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Ruth Weisberg, *Ghost*
(2001). Inset: Kristian von
Hornsleth, *Fuck Beauty*
(Blue) (2006)

RUTH WEISBERG, KRISTIAN VON HORNSLETH

Ruth Weisberg's recent series of mixed-media paintings on unstretched canvas elaborate on images of people on boats, floating toward a new life with hope and trepidation written across their faces. If you know your *Exodus*, book or movie, you'll recognize the faces, the clothing and the drama, but Weisberg has deliberately kept her pictures just universal enough to transcend the history of one land or one people. These are European (Ashkenazi) characters out of the mid-20th century, but Weisberg, who renders them with her characteristically tender verism, swaths them in a painterly mist that embodies not just offshore fog but misty recollection and equally dreamy aspiration.

At the other end of the attitude spectrum, Danish bad boy Kristian von Hornsleth sticks it in the eye of the beholder, splashing nasty slogans (and his own name) across figures ripped from magazines (ads, interviews, centerfolds) and addressing those fuck-yous at us. On one level this adolescent fury does Mark Kostabi one better in the exploitative-snottiness department. On another it does drive home a critique of the consumer society, cramming images (and objects, such as Hornsleth's post-neo-punk jewelry) down its gullet in a search for the point of — and just past — satiation. On still another level, Hornsleth can't hide his graphic virtuosity, and his defacing cascades of graffiti have a convulsive beauty all their own.

Ruth Weisberg at Jack Rutberg, 357 N. La Brea Ave., Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; thru June 3. (323) 938-5222. Kristian von Hornsleth at Another Year in LA, 2121 N. San Fernando Rd., Mon.-Fri., noon-5 p.m., Sun., 1-4 p.m.; thru June 4. (323) 223-4000.

—Peter Frank