

ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

532 W 24 ST NYC NY 10011 TEL 212 243 2100

ALEXANDER KALETSKI

Cardboard Chapel: A Fifty Year Retrospective

On view October 22 - December 5, 2026

Opening: Thursday, October 22nd, 2026, 6-8pm

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to announce *Cardboard Chapel*, a solo exhibition by Alexander Kaletski that includes a fifty year retrospective of his painting on cardboard. The title draws from the Sistine Chapel as a monumental example of how patronage of the arts has been used to shape and disseminate ideas, beliefs and stories throughout history. Kaletski considers how this powerful force operates today and he finds it in the marketing that surrounds us. Nowadays, financial support funds the creation of logos, packaging, and taglines that carefully construct narratives designed to make products recognizable, desirable, and memorable.

Kaletski takes these commercial images and removes them from their original purpose. Working directly on discarded cardboard packaging, he transforms logos, forms, and fragments of design into paintings and collages of his own. He is drawn to boxes with a particular visual or spiritual character. Their folds, tears, stickers and design fragments become part of each work. Rather than obscuring the original packaging, he incorporates and amplifies its existing imagery, creating an interaction between the established identity of the brand and his own intervention. By doing so, he separates the visual language from the consumerist message it was created to communicate. Material originally created to contain and sell a product is transformed into a surface for painting, collage, and invention.

Kaletski began working on cardboard in 1976, shortly after moving from the Soviet Russia to New York. The early works reflect the difficulty of leaving his former life behind. Their dark palette and imagery convey a sense of mourning. In discarded boxes he discovered an unexpected material through which he could process his new surroundings. As Kaletski became more settled in New York, the work grew more playful and humorous. These cardboard paintings were first exhibited publicly in 1996, when gallerist Valerie Dillon gave the artist his debut solo exhibition, *Cardboard People*. The works captivate viewers through their unusual materials, unexpected imagery and distinct personalities. Kaletski's perceptive eye and confident use of color and form captures the wild and vibrant life that surrounds us.

Over five decades, Kaletski has built an expanding world from cardboard. His earlier exhibitions introduced a cardboard museum, cafe and a cardboard castle. *Cardboard Chapel* continues this evolving world, bringing the artist's cardboard universe into a space of gathering and contemplation.

ALEXANDER KALETSKI (b. 1946, Monchegorsk, Russia), immigrated to the United States in 1975. He lives and works in New York City. The artist has exhibited widely in shows internationally including New York, Mexico, China, Japan, Austria, Belarus

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and France. His works are included in the permanent collections of the Voorlinden Museum in the Netherlands, AMMA Foundation, the Claryville Art Center in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belarus, the Meeschaert Collection in France and the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Collection in California. His work has been reviewed in Architectural Digest, Associated Press, Modern Painters, Vanity Fair and National Review among other publications. Kaletski is the author of the autobiographical novel "Metro: A Novel of Moscow Underground," an international bestseller that has been translated into fifteen languages.

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