

SLG

Press Release

Yto Barrada: *Thrill, Fill and Spill*

Dates: 26 September 2025 – 11 January 2026

South London Gallery, Main Gallery

This autumn, the South London Gallery (SLG) will present *Thrill, Fill and Spill* a major solo exhibition by artist Yto Barrada. Barrada's multidisciplinary practice has long addressed micro-histories, borderlands, cultural phenomena, and strategies of resistance. This exhibition will span textile, film, sculpture, and painting, and feature new and previous works. The title calls back to the slightly formulaic landscape design motto of 'Thrill, Fill and Spill' – a technique to create drama, volume and cascading edges in designing planted areas – and perhaps also in gallery exhibitions.

The exhibition will feature new textile pieces, some of which were dyed at *The Mothership*, Barrada's artist-led natural dye centre and residency space in Tangier, Morocco, an eco-campus where artists, gardeners and creatives come to work and study. *Tangier Island Wall* (2019), shown for the first time in the UK, is a sculpture made of crab traps which references Tangier Island, located in Chesapeake Bay, Virginia, USA. This island's small community and their crab fishing livelihood is increasingly threatened by rising sea levels due to the climate crisis. Barrada's porous "sea wall" of crab traps references the inhabitants' wish for a seawall to protect the island – what the artist describes as a 'beau geste' – a noble act, but one that is ultimately futile.

Expanding on concepts of perimeters and defensive structures *Acrobatic Formations* is a series of 14 model sculptures that reflect the long tradition of human pyramids in Morocco. Originally employed by warriors as a tactical means to scale enemy fortifications, the formation of human pyramids was also a spiritual practice. Over time, human pyramids evolved into a form of acrobatic expression and by the nineteenth century it had been adapted into circus performances for Western audiences. This series of wooden sculptures are models for an outdoor artwork commissioned by and exhibited at MoMA PS1, New York, from 2024 to 2026.

The exhibition also features *Tintin in Palestine*, a new textile work based on notably varying versions of the cartoon by Hergé. The adventure story was first published around 1940 as a children's supplement in a Belgian newspaper and then redrawn and altered for Tintin magazine ten years later; both versions were set during the British Mandate of Palestine. This new work in hand-dyed silk is part of Barrada's ongoing series which applies Emily Noyes Vanderpoel's 1902 colour-analysis system to convert images into geometric grids.

Barrada is renowned for her commitment to building communities and fostering cultural exchange, as exemplified by her 2007 founding of the *Cinémathèque de Tanger*, North Africa's first art house cinema and cinema cultural centre; and in founding *The Mothership*. The exhibition will embrace artistic cultural exchange

through an artist residency at *The Mothership* conducted by Emma Ogawa Todd. Following her residency Ogawa Todd will return to deliver workshops for young people as part of the SLG's Communities and Learning Programme.

Yto Barrada has recently been chosen to represent France at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia in 2026.

The exhibition is curated by Sarah Allen, Head of Programme, South London Gallery, in dialogue with the artist.

Exhibition design: Mira van den Neste

Installation: David Angus, Gallery Technical Manager, South London Gallery

Ends

For further press information, images and interviews please contact Anna Jones, Head of Communications: anna.jones@southlondongallery.org

NOTES TO EDITORS

Address and Opening Hours

South London Gallery, Main Building: 65–67 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UH
South London Gallery, Fire Station: 82 Peckham Road, London, SE15 5LQ

The gallery is open Wednesday – Sunday.
southlondongallery.org

Social Media

Instagram: @southlondongallery
Facebook: South London Gallery
TikTok: @southlondongallery_

About Yto Barrada

Yto Barrada is recognised for her multidisciplinary investigations of cultural phenomena and historical narratives.

Engaging with the performativity of archival practices and public interventions, Barrada's installations reinterpret social relationships, uncover subaltern histories, and reveal the prevalence of fiction in institutionalized narratives.

Informed by postcolonial thought and socio-political concerns, Barrada's interests range from the tensions around borders, immigration, and tourism to the urban landscape, and from children's toys to botany and paleontology. Her practice encompasses photography, film, sculpture, painting, printmaking, and publishing, while her installations often comprise both original work and found objects.

Barrada's work has been exhibited at the Renaissance Society, University of Chicago (2011); Tate Modern, London (2011); Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2013); The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams (2021); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2021); and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2022). In 2007, Barrada was selected to participate in the Venice Biennale. The artist has received multiple awards, including the Deutsche Guggenheim Artist of the Year (2011); the Abraaj Group Art Prize, UAE (2015); the Roy R. Neuberger Prize (2019); Mario Merz Prize (2022); Queen Sonja Print Award (2022), and Soros Arts Fellowship (2023). Works by Barrada are held in public collections worldwide, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; International Center of Photography, New York;

Kunsthalle Basel; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, among others.

About the South London Gallery

The South London Gallery (SLG) was founded in the 19th century by philanthropist William Rossiter to 'bring art to the people of south London'. Today the gallery comprises its original site at 65 Peckham Road; the Fire Station which opened to the public in 2018; Art Block, a space for local children and families on Sceaux Gardens Estate, and two permanent gardens.

The SLG has an international reputation for its contemporary art exhibitions by established, mid-career and younger artists and programme of film and performance events. Its highly regarded, free education programme includes a peer-led young people's forum; family workshops; artist-led projects and commissions on local housing estates; and a programme for looked after children.

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