and swimming pools that de Balincourt paints. This landscape, a disjunctured synthesis of the human, the architectural, and the organic, seems to temper idealistic energies: rather than striding boldly into the unknown, the figure drifts aimlessly through sunlit pockets of space, leisurely waiting for some ultimate opportunity for freedom. Here, the promise of the frontier – the hope of progress and the better life it inspires – coexists with a muddled reality of blurred boundaries between man and nature in a landscape that seems comprehensively colonised.

Poised between the strange and the familiar, the works that make up *Stumbling Pioneers* are rooted in the unmistakable vibrant landscape of California, yet shaped by dreamlike associations that interconnect large-scale canvases and smaller works. Almost-

transparent washes of paint build gradients of colour and form on these carefully constructed surfaces, on which the abstract remains visible amidst defined areas of representation. De Balincourt's work gestures towards the incalculable process of painting, which he has described as beginning with, 'a very intuitive dance in the dark of brushes and pigments [...] So in a way it is about this intersection in my mind when I abandon the more unknowing primitive approach, finding something that inspires or I need to pursue.'

De Balincourt's practice occupies a distinct emotional hyperspace, ranging with easy fluency across abstraction and figuration, collective imagination and singularised perception to make idiosyncratic connections within the landscape of contemporary westernised culture. Hard and fast dualities, whether psychological or sociopolitical, are suspended in this shifting space: together, his works invite us to journey across terrain in which it is no longer easy to distinguish between the utopian and the dystopian, the escape and the capture.

Jules de Balincourt, born in Paris, France in 1972, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and Los Angeles. De Balincourt's work has been the subject of a number of international solo exhibitions at institutions including Kasseler Kunstverein, Kassel (2015); The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas (2014 - 2015); Rochechouart Museum of Contemporary Art, Rochechouart (2014); Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (2013); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2010) and Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Nashville (2008). His work has also been included in a number of significant group exhibitions, including L'Ange de l'Histoire, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud at le Palais des Beaux-Arts, Paris (2013); New York Minute, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow (2011) and the 10th Havana Biennial, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana (2009).

For further press information please contact:

Victoria Miro: Kathy Stephenson | Director of Communications | kathy@victoria-miro.com | +44 (0) 20 7549 0422

Rees & Company: Chloe Nahum | chloe@reesandco.com | + 44 (0) 77 42 23 91 78