

# PACE LONDON

PRESS RELEASE

Yto Barrada

*Mobilier Urbain*

6 -10 Lexington Street, London, W1F 0LB

24 May – 14 July 2012

Opening: Wednesday, 23 May 2012, 6– 8 p.m.



LONDON, April 20, 2012—Pace London is delighted to announce an exhibition of work by Moroccan artist Yto Barrada, on view at 6-10 Lexington Street from May 24 to July 14, 2012. This exhibition marks the first time Barrada's work has been presented in a commercial UK gallery and many of the works on view have never before been presented in this country.

Yto Barrada (b.1971) lives and works in Tangier, and the city is a key source of inspiration and subject matter for her work. The exhibition, entitled *Mobilier Urbain*, is an ensemble of sculptures and photographs which examines, among other themes, the relationship between unchecked urban development, the botanical landscape, and the subtle forms of resistance that humans—and plants—attempt against the forces of monoculture.

The works on view in *Mobilier Urbain* span Barrada's varied career. *Gran Royal Turismo* (2003) is a table-sized automated model of a rather bleak little city, preened for the arrival of a political dignitary. When a convoy of black Mercedes emerges from a tunnel, palm trees push out of the ground, sidewalks and walls flip to reveal freshly painted surfaces, and flags blossom ahead of the convoy's arrival route. The city has been transformed for the eyes of the officials in those cars.

A recurring motif in Barrada's work is the tree, notably the palm tree—both a co-opted icon of exoticism and a pawn to be played in the game of urban planning. A new work entitled *Twin Palm Island* (2011) places two palm tree-shaped signs onto children's wagons. The work raises questions about the ranks of palm trees, transplanted from the warm south, which line Tangier's avenues. Also called to account is the maturity of the officials who place them there.

Photographs from the series *Autocar* show details of the company logos painted on the sides of buses in the Port of Tangier. It is of particular resonance to Barrada that the photos do not give away their stories, but simply allude to them: the illiterate children who read the destinations by these icons and smuggle themselves into the undercarriages and wheels wells of the buses, in the hope of escaping to the European destinations the icons represent. *Telephone Books* records another kind of coded language, the drawings and tally marks which the artists' grandmother used to record family telephone numbers, as she could not read or write.

Of *Mobilier Urbain*, Marie Muracciole, the curator of Barrada's traveling exhibition *RIFFS*, writes: "*For Yto Barrada, Tangier is a collage of temporalities, where official history is peeling off the damp walls, a city transformed by Europe's Schengen accords into a geopolitical dead-end. But for the artist, the city is also the stage of a necessary resistance to the global economy's absolutist logic of development.*"

*In this exhibition, sculptures—Gran Royal Turismo (a model in which « Potemkin » set dressing rises out of the ground, ahead of the arrival of an official convoy) and Twin Palm Island, (a movable piece of illuminated signage, which literally transports its exotic cargo)—dialogue with the artist book A Guide to Trees for Governors and Gardeners, an acerbic and droll critique of modern Urban Planning.*

*Barrada opposes the dominant discourses with a less-visible regime of signs. She gives them a surface on which to appear with photographs like Telephone Books."*

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### Yto Barrada

Yto Barrada was named Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year for 2011, and her show *RIFFS*, which debuted at the Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, is now on tour at The Renaissance Society, Chicago, to April 22, and will travel to the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham from May 16 to July 8.

Other recent exhibitions include Witte de With (Rotterdam), Haus der Kunst (Munich), SFMOMA (San Francisco), Tate Modern (London), MoMA (New York), and the 2007 and 2011 Venice Biennale. Since 2006, Barrada has been the director and co-founder of the Cinémathèque de Tanger.

Barrada's work is included in numerous prestigious collections, including: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Modern, London; Kunsthalle Basel; Pinault Collection, Venice; SFMOMA, San Francisco; Deutsche Bank Collection, Frankfurt; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Walther Collection, Neu-Ulm/Burlafingen; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Wien; International Center of Photography, New York; Fonds national d'art contemporain; Musée de la Photographie, Charleroi.

### Pace

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the 20th and 21st centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 700 exhibitions, including scholarly exhibitions that have subsequently travelled to museums, and published nearly 350 exhibition catalogues. Today Pace has seven locations worldwide: four in New York; two in London; and a 25,000-square-foot gallery in Beijing. Pace London recently inaugurated its flagship gallery at 6 Burlington Gardens with the exhibition *Rothko/Sugimoto: Dark Paintings and Seascapes*, 4 October – 17 November 2012.

Pace London at 6-10 Lexington Street is open to the public Monday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. [www.pacegallery.com/](http://www.pacegallery.com/)

**For press inquiries, please contact:**

London: Nicolas Smirnoff, [nicolas@pacegallery.com](mailto:nicolas@pacegallery.com) / +44 207 297 2820

New York: Sarah Goulet, [sgoulet@pacegallery.com](mailto:sgoulet@pacegallery.com) / +1 212 421 8987

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Image: © Yto Barrada, detail of *Gran Royal Turismo*, 2003. Photo by Alain Kantarjian