



## IN THE AIR

Art News & Gossip



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### Hassan Hajjaj Wins the 2014 Pulse Prize

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Hassan Hajjaj, represented by [GUSFORD Gallery](#), has been awarded the 2014 [Pulse Prize](#) at this year's [Pulse New York](#) art fair. The self-taught Moroccan-born artist was awarded the cash grant of \$2,500 last night during Pulse Presents, one of the fair's roundtable discussion sessions, by this year's invitational jury, which included Kathy Battista (director of contemporary art at Sotheby's Institute) Paddy Johnson (founder of Art F City), [Julia Kaganskiy](#) (director of the New Museum's NEW INC.), and Alive Gray Stites (museum director and chief curator for 21c Museum Hotels).

Hajjaj's winning portrait series "My Rock Stars," on view at booth A2 near the entrance of the fair, utilizes recycled materials, installation, and fashion and interior design to comment on the divide between high and low bro culture, branding, and visual stereotypes. Dressing friends and acquaintances in brightly patterned clothing, he photographs them on location by creating a makeshift backdrop from traditionally patterned Moroccan fabrics, creating bold contrast with the eccentric attire of his subjects. Handcrafted frames inlaid with corporately branded objects and consumer goods, like Coca-Cola cans, playfully interact with the textures and colors of the traditionally crafted materials in each image.

Helen Toomer, the fair's director, said in the fair's press release, "The Pulse Prize is such an integral part of the fair because it directly honors artists and provides a resource to further their practice," adding, "It's great to see galleries that adventure to bring focused presentations and I feel privileged to highlight these solo shows."

This year's finalists included Brea Souders (Uprise Art), Marko Tadic (Ikon Arts Foundation), and Daniel Temkin (TRANSFER). Hajjaj joins the ranks of artists like Cristina De Middel, Duke Riley, and Travis Somerville, among others, as a winner of the Pulse Prize.

— *Alanna Martinez (@lanna\_martinez)*

(Photo by Regina Mogilevskaya)

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