

JDJ

Barrow Parke

Knots

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370 Broadway

New York, NY 10013

September 30-October 25, 2025

Opening Friday, October 3rd, 6-8pm

The collaborative practice of New York-based artists Barrow Parke centers on the craft of weaving: its history, logic, and systems as well as its visual and tactile qualities. They are well known for their intricate paintings on hand-woven and embroidered fabric, where painted threads interact with the color, texture and pattern of the woven surfaces.

In *Knots*, their third solo exhibition with JDJ, Barrow Parke takes on the history of weaving—humanity’s first abstract conceptual system. Though the importance of weaving has been historically overlooked, Barrow Parke brings deep levels of research to this topic to show how weaving’s origins and foundational logic has so centrally shaped the human and non-human worlds.

The resulting paintings on hand-woven and embroidered fabric, works on paper, and wallpaper employ a spectacularly rich motif of visual references and storytelling that use weaving as both form and subject, revealing hidden structures, hierarchies, and interconnections among all living beings.

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.

-Donna Haraway¹

What led the first women to take the conceptual leap required to thread a piece of plant over, then under, then over, then under other subsequent pieces of plants? Was it born of an animalistic behavior passed down through genes?

It almost certainly arrived in response to some necessity, to hold or cover something. And it was likely the first complex, abstract thought. A thought leading to a system of knowledge

¹ Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 12.

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on which all other significant markers of civilization would be built², the foundation for all *progress*, if there is such a thing.

This idea (weaving), arriving some tens of thousands of years ago, was both nature and culture. Material and thought. Inchoate and fully formed. It was everything and nothing. Beautifully anonymous.

How is it that an idea of such consequence would grow and spread throughout civilizations, yet its origins remain anonymous? Was it because the system was nonlinear in form and concept, or because it occurred in contrast to what American author Ursula K. Le Guin calls *heroes' tales*? Or was it something more benign but equally insidious— the byproduct of the naming or classification of things? When understanding a concept through another concept, something is always hidden³, or worse, lost.

Whatever the initial impetus, it is clear that, with the linear march of heroes' tales and advent of Modernity, maintaining anonymity helped increase what American anthropologist Anna Tsing terms, *salvage accumulation*. In short, the anonymity of weaving allowed the conditions and circumstances within which it occurred to be overlooked and made it easier to convert wovens into capital.

When weaving was categorized, it had the distinction of being dubbed, *decorative*. A name that backgrounded it, and implied something *less than*. A name masking its rich history and importance, and in a sense preserving its anonymity.

Yet within every decorative motif, every floral repeat, there is the echo of the link between plants, weaving, and our foundational conceptual system. Within every structure or system (fabric or otherwise) there is the echo of the beautiful, mathematical logic first initiated with the passing of plants over and under themselves. Hidden in plain sight.

We seek to reveal these connections. Using weaving as both form and conceptual methodology, we craft densely knotted works— far from intractable, but with slow, thoughtful looking, rewards hopefully abound. The stories we tell, or rather the viewpoint from which we tell them (filtered through the lens of weaving), is at times idiosyncratic, but equally omnipresent. Our recent depictions of plants, animals and other non-human things, touch on the (mis)categorization, hierarchies, and hidden structures that nonetheless define us as humans, in all our follies.

-Mark Barrow and Sarah Parke

² David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything*, 435.

³ George Lakeoff and Mark Johnsen, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chapter 3