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## MAROC INTIME

Photographs by Abderrazzak Benchaâbane

Text by Nicole de Pontcharra

This book resembles a travel journal written during a “journey to the interior.” Far removed from exotic clichés, Abderrazzak Benchaâbane has taken the time to focus his expert lens on his intimately known native Morocco in these black-and-white photos. Each picture is an echo of a meeting with Morocco’s roots and is tinged with the emotion of the loving gaze that the photographer turns on his homeland.

The photographer travelled right to the desert borders of southern Morocco, where Abderrazzak Benchaâbane often returns like a pilgrim to his favourite shrine. His photos lead us into a world of silence where the light seems to come from another dimension and the passage of time is experienced completely differently.

A series of pictures show the women of Mogador emerging as if from another age, swathed in their *haïks*, heavy woollen cloaks. Times have changed and the *haïk* has disappeared now. Fortunately for us, Abderrazzak Benchaâbane took the trouble to photograph them expertly thirty years ago, when they were still common.

*Intimate Morocco* is thus a moving journey into the modest world of women, the world of children, at times laughing and at times serious. Their world is simple village life, and we are privileged in these pictures to feel its pulse at the heart of a timeless, hidden Morocco.

**Abderrazzak Benchaâbane** holds a PhD in ethnobotany. As well as being a self-taught photographer, he has restored the Majorelle Garden, founded the magazine *Jardins du Maroc*, and established a salon of contemporary art.

**Nicole de Pontcharra** is a French writer born into a Russian family in Lyon and lived in Marrakesh from 1945 to 1955; travel has been at the centre of her life and poetry ever since. She organizes encounters with poets and artists from both Europe and the Arab world. She represented the Institut Français at the Tangiers International Book Fair from 2002 to 2006, and in 2010, she collaborated in the production of an important documentary on the translation of the Koran from Arabic into French undertaken by Denise Masson.