

# The New York Times

## 4 Art Gallery Shows to See Right Now

May 13, 2021 | By Will Heinrich, Jason Farago, Jillian Steinhauer and Dawn Chan

### Hassan Hajjaj

Through May 29. Yossi Milo Gallery, 245 10th Avenue, Manhattan.

212-414-0370, [yossimilo.com](http://yossimilo.com)



Hassan Hajjaj's "Afrikan Boy Sittin," from 2013/1434 (Gregorian/Hijri), in the show "My Rockstars." Hassan Hajjaj and Yossi Milo Gallery

Hassan Hajjaj, who was born in Morocco and raised in London, came into photography by way of streetwear and music promotion, and you can see it in the explosively joyful color portraits of "[My Rockstars](#)." Hajjaj shoots outside, but stages every visual detail, from the vibrant textile backdrops to the eye-popping bespoke outfits, and his subjects are performers — like Cardi B and the Nigerian-born English rapper Afrikan Boy — he happens to know or be friendly with. For his camera, they pose with a winning innocence, like children very serious about playing dress up. Each image is framed in a custom shelving unit that holds columns and rows of tomato paste, mackerel or Jajjah Ginger Lemon tea in brightly colored cans.

Using products and patterns from North Africa — not to mention the graphic zing of the Moroccan flag — is a way for Hajjaj to reclaim representations of his home country. (The artist made the point himself in a 2019 profile by [Siddhartha Mitter](#) in The New York Times.) But it's also a way of saying that what you see is what you get, and of encouraging you to take pleasure in that fact. I've never tried Jajjah Ginger Lemon Tea, so I don't know whether it's any good. But I've learned that it comes in a beautiful yellow tin with a mint-green lid. WILL HEINRICH