



Lucas Reiner, 2010, Station 8 (Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem).

The Green Door Gallery presents

Lucas Reiner Fifteen Stations

Opening Saturday, March 26th, 3-9pm

On view Sundays 03/27, 04/04 and 04/10, 2-5pm

The Green Door Gallery is thrilled to host the first New York exhibition of Fifteen Stations, a series of fifteen etchings by internationally exhibited artist Lucas Reiner. Using his signature alphabet of trees, the artist offers a poetic and deeply personal rendering of the traditional “Stations of the Cross”, Jesus’ redemptive journey from death to resurrection.

When I first entered Lucas Reiner’s studio in Los Angeles, I felt like walking into something between a mysterious forest and a hospital room. I found myself surrounded by trees of all shapes, colors and species. They had, however, one thing in common: there was not a single tree there that was not, in some way, maimed or disformed. Their sometimes monstrous, sometimes comical look, is not the result of some birth-defect. Nature is not to blame for it. Their deformity was imposed on them by the hostile, urban environment they grew up in. As we walked through the dense thicket of his studio, Lucas stopped by a canvas where a thin, vertical tree, stood in the middle of a large, light-filled canvas, like a feverish child on immaculate bedsheets. This tree, he explained, grew up between two buildings so it had to stretch out its neck to seek the light. We kept on walking and stopped by another canvas, where a tree was bent and almost dwarfed by thick, brown layers of paint. This one grew under a shelter so that its vertical thrust was countered by the concrete ceiling. It looked like it was shouldering the weight of the whole construction. He showed me a clownish-looking tree, shamefully retired in a corner. This one was pruned senselessly, just so passers-by could see the commercial sign for a burger joint. And on we went, the artist leading me from one canvas to the other as a surgeon walking an intern through the rooms of an emergency ward.

The Fall — the season, as well as the Biblical story — is where Lucas Reiner’s trees belong. Withered trees that are but a far cry of that Tree of Life in whose likeness they were created. Orphan trees, uprooted from the original bliss of the Garden of Eden. They are, like Adam and Eve after the Fall, in dire need of redemption. It won’t come as a surprise, then, that when Lucas Reiner was commissioned to realize the Stations of the Cross for Saint Augustine Episcopal church in

Washington, D.C., he accepted heartily — though he himself is Jewish (his wife, however, is a Christian). His long litany of wounded trees was already, for years, moving in silent procession towards the Calvary, where artists throughout history have contemplated and depicted the miracle of the dead tree of the cross becoming the tree of life, the life-giving tree. The drama of Jesus' journey from condemnation and crucifixion to resurrection, traditionally analyzed into fourteen "stations", concentrates and illuminates the human paradox that Lucas had explored for many years with his pictorial language: the withering of fall and the ascent of summer, the death of winter and the rebirth of spring, the hidden roots deep in the soil and the branches soaring high in the sky and, above all, the longing and the struggle for life in a hostile and often brutal environment.

The Fifteen Stations made for Saint Augustine Episcopal church consist in fifteen etchings, now exhibited at the Green Door Gallery. Each etching offers a personal take of the artist on one of the "stations" through a tree or group of trees. All of them are real life trees observed and sketched by the artist along his trips and hikes in the United States, Italy, Germany... Intimate and quiet, these etchings preserve and treasure the memory of these overlooked creatures with tenderness and exactitude, much like a a polaroid.

As you undertake this journey from one station to the next, O visitor, do not run. Slow down. Look. Pause and meditate. Let these memories become yours. Let your gaze follow the gaze of the artist and rest upon those humble, overlooked beings. These trees, wounded and broken, derided and yet standing, thriving for light and for heaven, they people our streets, our hospitals, our nursing homes. They are our neighbors, friends or strangers.

Rev. Paul Anel

Lucas Reiner

Lucas Reiner has widely exhibited internationally and his work is represented in public and private collections, including the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the West Collection (Oaks, Pennsylvania, USA); Staatlichen Graphischen Sammlung (Munich, Germany); the Diözesan Museum (Freising, Germany); Colección Jumex (Mexico City, Mexico); and the American Embassy Collection (Riga, Latvia).



Writing in Modern Painters in 2005 about Reiner's paintings portraying the atmospheric after-effects of fireworks explosions, critic Shana Nys Dambrodt stated that his works evoke "the great mysterious void at the heart of existence, a railing against nihilism and entropy through the impossibly tender and romantic gesture of capturing the transitory in form and meaning . . . a moment in which nature and technology interact to produce a visual effect." Writing in Art in America in 1996, critic Tobey Crockett described Reiner's early work (exhibited at Bennett Roberts Gallery in Los Angeles) as "filled with genuine feeling," stating that his paintings "resonate with emotion, poetry and gritty reportage."