

Exhibition: *Hassan Hajjaj: My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1*
On view: December 21, 2013–ongoing
Location: Ahmanson Building, Level 4



Image captions on page 3

(Los Angeles—December 11, 2013) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to present *Hassan Hajjaj: My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1*, an exhibition featuring a three-channel video installation by Moroccan-born artist Hassan Hajjaj. *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1* includes nine separately filmed performances by an international array of musicians—Hajjaj’s “rock stars.” The performers wear clothes that the artist designed himself and pose in spaces covered by patterns he selected. Clad in traditional fabrics, as well as luxury-brand clothes and shoes, the musicians bridge the gap between now and then, us and them, and high and low culture, thus reflecting a fusion of Moroccan craftsmanship and contemporary art.

Several of Hajjaj’s featured musicians were largely unknown until they were “discovered” by the artist. The London-based Moroccan musician Simo Lagnawi, however, is a renowned performer of Gnawa, traditional African-Islamic spiritual songs and rhythms that in recent decades have been transformed into a type of popular music. The thoughtful message of Hajjaj’s (exuberant, colorful, and playful) video comes through its Moroccan-infused multiculturalism.

Mandisa Dumezweni (“Sit Down”)

Mandisa Dumezweni is a South African singer based in London. She sings “Sit Down” from her *Slow Burn* EP.

Jose James (“Code”)

Jose James is a singer-songwriter from the United States and trained at the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York City. “Code” is from his album *Blackmagic* (2010).

Boubacar Kafando (Gnawa song)

Boubacar Kafando is a Gnawa musician from Burkina Faso. He plays the *kora*, a 21-string bridge-harp from West Africa and sings a traditional Gnawa song.

Toca Feliciano (Capoeira song)

Toca Feliciano is a capoeira master from Brazil, now based in London. He plays the *berimbau*, a Brazilian musical bow that is used to control the speed of capoeira games.

Simo Lagnawi (Gnawa song)

Simo Lagnawi, from Morocco, is the UK's leading Gnawa musician.

The Venus Bushfires (“Love Our Lovers”)

The Venus Bushfires is Helen Parker-Jayne Isibor, a singer-songwriter from Nigeria. She plays the Swiss-made hang drum and performs “Love Our Lovers” from her EP *The Venus Bushfires* (2013).

Poetic Pilgrimage (“No More War”)

Poetic Pilgrimage, of Jamaican descent, is the Hip Hop duo Muneera Rashida and Sukina Abdul Noor. The pair is the subject of the forthcoming documentary *Hip Hop Hijabis* directed by Mette Reitzel.

MARQUES TOLIVER (“Charter Music”)

Marques Toliver is a violinist, vocalist, composer, and magazine editor from the U.S. “Charter Music” is from his EP *Butterflies Are Not Free* (2011).

LUZMIRA ZERPA (“El dia que yo me case”)

Luzmira Zerpa is a Venezuelan singer-songwriter and founder of the music and dance group Family Atlantica.

About Hassan Hajjaj

Hassan Hajjaj was born in Larache, a small harbor town in northern Morocco; he moved to London as a teenager and now divides his time between London and Marrakesh. Best known as a photographer, Hajjaj has recently turned to video to depict a globalized society in which the margins of cultural identity—whether African, Arab, or European—are continuously shifting and blurred.

Some of his sitters are deliberately clothed or framed to create a conscious friction with Western stereotypes. Clad in traditional fabrics, clothes, and shoes (often branded with Louis Vuitton or Nike logos), and posed in the manner of international fashion models, his subjects bridge gaps, reflecting a brilliant fusion of Moroccan street style and contemporary art.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that boasts over 120,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of art representing Asia, Latin America (from pre-Columbian to the present), and the Islamic world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over a million visitors annually. The museum also serves millions through digital initiatives, such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement at lacma.org. Situated in Hancock Park on over 20 acres in the heart of Los Angeles, LACMA is located between the ocean and downtown.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Image captions:

(Left and Right) Hassan Hajjaj, still from *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1, Boubacar Kafando*, 2012, Purchased with funds provided by Art of the Middle East: CONTEMPORARY, courtesy of Rose Issa Projects

Hassan Hajjaj, still from *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1, Helen Venus Bushfire*, 2012, Purchased with funds provided by Art of the Middle East: CONTEMPORARY, courtesy of Rose Issa Projects

Hassan Hajjaj, still from *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1, Poetic Pilgrimage*, 2012, Purchased with funds provided by Art of the Middle East: CONTEMPORARY, courtesy of Rose Issa Projects

Hassan Hajjaj, still from *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume 1, Mandisa Dumezweni*, 2012, Purchased with funds provided by Art of the Middle East: CONTEMPORARY, courtesy of Rose Issa Projects

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