

truth of the man's various character. What he discovers instead is the truth of the image, which in this case is no less significant.

There are six large, monochromatic oil paintings in the show, as well as several bust-size ceramic works. Each portrays the leader at a different period in his life, usually with some element of manipulation or distortion. Gerhard Richter is an obvious influence on the paintings, and although Yin's Zhaoyang's technique falls well short of Richter's profound precision, it carries a persuasive emotional resonance.

"I," an 8-by-6-foot painting rendered in shades of vivid indigo, is based on a famous 1936 photograph of Mao as a young, handsome revolutionary. In one example of the show's deep personal undercurrent, however,

and slack-jawed, his vague gaze suggesting a Lear-like disintegration of majesty.

The gray-toned "Swimming" captures an aging Mao awkwardly mid-stroke, looking pitifully — but also endearingly — human and vulnerable. And "Passed Away" — an 8-by-8-foot canvas, rendered in an unusually thick application of brilliant Communist red — presents the leader at last on his deathbed, his ultimate mortality confirmed.

In the ceramic works, Yin Zhaoyang subjects several of the same images to fun-house-like distortions: dramatically elongating the body or comically compacting it; shrinking the head or tilting it unnaturally to the side. They're elegant objects, with smooth, lustrous surfaces and rich red, black and white

## Hip, without forgoing tradition

In the au courant climate of South La Cienega Boulevard, the pair of exhibitions now at Kim Light / LightBox have an anomalously — and appealingly — old school air, with contemporary concerns grounded in decidedly traditional methods.

The two front galleries contain the paintings of **Samantha Fields**: dramatic skiescapes rendered in meticulous airbrush on mid-sized canvas-covered panels. Fields gathered the images with a camera — storms, fires, sunsets and spectacular cloud formations encountered on a re-

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**DRAMATIC SKYSCAPE:** Samantha Fields' meticulous paintings, including "Destroy the Destroyers (Cedar City, UT)," are on exhibit at Kim Light / LightBox.

JOSHUA WHITE Kim Light / LightBox Gallery



ADAM SILVERMAN  
Kim Light / LightBox Gallery

**CERAMIC:** Adam Silverman combines clean, traditional forms with rich glazes.

[Galleries, from Page E20] cent cross-country trip — and reproduces them with lush, photographic accuracy, exploring the romantic tradition of the sublime as well as contemporary fears of environmental apocalypse.

Whether the works go so far as to “catapult landscape painting beyond the rehashing of art historical styles,” as the news release suggests, is questionable — if anything, the thinness of the airbrush inspires nostalgia for the rich, choppy surfaces of a Constable or a Turner — but they’re gorgeous paintings nonetheless.

Equally rousing though far more modest in scale are the ceramic works of Adam Silverman, in the project room and back office. The roughly two dozen vessels, the largest of which is no bigger than a basketball, combine clean, thin-walled, traditional forms — round with a narrow neck or columnar — with thick, expressive, richly organic glazes.

The craftsmanship is exquisite. Some have smooth, dark surfaces, with pale drips running across at unexpected angles. Others have rough, crusted surfaces, resembling dried foam. Others — my favorite — are clean, elegant, matte gray vessels partially coated with a lumpy, earthy, glossy, green-brown glaze, thick enough to



**BY DESIGN:** Steve Gorman mixes images that are easy to recognize.

serve as a sculptural element in itself. The contrast between the high refinement of the vessels’ lines and the mad unruliness of the glaze brings two opposing veins of ceramic practice into a masterful and deeply absorbing balance.

**Kim Light / LightBox**, 2856 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, (310) 558-1111, through April 7. Closed Sundays and Mondays. [www.lightbox.io](http://www.lightbox.io)

## Enlivened by graphic mastery

Steve Gorman brings a lively graphic sensibility to a rather tired handful of themes in “Learned Helplessness,” an exhibi-