

## Press Release



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Newark Museum Presents New Video Installation By Artist Hassan Hajjaj

Hassan Hajjaj: *My Rock Stars*  
*February 25 – August 9, 2015*

NEWARK: The Newark Museum is presenting a video installation by UK-based artist Hassan Hajjaj, along with a related series of photographs, in a exhibition titled *Hassan Hajjaj: My Rock Stars*, opening Feb. 25, 2015. The video and photographs will be presented in a salon environment designed by the artist that offers a contemporary spin on the traditional Moroccan souk or marketplace.

The video, *My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume I* (2012), was recently acquired by the Museum and pays tribute to individuals who – though they may not all be famous – have inspired the artist personally. The video features nine separately filmed performances by an international group of musicians and singers whose influences include hip-hop, jazz, as well as Gnawa (traditional north African spiritual songs by descendants of enslaved west Africans). Hajjaj has designed both the clothing worn by the performers – combining traditional fabrics with luxury brands – as well as the spaces in which they perform, transforming his subjects into global “rock stars.” The vivid contrasts between patterned backdrops, colorful dress, and evokes the exuberance of African studio portraiture of the 1960s and ‘70s as well as the gloss of high-fashion photography.

Accompanying the video are photographic portraits of the nine performers set in handcrafted wood frames lined with everyday consumer goods

sourced from Moroccan markets. A vibrant fusion of high and low, the salon environment offers visitors a gathering space with furniture made from recycled materials such as Coca-Cola crates and discarded road signs. Works from Newark's own collection of north African art are integrated into the salon's design, displayed on shelving units and incorporated into wallpaper graphics.

Hajjaj was born in Larache, in northern Morocco and moved to London as a teenager. Known primarily for his work as a photographer, Hajjaj's art embraces a wide range of media including furniture and clothing design and, most recently, video. His work fuses high and low, drawing from contemporary street culture, fashion, consumer culture and the power of brands, to explore the blurred lines of cultural identity in an increasingly globalized society. Hajjaj's work is in private and public collections worldwide, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (LACMA), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, and Kamel Lazaar Foundation in Tunisia.

*My Rock Stars Experimental, Volume I* (2012) will be on display through Aug. 9, 2015. It was curated by Christa Clarke, the Museum's Senior Curator of the Arts of Global Africa.

For additional information, follow the Museum on Facebook at [facebook.com/newark.museum](https://www.facebook.com/newark.museum) or Twitter at [twitter.com/newarkmuseum](https://twitter.com/newarkmuseum); or by visiting [www.newarkmuseum.org](http://www.newarkmuseum.org).

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### **ABOUT THE NEWARK MUSEUM**

The Newark Museum is located at 49 Washington Street in the heart of the Downtown/Arts District of Newark, New Jersey, between the Rutgers Newark Campus and NJPAC. The Newark Museum is 10 miles west of New York City and easily accessible by NJ Transit and PATH. The Museum is open all year round: Wednesdays through Sundays, from Noon – 5:00 p.m. Suggested Museum admission: Adults, \$12.00; Children, Seniors and Students with valid I.D., \$7.00. Newark Residents and Members are admitted free. The Museum Café is open for lunches Wednesday through Sunday. Convenient parking is available for a fee. The Newark Museum campus, including its collections, facilities, and other resources, is accessible to accommodate the broadest audience possible, including individuals utilizing wheelchairs, with physical impairments, other disabilities, or special needs. For general information, call 973-596-6550 or visit our web site, <http://www.NewarkMuseum.org>.

Newark Museum, a not-for-profit museum of art, science and education, receives operating support from the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey Council on the Arts/Department of State — a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the Prudential Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, the Wallace Foundation and other corporations, foundations and individuals. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.