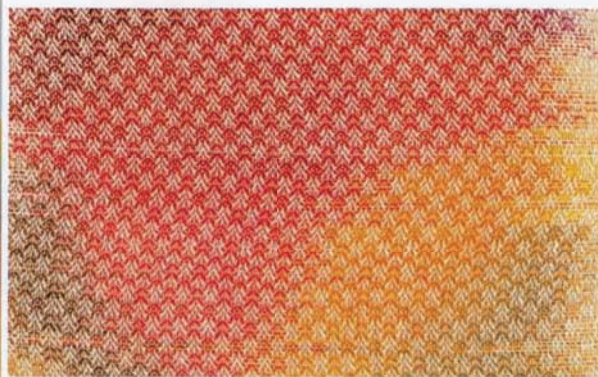


# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

OCTOBER 2015

## ART SCENE



Artists Sarah Parke and Mark Barrow are pictured in their Queens, New York, studio with a loom used in their collaborations. A selection of the couple's recent works is on view at Manhattan's Elizabeth Dee gallery ([elizabethdee.com](http://elizabethdee.com)). Shown clockwise from top are *Reweave 3.2*, *Reweave 1*, and *Swipe 2*.

## MIX MASTERS

Husband-and-wife team Mark Barrow and Sarah Parke combine weaving and painting in works of stunning intricacy

**M**ark Barrow first made a splash in the art world several years ago with his abstract paintings on Belgian-linen canvases, meticulously applying tiny stipples along the pattern of the weave. For the New York City artist, the intricately composed works represented a “conceptual merging of figure and ground,” as he puts it, and they set him on a creative course where artisanal craft, mathematics, color theory, optical perception, and modernist abstraction all mesmerizingly converge.

Joining Barrow in these experimentations is his wife, textile designer Sarah Parke, whom he met when they were both studying at the Rhode Island School of Design. For a time she just supplied him with simple fabrics—made using a handloom in their Queens studio—that he utilized for his paintings. But pretty soon they were working as full-on collaborators. “We realized we were spending countless hours basically doing the same thing in different fields,” Barrow says.

Together they devised a series of works rooted in the CMYK (cyan-magenta-yellow-black) four-color printing process and RGB color model of mixing red, green, and blue to produce different hues. Based on compositions Barrow designs on a computer, Parke weaves textiles using carefully calibrated ratios of colored yarns. Barrow, in turn, adds precisely placed white or black acrylic dots, amplifying aspects of the fabrics’

pattern while negating others. His Braille-like embellishments blend with the underlying strands, forming dizzying matrices that coalesce into larger abstract patterns when one steps back.

The duo’s signature melding of handicraft and abstract painting has earned them spots in top museums as well as representation by Milan’s Galleria Zero, Paris’s Almine Rech, and Manhattan’s Elizabeth Dee gallery, where their latest show runs through October 24. Among the couple’s new creations are a series of “Reweaves,” which start with Barrow painting swaths of dye on linen fabrics that Parke then unstitches and weaves again, resulting in unpredictable works that feature apparitional echoes of the original paintings. “Our process was getting so tight and controlled, and this was a way to loosen up a bit,” notes Parke.

They’ve also been expanding their practice, incorporating textiles into folding screens and creating RGB-based window installations (one covers the gallery’s glass façade) made with hand-applied half-inch colored film squares. “It’s like a mix of weaving, painting, pixels, and stained glass,” Barrow says. “We’ve established a working language, and we’re looking to explore every little part of it to the fullest.” —MICHAEL SLENSKE