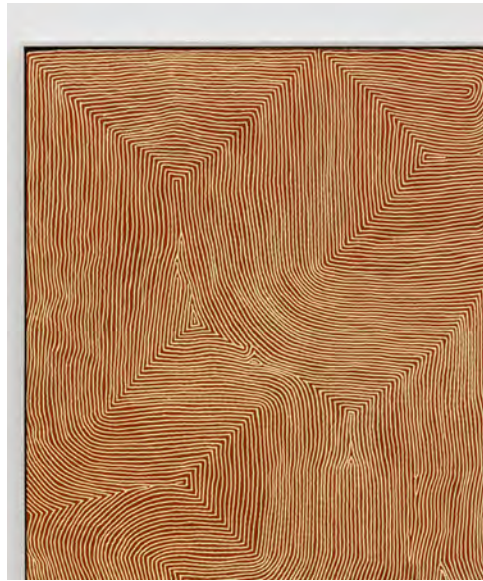


New York Times, October 15, 2015

The New York Times

Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri's Aboriginal Dreamtime Paintings

By Roberta Smith



"Untitled" (2015), an Aboriginal Dreamtime painting by Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri, at Salon 94. Credit Courtesy of the artist and Salon 94, New York.

It's always thrilling when examples of a given art form make you think this is the best (fill in the blank) I've ever seen. That's my feeling about the Aboriginal Dreamtime paintings in Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri's American solo debut at Salon 94 Bowery on the Lower East Side. Born in 1958, Mr. Tjapaltjarri is a Pintupi artist and ritual healer from the Western Australia desert. The elaborately topographical patterns of his paintings, created with thousands of delicate concentric lines, often depict sacred landscapes — specifically Lake Mackay or Marawa, a clay pan to its west — that figure in the travels of Pintupi ancestors called Tingari.

These sites and their accompanying rituals cannot be detailed to outsiders, but that's fine. The paintings themselves are beyond category. Loosely applied, Mr. Tjapaltjarri's lines accumulate into continuous surfaces that, however simply made, are never still or flat. They are intensely optical, but not Op: their handmade vitality avoids that style's soulless surfaces and designs. They use a maximum of three colors: the whitish lines, the color between them (red, brown, gray or gray-blue), and sometimes a hidden plane of red or black glimmers in the tiny gaps between the two.

The lines shift direction gently, in curves, or abruptly, in angles. These result in undulating swells, swirls, boxy corners or chevrons. More subtle variations across open fields may indicate where Mr. Tjapaltjarri left off work for a while and then returned, using a fuller brush. Vortexes appear as the lines' patterns narrow, moving toward centers defined by tiny closed shapes or by open, closely nestled lines.

The above could be taken as a partial user's guide easily expanded through looking, a ritual unto itself.



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Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri

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Salon 94 Bowery

243 Bowery, at Stanton Street, Lower East Side

Through Oct. 24

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