

Yto Barrada

How to Do Nothing with Nobody All Alone by Yourself

32 East 57th St, Floors 2, 7 & 9

New York, NY

April 6 – May 5, 2018

Opening Reception:

Thursday, April 5, 6 - 8 PM

New York—Pace Gallery is pleased to present the first gallery exhibition in New York dedicated to the work of Yto Barrada. A survey of the artist's practice, *How to Do Nothing with Nobody All Alone by Yourself* will span three floors of 32 East 57 Street, including the galleries of Pace, Pace/MacGill and Pace African and Oceanic Art. An opening reception with the artist will be held on Thursday, April 5 from 6 – 8 pm; the exhibit will be on view from April 6 through May 5, 2018.



For her first solo show with Pace in New York, Barrada situates her multi-disciplinary work—photography, video, installation, sculptures, books, and textile-based works—against the formal separation of these three branches of Pace. Marc Glimcher, Pace Gallery President and CEO, describes Barrada as "a disruptor, eschewing traditional boundaries of medium and form, forcing us to question our understanding of the world around us, past, present, and future, and to investigate how that understanding is constructed in the first place."

Barrada's first internationally shown photographic project documented the urban and psychological transformation of her hometown of Tangier. This exhibition goes on from there to span two decades of work that weaves together personal and political narratives; reflects Barrada's ongoing research into displacement and dislocation, modes of education, and forms of abstraction; and embraces the resistance and strategies of autodidacts. Playfulness, enigma and humor are hallmarks of Barrada's tone, reinforcing rather than softening the ways she exposes structures of domination.

The title of the exhibition, *How to Do Nothing...* harks back to Robert Paul Smith's guidebook of children's projects; Barrada's penchant for manuals, handbooks and guides is also evident in her satirical boxed-set of books *A Guide to Fossils for Forgers and Foreigners* (Walther König, 2016) and *A Guide to Trees for Governors and Gardeners* (Walther König, 2011).

Exhibition highlights include a dinosaur mobile, oversized wooden toy blocks, assemblages of pipes and fixtures made by plumbers in Tangier and a reconfigurable playground.

This exhibition also premieres new textile works which reference Frank Stella's series of fluorescent paintings, inspired in part by Moroccan cities. Barrada's textiles expand the frame of reference for these patterns and motifs, transposing the colors and forms of Stella's paintings using dyes made in her studio from plants and insects. These new textile works are equally inspired by the painters Mohamed Chebaa, Farid Belkahia, and Mohammed Melehi, founders of the Casablanca School in the 1960s, who paved the way for a North African modernism whose abstraction embraced the motifs and materials of popular, local art forms.

Another major new work is Barrada's short film *Tree Identification for Beginners* (2017), initially developed for Performa 17. This film essay revisits her mother's 1966 trip to the U.S. on a State Department-sponsored travel program, Operation Crossroads Africa, aimed to convince African students (presumed to be future leaders) that "the U.S. is a vital society worthy of sympathetic or at least serious consideration." Over rhythmically edited 16mm stop-motion animation of Montessori toys and grammar symbols, the cadence of the film's voiceovers juxtaposes her mother's account of the trip with the organizers' perspectives on the Africans' attitudes and behavior.

The short film *Ether Reveries (Suite for Thérèse Rivière no. 2)* (2017) is a surrealist dream montage set in a flower market in Tangier. Barrada has disinterred the work and life of Thérèse Rivière (1901–70), a French anthropologist, a collector of toys, drawings and magic instructions from North Africa, whose remarkable achievements were largely silenced following her confinement in psychiatric institutions. The exhibit also features Barrada's photographs of items collected by Rivière, notably *The Rat's Staircase* (2014–15), a toy folded from palm fronds.

In Barrada's work, politics is inseparable from an attention to form, as in several works where written language is replaced by a symbolic logic. Barrada's *Autocar* photo series (2004) depicts hard-edged graphics that share stylistic motifs with modernist abstraction—yet in fact the photographs are of bus company logos which clandestine child émigrés memorized to know which bus leaving the port of Tangier was bound where. In *The Telephone Books (or the Recipe Books)* (2010), Barrada presents photographs of her illiterate grandmother's graph paper notebooks: the simple figurative drawings and hash marks were a system for recording the phone numbers of her ten children. *Plumber's Assemblage* presents the sculptural signposts created by craftsmen in Tangier to advertise their skills and availability at the roadside.

Nonverbal communication, family myths, "hidden transcripts" that unearth new grammars—within the interlinked logic of Barrada's work lie secrets, pleasures and a celebration of strategies of resistance to domination.

A color catalogue expanding on Barrada's recent film-and-performance *Tree Identification for Beginners* (2017), with an introduction by Adrienne Edwards, will be published to coincide with the opening of the exhibition.

Yto Barrada (b. 1971, Paris) lives and works in New York. Barrada's work combines the strategies of the documentary film with the metaphorical approach to imagery in her photographic, installation and sculptural work.

Her work is in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Tate, London. Her exhibitions have included Kunsthalle, Basel; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Jeu de Paume, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Renaissance Society,

Chicago; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Hayward Gallery, London; Museu de Arte de São Paulo; The Power Plant, Toronto; and the 2007 and 2011 Venice Biennales.

She was nominated for the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize in 2006 and the Prix Marcel Duchamp in 2016. She won the first Ellen Auerbach Award in Berlin in 2006; was named Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year in 2011 and won the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2015.

Barrada is the founder of Cinémathèque de Tanger (2006–ongoing), North Africa’s premier cinema cultural center and film archive, housed in a renovated 1930s film theater in Tangier.

Barrada’s most recent project, the major commission *Agadir* for the Barbican Curve in London, opened in February 2018 and is on exhibit until May 20.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace’s mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world’s most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has ten locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; two in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul. Pace will open a new flagship gallery in New York, anticipated for completion in fall 2019. In 2016, Pace joined with Futurecity to launch Future\ Pace—an international cultural partnership innovating multidisciplinary projects for art in the public realm.

Pace/MacGill

One of the leading photography galleries, Pace/MacGill has been dedicated to advancing fine art photography for over 30 years. Known for discovering artists, representing masters, and placing important collections and archives into major public institutions, Pace/MacGill has presented some 200 exhibitions and published numerous catalogues on modern and contemporary photography. Founded in 1983 by Peter MacGill, in collaboration with Arne Glimcher of Pace Gallery and Richard Solomon of Pace Editions, Pace/MacGill is located at 32 East 57th Street in New York City.

Pace African and Oceanic Art

Established in 1971, Pace African and Oceanic Art is a tribal art gallery affiliated with Pace Gallery. The gallery maintains an inventory of museum-quality African and Oceanic art. The gallery is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America.

Image: Yto Barrada, *Family Tree*, 2005, C-print, 59-1/16" x 59-1/16" (150 cm x 150 cm), Edition of 5 + 2 AP. © Yto Barrada, courtesy Pace Gallery; Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg, Beirut; and Galerie Polaris, Paris.

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