

Untangling Threads

Brooklyn, NY

Tel: 917/975.4215

Email: akate@kantaracrafts.com

Website: www.untanglingthreads.kantaracrafts.com

Press Release:

Contact: Alia Kate

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While photographer Anna Beeke and curator Alia Kate began their artistic journey with the unprecedented and headline-grabbing Oberlin Women's Rugby Calendar in 2006, this month they have reconvened in Oberlin for yet another creative endeavor on the eve of their five year college reunion. Opening on May 9th and running through May 30th at Oberlin College's Mudd Library is *Untangling Threads: Women Artisans in Morocco's Rug Weaving Industry*. This exhibit displays handwoven Moroccan rugs beside documentary photographs of the weavers and their families, thereby creating a link between the traditional textural and modern visual arts.

From rugby to rugs, Kate and Beeke have created a project that is a testimony of how rural Moroccan weavers live their lives, celebrate their Amazigh identity, and most importantly, how they sustain the pertinence of their ancient art in the face of a globalizing world. The legacy of these women's art form is manifest in the woven carpets and the photographs reveal how this ancient craft permeates all aspects of Moroccan life.

Kate, named Cleveland Magazine's Most Interesting Person in 2009 for her fair trade rug importing business, has been collecting woven works for the past five years in a supportive role of the women who labor throughout various regions of Morocco. Beeke joins as a documentarian whose eye integrates seamlessly from journalist to aesthete.

In the photographs you see confident Amazigh Moroccan women who defy the stereotypes painted by the Western media. In the rugs you discover the dexterity of the weavers' fingers, the boundaries of their imagination, and the antiquity of their craft. With this *Untangling Threads* reveals the faces and the hands behind the handicraft of weaving in Morocco.

This is the fourth installment of the *Untangling Threads* exhibit, which has been shown in a host of different venues. Debuting in a New York gallery, it has since traveled to a New Jersey High School gallery and most recently appeared in the New York Festival of Ideas for the New City. Kate and Beeke are proud to bring the show back to their alma mater's library and transport the viewer from Ohio to the rural world of Moroccan women where everything is connected to the rug weaving industry.

Quick Facts:

Event Name: Untangling Threads: Women Artisans in Morocco's Rug Weaving Industry

Event Type: Gallery Exhibition

Date: May 9th - May 30th 2011

Gallery Hours: Call Mudd Library Circulation Desk for exact hours: 440-775-8285

Reception and Artist Talk: Saturday, May 28th at 3:00pm

Location: Mudd Library, Oberlin College, Oberlin OH, 44074

People involved: Alia Kate, curator and founder of [Kantara](#): Moroccan Rugs; Anna Beeke, [documentary photographer](#)

What it is: This exhibit combines documentary photographs by Anna Beeke and hand-woven Moroccan rugs curated by Alia Kate in an innovative display that positions the two art forms side by side. In the photographs you see confident Amazigh Moroccan women who defy the stereotypes painted by the Western media. In the rugs you discover the dexterity of the weavers' fingers, the boundaries of their imagination, and the antiquity of their craft. Through this combination of mediums, Untangling Threads repositions the artisans as artists and their rugs as art by revealing the faces and the hands behind the handicraft of weaving in Morocco.

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