



**EVIL UNDER THE SUN:
JULES DE BALINCOURT**

Jules de Balincourt's large canvases mix abstract and figurative forms to create colourful dreamscapes that teeter on the brink of becoming nightmares. For his forthcoming show *Malpais*, at Galerie Thaddeus Ropac in Paris, de Balincourt presents paintings that depict current and vanishing aspects of American culture that look like they could have been culled from holiday postcards. In fact de Balincourt makes deceptive work that dismantles the architecture of the American dream, but always in a folksy, childlike style. It is this wary approach to his adopted homeland (de Balincourt emigrated to the US from France age ten) that got his work included in *USA Today* (2006), a show exploring contemporary artists' views of US identity at the Royal Academy in London two summers ago.

For *Malpais*, de Balincourt will show *Winds of Change* (2008), a canvas depicting a seemingly serene beach in the Caribbean. *Winds of Change* could easily be the large-scale replica of a postcard were it not for small details - such as windblown palms and colourful scraps flying agitatedly above them - that suggest the onslaught of some severe weather-related disaster, with references to Hurricane Katrina not far off. Elsewhere, in *Your Technology Fails Me* (2008), the artist tackles the technological matrix, with sinewy multicoloured ribbons standing in for lines of mass communication, and the title's statement of failure printed either side. Chaos never looked prettier. *Laura Allsop*

JULES DE BALINCOURT:
MALPAIS
11 JUNE - 26 JULY,
GALERIE THADDEUS ROPAC,
PARIS, WWW.ROPAC.NET

**GOLDEN BALLS:
BUCKMINSTER FULLER**

'Heisenberg said that observation alters the phenomenon observed. T.S. Eliot said that studying history alters history. Ezra Pound said that thinking in general alters what is thought about. Pound's formulation is the most general, and I think it's the earliest.' Here, in this statement from 1967, one gets a sense of the ease with which R. Buckminster Fuller ranged among and between disciplines, and it is that ranging which stands as a hallmark of his importance for contemporary artistic practice, which the Whitney's forthcoming retrospective promises to reconfirm.

After Edison in the late-nineteenth century, Fuller may be the epitome of the intellectual tinkerer - the artist, designer and inventor who recognised the supreme systematicity of the physical world and how any intervention into that world needed to fit its system, needed to redirect rather than to interrupt its flows. Of course, most of us come to know of Fuller via his geodesic domes, easily one of the more radical contributions to the worlds of architecture and design. But Fuller's gifts extend far beyond these signifiers of 'the future', most notably to his many years as an educator and his tireless efforts to close the chasm between C.P. Snow's so-called two cultures (science versus the humanities).

Even more importantly, however, the Whitney retrospective will undoubtedly offer us the first opportunity to consider the emergent ideology of 'sustainability' as a successor to our now-more-than-200-year-old process of industrial and technological modernisation. As an architect and designer, Fuller was a particularly astute critic of high modernist aesthetics (and the International Style it wrought). As a theorist and futurist (in the Kurzweil sense of that term), Fuller's may very well be the hand that guides us through our next, even more global, century.

Jonathan T.D. Neil

BUCKMINSTER FULLER: *STARTING WITH THE UNIVERSE*, 26 JUNE - 21 SEPTEMBER
THE WHITNEY, NEW YORK, WWW.WHITNEY.ORG



from left: Jules de Balincourt, *Your Technology Fails Me*, 2008, oil, acrylic and spraypaint on panel, 183 x 152 cm, courtesy Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, Paris & Salzburg, photo: Jason Mandella. Buckminster Fuller and Shoji Sadao, *Dome over Manhattan*, c 1960, b/w photograph mounted on board, 35 x 47 cm, courtesy the Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller