

YOSSI MILO GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Hassan Hajjaj
My Rockstars
March 25 – June 12, 2021

Yossi Milo Gallery is pleased to present the New York premiere of Hassan Hajjaj's celebrated *My Rockstars* series featuring exuberant and playful mixed media portraits of performers, musicians and friends of the artist taken all over the world. *My Rockstars* will open on Thursday, March 25, with extended hours at the gallery until 8 PM, and remain on view through Saturday, June 12. This is the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

In his series *My Rockstars*, Hassan Hajjaj pays tribute to the individuals by whom he has been artistically inspired, capturing a range of international performers, from recording and visual artists such as Hank Willis Thomas, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye and Cardi B., to less known music bands like Arfoud Brothers and Nigerian singer-songwriter Keziah Jones. From the year 2000, Hajjaj has photographed these figures in colorful pop-up studios constructed from textiles and plastic mats typical of Morocco and North Africa, which he sets up in the streets of London, Marrakesh, Dubai, Kuwait and Paris. Outfits designed or styled by the artist, including custom suits, shoes and hats, pop with loud colors and dazzling patterns, empowering his subjects to explore larger-than-life personas before the camera. Each portrait is bordered with a custom handcrafted frame outfitted with miniature shelves and actual consumer products, such as cans of tomato sauce, car paint tins and soda cans, often with Arabic logos. The products are chosen for their origins, names, content as well as colors and aesthetics. The uninterrupted border of commercial packaging and corporate logos mimics with irreverent Warholian flare the repetitive motifs framing traditional Islamic mosaics and offers clues about the subject of each photograph.

In the tradition of Africa's past masters of studio photography such as Samuel Fosso (Cameroonian, b. 1962), Malick Sidibé (Malian, 1935 – 2016) and Sanlé Sory (Burkinabe, b. 1943), Hajjaj explores portraiture to express evolving notions of self and society in today's globalized, modern world. In the space of the studio, Hajjaj captures the international nature of popular culture, fashion and music today.

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A site-specific installation, *Le Salon*, will also be presented in the gallery's viewing room featuring custom-made furniture and interior design elements meant to encourage the local exchange of ideas, just as the larger show celebrates cultural exchange and hybridity across the global stage. Also on view will be a one-channel video installation presenting performances by select members of Hajjaj's ensemble of "rockstars", alongside "cabinet" pieces showcasing shelves of the hand-crocheted hats and socks that the artist sources from his local Marrakesh souk or other markets around the world.

A solo exhibition of Hajjaj's *VOGUE, The Arab Issue* will be concurrently on view at Fotografiska New York. Hajjaj's works are represented in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Farjam Collection, Dubai; Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Kamel Lazaar Foundation, Tunis; Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome; Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden, Marrakesh; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, among others. Hajjaj was born in 1961, in Larache, Morocco, and currently lives and works between London and Marrakesh.

For more information, please contact Alissa Schoenfeld at 212.414.0370 or alissa@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com

Image: *Sarah Perles Gazin'*, 2015 / 1436 (Gregorian/Hijri). Metallic Lambda on Kodak Paper on 3mm Dibond in a Wood Sprayed-White Frame with Red Tomato Squeezies. 53 1/8" x 71" x 4 1/2"