

Songlines

Alexander Karinsky's new exhibition of paintings are influenced by the writings of Bruce Chatwin, an English writer who recorded the Aboriginal Dreamtime in his remarkable book titled *Songlines*. Chatwin explained that "*Aboriginal Creation myths tell of the legendary totemic beings who had wandered over the continent in the Dreamtime, singing out the name of everything that crossed their path - birds, animals, plants, rocks, waterholes - and so singing the world into existence.*"

Karinsky's new paintings emerge as visible pathways connecting us to his world. However, these works are not literal maps, they are instead, memories of place; mind maps that reference the totemic geography of his beloved NYC. Karinsky, inspired by *Songlines*, has painted his world into existence by mapping out the contents of his territory.

The abstracted forms suggest roads, city blocks, structures and shadows; they are stretched and distorted, erased and filled in. These works locate you in an unsettling place; it is both physical and remembered. Memory can play tricks and is often unreliable, but it is this tension or unease between remembering and forgetting, real and unreal, between the familiar and the unknown, that makes this work so absorbing.

Karinsky's chosen surface is the humble and ubiquitous wooden palette. This imperfect material is encoded in narrative, with stories literally embedded in the often cracked and busted surfaces. The artist collects the material from the streets itself. Discarded and overlooked these palettes present the perfect surface to overlay his distorted memory geography.

Karinsky's paintings are a striking marriage of image and material, they are literally pieces of the city, reclaimed and presented back to the viewer. The beautifully painted surfaces, though split and fractured, embody the energy and thrust of the city. These paintings chart a remembered experience within the cityscape, they are essentially Karinsky's own songlines.

Peter Atkins