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Berlin Steps Out for Gallery Weekend

By Arsalan Mohammad

BERLIN — On the evening of April 30, Berlin's **Gallery Weekend** kicked off with over 40 contemporary galleries launching new exhibitions, and special programming from museums and permanent institutions. The festivities whet the city's artistic appetite until the **Berlin Biennale**, which opens on June 11th. ARTINFO embarked on a whirlwind tour of galleries and parties, from Jimmy Durham's quirky conceptualism to the stunning canvases of Jens Hausmann.



Later in the evening, the place to be was **Heidestrasse**, a grim, industrial backyard to the city's central Hauptbahnhof station, backing onto the city's renowned **Hamburger Bahnhof** museum.

Across the road — and next to the hordes pleading entrance to the **Damien Hirst/Michael Joo** double-header at Haunch of Venison — **Galerie Schuster** offered up a superb series of paintings by **Jens Hausmann**.

After a whistle-stop tour of a dozen galleries, one's retinas can start to feel dehydrated; these extraordinarily unsettling, silent canvases were a bracing antidote. Across 35 canvases, Hausmann unfolded haunting scenes of quietly unsettling interactions. The landscapes appear Californian, apocalyptically-colored with looming skyscapes against which each blank-faced protagonist mulls through a personal crisis. Hausmann is adept at concocting a quiet, disturbing mise-en-scene. The muted, soft pastel shades and the vast backdrops pushes a narrative front and center, bristling with dark possibilities and ominous, evening dread.