

Helen Venus Bushfire - Performing *Love Our Lovers*.

Nigerian born, London based, singer, songwriter, composer and musician Helen Parker-Jayne Isbor is the only permanent member of creative collective *The Venus Bushfires*. Exploring the ethereal sounds of the hang, the power of the talking drum and the quirks found through cross-fertilising children's toys, their work spans multiple visual and musical styles. Self-described as Neo Afro Folk, Isbor combines avant-garde, psychedelic, tribal and meditative arts, inspired by 70's musical pioneers such as Fela Kuti.

Marques Toliver - Performing *Charter Magic* from the album *Butterflies Are Not Free*.

Born in Florida, violinist, vocalist and composer Toliver trained at Stetson University's Music School as a classical violinist before moving to New York. There, he busked his way into the 'Williamsburg set' before appearing with *The Radio and Grizzly Bear* and travelling to the UK as part of Miles Benjamin Anthony Robinson's band. His work explores ideas of escape, persecution

FIND OUT MORE

You can listen to Hassan's playlists featuring music from some of the musicians who have inspired him by scanning the first QR code to the right.

You can listen to audio descriptions and hear Hassan talk about his work by scanning the second QR code to the right.

Take a look at our website to find out about upcoming events accompanying *The Path* including film screenings and family workshops at www.arnolfini.org.uk

ABOUT ARNOLFINI

Woven into the fabric of Bristol since 1961, Arnolfini is a pioneer of interdisciplinary contemporary arts, presenting an ambitious, eclectic programme of visual art, performance, dance, film and music, carefully curated to appeal to a broad audience. Housed in a prominent Grade II listed, accessible building on Bristol's harbourside, Arnolfini is an inspiring public space for contemporary arts and learning, greeting over half a million visitors each year and offering an innovative, inclusive and engaging experience for all. An internationally-renowned institution, throughout its history Arnolfini's programme has welcomed artists from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, supporting and developing their work and investigating their influences and aspirations.

Arnolfini has long-standing relationships with a variety of partners and celebrates the heritage and wide-reaching impact of the organisation through sharing a 60 year archive of exhibition slides, publications and artist book collection. In 2019, Arnolfini relaunched its major exhibition programme with *Still I Rise: Feminism, Gender and Resistance Act 3* and continues to build on the multicultural, diverse and inclusive ethos that has prevailed since its inception. Arnolfini remains at the heart of the Bristol community, always mindful of founding director Jeremy Rees' principle to 'Enjoy Yourself', inviting everyone to join in.

Arnolfini is an independent organisation, proud to be a part of the University of the West of England, Bristol, supported by Arts Council England and the Ashley Clinton Barker-Mills Trust, and run with the invaluable guidance of its Board of Trustees.

 @arnolfiniarts

 @arnolfiniarts

 @arnolfiniarts



ARNOLFINI



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



ACBMT
Ashley Clinton Barker Mills Trust



**UWE
Bristol**
University
of the
West of
England

GALLERY GUIDE HASSAN HAJJAJ: THE PATH

ABOUT HASSAN HAJJAJ: THE PATH

The Path by Moroccan-British artist Hassan Hajjaj presents a unique and timely consideration of culture and identity in the modern, globalised world.

His photographs and films are characterised by an explosion of colour, pattern, appropriated brand logos and found objects, in which signs, symbols and people from around the globe collide together as equals, without the presumed superiority of a Eurocentric view of the world.



The exhibition title *The Path* references Hajjaj's personal journey from his birthplace in Larache, Morocco to London, as well as his international way of working. It also draws inspiration from an album of the same title by jazz-fusion musician Ralph MacDonald. The album makes an artistic and emotional link between the music of Africa, the Caribbean and America, suggesting that an individual's journey can be emblematic of the diasporic scattering of peoples of African descent.

The Path includes work from three different photographic series; *Dakka Marrakchia* which challenges Western stereotypes of Islamic women; *My Rock Stars*, portraits and a film installation depicting creative figures who have inspired Hajjaj, and *Between*

(displayed to the right), reflecting the artist's travels in Africa and the Middle East.

In focusing on figures whose family origins mostly lie abroad Hajjaj conjures up a vision of a society united (rather than divided) by difference. At a time when Britain risks turning inwards in pursuit of a national identity based on an idealised past, Hajjaj's portraits make an urgent case for hybridity. Here, cultural identity is fluid and multiple rather than fixed and singular.

Celebrating and encouraging creativity sits at the heart of Hajjaj's practice and visitors are encouraged to explore the exhibition's rich variety of resources. Hajjaj invites us all to embrace our cultural plurality and reflect on the multiple spaces and places that inform both his work and his worldview. Welcome to Hassan's World!

Hassan Hajjaj: The Path is a touring exhibition by New Art Exchange, Nottingham, curated by Ekow Eshun.

Image Credit: *Bumi Sittin'*, 2013, Hassan Hajjaj.

ABOUT HASSAN HAJJAJ

Born in Larache, Morocco in 1961, Hassan Hajjaj moved to London, aged 12, in the 1970s. He has since lived and worked in-between Morocco and the UK. Heavily influenced by the club, hip-hop, and reggae scenes of London as well as by his North African heritage, his artistic practice reveals his capacity to bridge British and Moroccan cultures.

