

Alvaro Barrington

On the Road (TMS)

24 January—21 March 2026
Opening Saturday 24 January 2026, 11am—1pm

Thaddaeus Ropac
Salzburg Villa Kast
Mirabellplatz 2, 5020 Salzburg



Alvaro Barrington, *On the Road (TMS) A13, Blue Dancers, Kids Day*, 2024-26.
Oil, acrylic, flash, enamel on burlap / silk screen printed burlap, cotton linen, waxed cotton thread.
250 x 210 cm (98.43 x 82.68 in)

There's an inherent optimism in these works. In these uncertain times, I wanted to create paintings that were joyful, playful and about coming together.

—Alvaro Barrington

Thaddaeus Ropac Salzburg presents a new series of works by Alvaro Barrington, titled *Cutout Paintings*, in the artist's second solo exhibition in Austria. The exhibition's title, *On the Road (TMS)*, evokes a wide range

of references that run through the exhibition, including motifs from Barrington's personal and cultural history. The title also refers literally to the works themselves: first exhibited in Barrington's 2024 solo exhibition *Grace* at Tate Britain, they were subsequently expanded for the Notting Hill Carnival in 2025, installed on the Mangrove Sound Truck. Now, for the third iteration in Salzburg, the *Cutout Paintings* unfold as a body of collaged and appliqued works.



Alvaro Barrington, *On the Road (TMS) A12*, 2024-26.
Oil, acrylic, flash, enamel on burlap / silk screen printed burlap, cotton
linen, waxed cotton thread. 270 × 190 cm (106.3 × 74.8 in)

Depending on the audience, the phrase ‘On the Road’ may invoke Jack Kerouac’s 1957 eponymous post-war classic. The largely autobiographical novel, which tells the story of a group of friends travelling across the United States in search of freedom and identity, came to define the Beat Generation and a countercultural milieu shaped by jazz, poetry and drug-inflected experimentation. ‘I remember Kerouac’s book from when I was in college, in a time where a lot of my friends, including myself, were at an age that we thought, oh, we need to find ourselves, and maybe, we need to travel. For me, I travelled through South America,’ says the artist.

For Barrington, who has family roots in Grenada and Haiti, ‘On the Road’ echoes a familiar phrase about meeting someone on the streets during Carnival. Caribbean Carnival traditions are vibrant celebrations of cultural fusion and were expanded geographically by diasporic communities. Today, all over the world, carnivals are hubs for various forms of cultural production. ‘The energy is high, the streets full of people. The sound is soca and reggae played on sound systems, the smell is of truck engine, grass and marijuana,’ the artist describes.

The *Cutout Paintings* in the exhibition show a variety of Carnival masquerade characters originating from

Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. The depictions include Moko Jumbie, a stilt walker derived from West African protective figures; Pretty Mas, featuring costumes with feathers, sequins and head pieces; and Jab Jab, where masqueraders, often covered in black oil or paint and chains, embody the devil to symbolize post-emancipation resistance. For Barrington, identity – or a sense of belonging and community – is today less defined by nationality than by shared culture and interests. ‘It doesn’t matter where you are, if you’re a K-pop fan, if you’re in Mexico, Australia, or in the middle of Nebraska, you will recognise other K-pop fans. You are probably on an online forum talking about your love of K-pop. I think Carnival culture is just one of those spaces in which millions of millions of people, including myself, meet. I’m really interested in exploring that as a space,’ he explains.

These tapestry-like canvases have borders of silkscreened portraits of Buju Banton, one of the most significant and well-regarded Jamaican dancehall musicians. Banton is depicted at turntables, in delicate, graphic strokes set against bright square backgrounds that were inspired by Barrington’s admiration for the works of Josef Albers. The compositions are applied with textile cutouts that draw from the elaborate vocabulary of Kuba cloth patterns and hark back to



Alvaro Barrington, *On the Road (TMS) A9*, 2024-26.
Oil, acrylic, flash, enamel on burlap / silk screen printed burlap, cotton
linen, waxed cotton thread. 260 × 190 cm (102.36 × 74.8 in)



Alvaro Barrington, *On the Road (TMS) A7*, 2024-26.
Oil, acrylic, flash, enamel on burlap / silk screen printed burlap, cotton
linen, waxed cotton thread. 160 × 190 cm (62.99 × 74.8 in)

traditionally gendered craft traditions passed down by the women in his family, as well as the Caribbean history of artistic expression in fabric and sewing.

Kuba cloths are woven from palm leaf fibres and decorated with geometric shapes, stitched or embroidered onto long cloths. They have served as ceremonial attire and currency in the Kuba Kingdom of Central Africa since the seventeenth century and have a long history of reception in Western art, notably in the work of Henri Matisse, who, after travelling to Africa, collected and hung the textiles in his studio, and whose colourful cut-outs and collages – specifically his 1947 *Jazz* series – also strongly resonate within Barrington's works. For Barrington, the patterns have a musical connotation and resemble dancing bodies and energetic movement. 'They testify to the enduring cultural exchanges among artists and the historic roots of trade,' explains the artist.

Barrington chose burlap rather than canvas as his painting surface, a decision consistent with his characteristic multimedia approach. The material is primarily used to make sacks for transporting cocoa and coffee beans,

but also favoured by artists including Paul Gauguin and Alberto Burri. 'I feel every material. I try to be very careful with the choices,' explains the artist. The coarse fabric lends the works a tactile weight and recalls the medium of tapestry. Historically of great value, tapestries were used to convey power, status or family history, traditionally carried from home to home, and passed down from generation to generation. 'I really love this idea of tapestries being about travel. After the Tate and the truck at Notting Hill, for this exhibition, I tried to make the works feel like they had weight and belonged on a wall.'

I have this belief that we live fuller lives as human beings through trade, through the ability of trading stories, trading gifts, trading ideas. That was the overall vision. This show is a celebration of the people and places that make us feel like we belong.

— Alvaro Barrington



Alvaro Barrington, *On the Road (TMS) A5*, 2024-26.
Oil, acrylic, flash, enamel on burlap / silk screen printed burlap, cotton
linen, waxed cotton thread. 270 × 195 cm (106.3 × 76.77 in)



Portrait of the artist.

About the artist

Art is about learning how to be, Painting is about what's in front of you, it's about learning to see

Excerpt from Alvaro Barrington's 'Artist's Statement', December 2024

[Link to Full Artist Statement](#)

For press enquiries:

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