

# LAWEEKLY



FREE

## THE FINAL FRONTIER



STEM CELLS—MEDICAL GODSEND OR SIMPLY GODDAMNED?  
BY STEVEN KOTLER



STATE OF THE ONION: BUSH SLICED, DICED AND CAMELIZED  
THE TWINKIE OFFENSE: JEFFREY VALLANCE GOES TO WAR  
GEOFF DYER ROCKS! INTRODUCING OUR NEW BOOK CRITIC  
THE TELL-TALE TONE: LOU REED ON SOUND, SPIRIT AND POE

## ART PICKS OF THE WEEK

AMIR ZAKI, LUCAS REINER

Amir Zaki has found mystery in the Valley, of all places. Yes, that Valley. To

Zaki, our sea of suburbia is dotted with the strangest of structures. They are stranger the way Zaki regards them, segregating his photographs by shape of building. At least that's what he's done here, grouping together tall (over six feet), narrow (less than two feet wide) shots of tall, narrow house-things. It is evident from Zaki's documentation that such peculiar erections — disguised chimneys? birdhouses for condors? stables for giraffes? (the catalogue essay regards them, at least metaphorically, as family mausoleums) — dot the Valley (specifically Valley Village and Lake Hollywood). He's not making a sociological point (although Mike Davis could really run with it) so much as capitalizing on the oddity and noirish disquiet of our urban landscape. Zaki enhances this wooze not only by making his photographs as big as people (or, tellingly, full-length mirrors), but by shooting the constricted sheds from low vantage points and frequently allowing a slight tilt to the camera, as if looking at these skinny houses while dropping to the ground in a partial faint.

Okay, now that you're lying in the grass, you open your eyes again and, rather than Zaki's buildingettes, you see treetops silhouetted against the sky. You stare at them, and they come more and more into focus even as they come to resemble more and more untree things — clouds, heads of hair, tornadoes, maps and, of course, paintings. Lucas Reiner's little paintings (approximately a foot square) of just trees take us on a tree-by-tree tour of an ideal arbor, leading us into a meditation on treeness. Reiner's painterly touch, firm but feathered, comes right out of Barbizon realism, as does his sober but verdant palette; but his treatment of his subjects, painting them realistically but cropping them into icons, finds transcendence, a meta-treeness, in them. "[T]he city tree," notes Reiner, "is engaged in a specific struggle — it is rarely permitted to grow freely . . . And unlike the form of trees in nature, it reflects the impact of the city in its shape." Sounds almost like that poor old tree in Santa Clarita; but, in fact, Reiner's simply mused on the kind of scraggly evergreens that brush against Zaki's buildings. At Roberts & Tilton, 6150 Wilshire Blvd.; thru Feb. 8. (323) 549-0223.

—Peter Frank

We also recommend: *Landscapes of Myth* at the Getty Museum; *Mark Housley* at Advocate Gallery; *Lauren Greenfield* at Stephen Cohen; *Kharlene Boxenbaum* at DoubleVision; *David Grant* at Newspace; *Sex* at Karyn Lovegrove; *Papers* at ACME.; *Michael Salerno* at Coagula; *Carrie Ungerman* and *Julie McManus* at Acuña-Hansen; *Any Gallaccio* at Blum & Poe; *Joan Jonas* at Rosamund Felsen; *Jim Shaw* at Patrick Painter; *Daniel Clowes* at Richard Heller.

## Amir Zaki's Family Califa

**NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**, 900 Exposition Blvd., Exposition Park. Open Mon.-Fri., 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$8, \$5.50 seniors & students, \$5 children 5-12, under 5 free, free to all first Tues. of the month. (213) 763-DINO (3466).

**Spectacular Sea Slugs!** Museum curator Dr. Angel Valdes leads the lesson on naked mollusks, followed by a tidepool excursion to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Sat., Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; \$45.

**NORTON SIMON MUSEUM OF ART**, 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. Highlights include seven centuries of European art (Botticelli, Rembrandt, van Gogh, Matisse) and 2,000 years of Asian sculpture. Open Mon., Wed.-Thurs & Sat.-Sun., noon-6 p.m.; Fri., noon-9 p.m.; \$6, \$3 seniors, students & children free. (626) 449-6840.

**Intimate Viewing: Reading Other People's Mail** Rodin to his mistress, Matisse to his model, and other artists' correspondence; thru May 19.

**My Four Kings: Galka Scheyer and the Blue Four** Oil paintings, watercolors, prints and drawings are among the hundreds of works by Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Alexei Jawlensky, and Vasily Kandinsky from the collection of Emmy Galka Scheyer, who also befriended the artists known as the Blue Four; thru April 14. Related slide lecture, "Tone/Color: The Blue Four's Relation to Music," and piano recital by Dr. Leonard Stein, Fri., Jan. 31, 7 p.m.

**Film: Sister Wendy at the Norton Simon Museum**

The famous British "art num" goes from gallery to gallery discussing 20 of her favorite works, screens daily.

**PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM**, 46 N. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena. Open Wed.-Thurs. & Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri., 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; \$5, \$3 seniors & students, children under 12 free. (626) 449-2742.

**Sacred Stitches: Tibetan Buddhist Images Pieced in Silk by Leslie Rinchen Wongmo** Featuring nine pieces of the American artist's *thangkas*; thru Feb. 16.

**PAGE MUSEUM AT THE LA BREA TAR PITS**, 5801 Wilshire Blvd. Though dinosaurs were extinct when this fossil record began, there are mammal and bird fossils on display at this museum that date back as far as 40,000 years. Open Mon.-Fri., 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$6, \$3.50 students & seniors, \$2 children 5-12, under 5 free, free to all first Tues. of the month. (323) 857-6311.

**PASADENA MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA ART**, 490 E. Union St. Open Wed.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; \$5, \$3 seniors & students, children under 12 free. (626) 568-3665.

**Sweet Dreams: Children's Toys, Quilts and Clothing** A hundred years' worth of dolls, stuffed animals, games, books, furniture and other pre-Pokémon pastimes from 1850 to 1950; thru May 25.

**PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY**, 470 W. Walnut St. Open Wed.-Sun., noon-5 p.m.; \$6, \$5 seniors & students, children under 12 free. (626) 577-1660.

**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY** **FREDERICK R. WEISMAN**

**MUSEUM OF ART**, 24255 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu. Open Tues.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; free. (310) 506-4851.

**Wayne Thiebaud: Works From 1955 to 2003** The California Pop Artist's paintings of food, as well as his still lifes, cityscapes of San Francisco and landscapes of the Sacramento River Valley; thru March 23. Related family art workshop; Sat., Feb. 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM**, 6060 Wilshire Blvd. Open Tues.-Sun., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; \$7, \$5 seniors & students, \$3 children 5-12, under 5 free; parking \$8. (323) 930-CARS.

**SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART**, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Building G-1. Open Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; \$3 suggested donation, \$2 students & seniors. (310) 586-6488.

**Hand Held Objects** Sculpture vaguely resembling human body parts by the L.A.-based artist Lauren Bon; thru March 22.

**Alfred Jensen: Concordance** The abstract artist's ten canvases, some highlighted by hand-drawn numbers in Arabic and Chinese, and others by symbols from exotic calendars and scientific diagrams; thru April 19.

**SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER**, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd. The American Jewish experience is the subject of this complex. See Film & Video Events and Theater for occasional screenings and plays. Open Tues.-Sat., noon-5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$8, \$6 students & seniors, children under 12 free. (310) 440-4500. Tours for the blind available by reservation at (310) 440-4573.

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