

GALLERY 1

La Salle de Gym des Femmes Arabes

Hassan Hajjaj

March 14 – April 16, 2016

The Third Line is pleased to present **Hassan Hajjaj's** third solo show in Dubai, *La Salle de Gym des Femmes Arabes*. The title, which translates into Gym for Arab Women, is a continuation of Hassan's depiction of strong and spirited Arab women in his vision of Moroccan pop-culture.



Hassan Hajjaj, *Nabila Boxer*, 2011, metallic lambda with white gloss frame, 94 x 133 cm

For the exhibition, Hassan is delving into the traditional gym culture across the Arab world, transforming the gallery space into a makeshift recreational centre for women. Whereas Hassan has had easy access to fitness clubs for men in Morocco, he has never been inside a women-only sports facility or gym and he uses this as a trajectory to conceptualise such a space, keeping true to the aesthetics of his previous installations – all embodying the vibrant colour, texture and spirit of the Moroccan street vibe.

The women photographed for this series are personal acquaintances of Hassan's and they have been masked and dressed to represent fictional characters. They are presented in various uniforms and athletic gear, with popular branded

objects modified and pieced with traditional textiles and shapes – all designed and put together by the artist himself – and photographed on sets, posing with boxing gloves, gym shoes and socks, surfing boards and footballs. In some cases the women are seen wearing name jerseys with text in both English and Arabic.

The photographs included in this exhibition have been taken over many years and at different locations, only now coming together for this exhibition. Playing with gender norms associated with the gym space, Hassan inverts expectations with this body of photographic work featuring female figures of strength in the places where hyper-masculine imagery is normally featured, or imagined.

About Hassan Hajjaj

Hassan Hajjaj was born in Larache, Morocco in 1961 and has lived and worked in England since his early teens. Hassan predominantly works with photography as his medium but incorporates elements and references from North African culture, fashion and recycled objects.

Hassan's most recent solo shows include: *Hassan Hajjaj: My Rockstars*, Newark Museum, NJ, USA and Worcester Art Museum, MA, USA (2015); *Hassan Hajjaj, My Rock Stars Experimental, Vol.1*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, USA (2015); *My Rock Stars: Volume 1*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, USA (2014, travelled from The Third

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Line, Dubai, and Virginia Commonwealth University, USA); *Fashion in Motion*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2005). Hassan's work has been exhibited internationally in many exhibitions including *Islamic Art Now: Contemporary Art of the Middle East*, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA (2015); *True to Life?-New Photography from the Middle East*, Birmingham of Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2014); *Light from the Middle East*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2013); *We are not Witches*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2010); *Africa Remix*, Hayward Gallery, London (2005). Hassan's works have been acquired by Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Newark Museum, New Jersey; Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the British Museum, London and the Farjam Collection, Dubai. The artist lives and works between London, England and Marrakech, Morocco.

GALLERY 2

Sara Naim, *When Heartstrings Collapse*

About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

The Third Line's book wing *Works on Paper* publishes books by associated artists from the region. Books published to date include *Presence* by photographer Lamy Gargash (2008), *In Absentia* by Tarek Al-Ghoussein (2009), *Cosmic Geometry*, an extensive monograph on Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta (2011), and the self-titled treatise *Huda Lutfi* about the artist's Cairo based practice.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Ebtisam Abdulaziz, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamy Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Poursan Jinchu, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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