Hajjaj is a self-taught and thoroughly versatile artist whose work includes portraiture, installation, performance, fashion, and video. Through his work, he investigates and translates his background into artworks. Turning to photography in the late 1980s, Hajjaj has become a master portraitist, often styling his models who are friends, musicians, artists, and strangers. These colourful and engaging portraits combine the visual vocabulary of contemporary fashion photography and pop art, as well as the studio photography of African artists.

His photographs can sometimes also refer to stereotypical imagery such as the odalisque, a nineteenth-century symbol of Oriental exoticism, or to icons of contemporary fashion. Hajjaj 'plays with' or highlights the power of image and branding, juxtaposing the iconography of contemporary culture and consumerism with classical references.

He includes and contrasts visual elements of both Islamic and European culture. Familiar components from contrasting cultures are integrated to create an unexpectedly rich and seductive environment. The frames are an integral part of the photographic image using modern packaging, which echoes designs such as mosaic patterns.

Whether through photography or installation, Hajjaj is keen to explore the perception/reflection relationship between the Orient and the Occident and to deliver, in his traditions, a warm and welcoming space for audiences to experience.

ABOUT EKOW ESHUN, CURATOR

Ekow Eshun is a writer and curator. He is Chairman of the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group, overseeing the most prestigious public art programme in the UK, and the former Director of the ICA, London. He is the author of *Africa State of Mind: Contemporary Photography Reimagines a Continent* (Thames & Hudson) and *Black Gold of the Sun* (Penguin), which was nominated for the Orwell prize.

Recent exhibitions include *Masculinities: Liberation Through Photography* (Barbican) as adjunct curator; *Africa State of Mind* (NAE, Nottingham; MOAD SF); *Made You Look: Dandyism and Black Masculinity* (The Photographer's Gallery, London); *Kaleidoscope: Immigration and Modern Britain* (Somerset House, London).

He has contributed to several books including *Between Worlds* (National Portrait Gallery); *Seen: Black Style UK* (Booth Clibborn) and, forthcoming, *Fashioning Masculinities* (V&A), as well as to catalogues on the work of Chris Ofili, Kehinde Wiley, John Akomfrah and Duro Olowu among others. Eshun's writing has appeared in publications including the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *Esquire*, *GQ Style*, *The Guardian*, *Aperture* and *L'uomo Vogue*. He is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from London Metropolitan University.

ABOUT MY ROCK STARS EXPERIMENTAL VOL.1 (PERFORMERS L-R):

Mandisa Dumezweni - Performing *Sit Down* from the Project/EP *Slow Burn*. London based South African singer Dumezweni describes the song performed here as a song about 'finding relief and joy in releasing what has been' suggesting that 'conformity and beliefs are built on false premises, whichever way they manifest in one's own experience. A.k.a F*** it! Life is supposed to be FUN.'

Boubacar Kafando - Performing *Bangoro*.

Now based in France, Kafando is inspired by the traditional music from his homeland in Burkina Faso, also playing alongside musicians from across the globe to create a vibrant musical fusion. Originating from the Mossi ethnic group, known for their oral traditions, he has toured Burkina Faso far and wide, absorbing techniques and learning to play various instruments such as the Kora and the N'goni. He started his first band in 2001, touring France before moving there in 2003, and absorbing a range of new influences from rock, blues, jazz and funk to afrobeat.

Simo Lagnawi - Performing *Bangoro*.

Moroccan born Lagnawi now lives in London where he has become a UK leader, master and ambassador of Gnawa music culture (a sacred trance music from Morocco). Lagnawi fuses Gnawa with musical influences from countries such as Gambia, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea, Mali, India, Japan, Venezuela and the Caribbean, playing with his bands *Electric Jalaba*, *Gnawa Griot*, and *Gnawa Blues Allstars*.

Poetic Pilgrimage - Performing *No More War*.

This female hip-hop and spoken word duo's sound hails from 'Britain via Jamaica'. One of only a handful of Muslim acts occupying the genre, their music explores identity and global politics from a woman's perspective. The duo – Muneera Rashida and Sukina Abdul Noor – were born in Bristol to Jamaican parents and fuse their Caribbean roots with hip-hop, jazz, world music and electro soul.

Luzmira Zerpa - Performing *El dia que yo me case (The day I get married)*, a Venezuelan merengue from the album *Family Atlantica* released on Soundway records.

Singer, songwriter, dancer and healer Luzmira Zerpa is the lead singer of collective *Family Atlantica*. Now based in London, Zerpa explores the local musical traditions of her childhood in Venezuela through the group's musical voyage. The group's eclectic sound has taken inspiration from Ghana, Senegal, Cuba and Ethiopia, as well as drawing on Zerpa's South American roots.

Jose James - Performing *Code*, written by Jose James and Flying Lotus.

American singer, composer and producer James was born and raised in Minneapolis, coming of age with the sounds of Prince, hip-hop and modern jazz. He was a member of the ground-breaking avant-garde performance poetry and jazz ensemble *Ancestor Energy* before moving to New York to attend The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music. Here he was mentored by and recorded with the legendary drummer Chico Hamilton and the pianist Junior Mance.

Toca Feliciano - Jamming.

Capoeira master Feliciano hails from Brazil but now lives and works in London. He is known for his improvisational style (hence jamming for *My Rock Stars*). He established the FICA School of Capoeira in London in 2014, teaching the Angolan form of this artform. Affiliated to the International Capoeira Angola Foundation (ICAF), founded in 1995, Feliciano's school follows in the ICAF's aim to preserve and promote the Afro-Brazilian art and culture of Capoeira Angola.