



The Kitchen
Center for Video, Music, Dance,
Performance, Film & Literature

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For Immediate Release

The Kitchen presents the first U.S. solo exhibition by photographer and filmmaker Yto Barrada

April 1, 2006 - This first solo exhibition in the United States by the French-Moroccan artist Yto Barrada, titled *A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project* features thirty photographs and two video works from the artist's ongoing investigation of the Moroccan city of Tangier, which overlooks the Strait of Gibraltar--the ten-mile wide channel separating Africa and Europe. Borrowing its title from a 1964 novel by Driss ben Hamed Charhadi about a young boy growing up as a poor worker in Morocco, Barrada's exhibition reflects a sensibility poised between the poetic and the documentary, revealing the tensions, hopes, and despair that animate the streets of her hometown where the tantalizing possibility of a new life is within easy view, but dangerous reach. This exhibition was selected by Sina Najafi, editor of *Cabinet* magazine, and was organized by Debra Singer and Matthew Lyons of The Kitchen. The exhibition will be on view from April 7 – May 30, 2006 at The Kitchen (512 West 19th Street). Please note: The Kitchen's new gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 12 to 6pm and Saturday, 11am to 7pm. Admission is free.

The Strait of Gibraltar, dividing Morocco from Spain, forms a unique border -- one that is both physical and symbolic, political and intimately personal. Until recently, any Moroccan with a passport could travel freely into Europe; however, since the European Union's common, closed border went into effect in 1995, the Strait has become essentially a one-way route. Europeans can still visit Tangier at will; however, North Africans can no longer cross the channel without visas. The once ordinary passage into Spain was thus transformed into an illegal, treacherous journey, and a new generation of Moroccans is now growing up literally facing this troubled divide that represents both lost personal freedom and newly limited economic opportunity.

In addition to the thirty photographs on view, this exhibition also includes two videos, *The Magician* (2003) and *The Smuggler* (2006). *The Magician* (2003) documents the Moroccan sideshow entertainer "Sinbad of the Straits" performing a lackluster routine of simple illusions for the camera. Barrada includes the banal pauses between tricks and the moments when the mechanisms behind each trick are perceivable, revealing the effort necessary to maintain a façade and to fool the eye. *The Smuggler* (2006) records how a woman has been able to make a career of taking daily trips between Tangier and the Spanish enclave of Ceuta by concealing goods beneath her clothes. A catalogue of photographs from this series was published in September 2005 by Autograph ABP London in conjunction with Barrada's solo exhibition at the Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Center, England.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of John Parkinson III, a devoted member of The Kitchen's Board of Directors from 1995 to 2005 and a passionate collector of photography and supporter of the arts. The show was made possible with support from *étant donnés*: The French-American Fund for Contemporary Art, a program of FACE, and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

About the Artist

In addition to her recent solo exhibitions at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Netherlands, curated by Catherine David (2004); the Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Center (2005); and at Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool, **Yto Barrada** (b. Paris, 1971) has been included in numerous group exhibitions at venues including: Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fundacio Antoni Tapies, Barcelona; the Stenersen Museum in Oslo, Norway; and the International Center for Photography, New York; where a small selection of photographs from this series was included in *Strangers: The First ICP Triennial of Photography and Video* in 2003. In 2006, in addition to her solo exhibitions at The Kitchen and at the Jeu de Paume, France, Barrada's work will be on view at the Mori Art Museum in Japan and the Moderna Museet in Sweden. She is also the Founder and Director of the Cinéma theque de Tanger in Morocco. Barrada was shortlisted for this year's Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, an annual award that aims to reward a living photographer, of any nationality, who has made the most significant contribution to the medium of photography in Europe in the past year.



ABOUT THE KITCHEN

The Kitchen is one of New York City's oldest nonprofit performance and exhibition spaces, showing experimental work by innovative artists, both emerging and established. Programs range from dance, music, and theatrical performances to video and media arts exhibitions to literary events, film screenings, and artists' talks. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

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