

UAE Debut

FIQ!

Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger



**A dazzling, high energy circus
with a Moroccan touch**

An otherworldly collection of acrobatic feats, figures, colors, music, sketches, headspins, and choreography explode in a colorful visual world created by Moroccan artist Hassan Hajjaj.

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CENTER**

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7:30pm on Fri & Sat, Apr 28-29

3pm on Sun, Apr 30, 2023

The Red Theater

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Ticket info at nyuad-artscenter.org

Welcome.

I am proud to welcome you to The Arts Center's eighth season, themed "Stories." At the root of the performing arts are stories. The stories told in the performances themselves. The stories each of us in the audience bring to the experience. The stories we leave with, as we create a shared history, are new every time. The stories we'll share as memories in the future.

As the weather gets warmer outdoors and we near the end of our season, and, we're thrilled to welcome you and your families indoors for the exuberant *Fiq!*, with a program that will heat up The Red Theater. When we first saw excerpts of this production, by Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger, we were immediately struck by the energetic combination of acrobatics, hip-hop dance, and music. The distinctive visual style of pop artist Hassan Hajjaj permeates the stage and costume design, and feels like his photographs come to life. We are excited to bring this piece to the UAE for the first time, and to bring a burst of adrenalin to The Arts Center immediately following Eid to help lead you to the summer. But don't fear - we have a few more surprises up our sleeve for the coming weeks, so keep your eyes out.

We are thrilled to welcome back Mubadala as the lead sponsor of The Arts Center's season, and as the presenting sponsor of our *Off the Stage* series of workshops, talks, and audience engagement. Their commitment to the community of Abu Dhabi, and to the arts, is deeply appreciated.

We are grateful for The Arts Center's partnerships with the US Mission to the UAE, who support our youth educational activities. We invite you to join us on a rich artistic journey. The path may be new and unfamiliar. It may be comforting. It may be unexpected or challenging. No matter what path you travel, we hope you will always find that it is dynamic and diverse. The Arts Center is a place for discovery and for new inspiration.

As always, we invite you to approach our season with a sense of openness, curiosity, and adventure. Once the lights go on after the performance...what stories will you take with you?

Come Curious. Leave Inspired.

Bill Bragin

Executive Artistic Director,
The Arts Center





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FIQ! (WAKE UP!)

BY:

The Acrobatic Group of Tangier & Maroussia Diaz Verbèke Produced by HALKA (PARIS) - 2020

Directed and Circography by Maroussia Diaz Verbèke
6 years and up / duration 75 mins - no intermission

Post-show Q&A on April 29 is moderated by:
Deborah Kapchan, Professor of Performance Studies, NYU New York



Photography © Philippe Fleury

**This vitality has something
to tell us and this show,
FIQ! is the messenger.**

“

A hymn to Moroccan youth in this visual
spectacle overflowing with dexterity and humour

”

- **Télérama**

“

The Tangiers Acrobatic Troupe reminds us that
acrobatics has been a part of Moroccan culture
for centuries and thus proves that tradition can
give birth to modernity

”

- **Figaro Magazine**

“

Known as the Andy Warhol of Morocco, Hassan
Hajjaj's images evoke a luminous and pop sensitivity,
questioning the identity and the relevance of the
frenetic nature of our modern world

”

- **El Pais**

“

What's extraordinary about Maroussia Diaz
Verbèke is the sense that gushes forth, so
lively and caustic

”

- **Télérama**



Photography © Philippe Fleury

Background

A group of fifteen young artists, women and men, Moroccan acrobats, dancers, freestyle footballers, breakdancers, taekwondo fighters, dressed and visually framed by photographer Hassan Hajjaj, accompanied by Dj Dino's turntables, are gathered on stage to offer a show directed by Maroussia Diaz Verbèke. They were selected after huge nationwide auditions in Morocco for their art, their energy, their commitment and the personalities that they can share. This vitality has something to tell us and this show, *FIQ!*, is the messenger.

An other-worldly collection of acrobatic feats, figures, thoughts, colours, music, ideas, sketches, stunts, races, stools, faces, oriental slippers, choreography, headspins, caps, concepts, quotes, text messages and other joys. A show built of modern, tumbling alchemy, between DJ set and fiery rap, between vivid colours and black and white questions.

A questioning, luminous and acrobatic, a tender profound and playful ode, a singular viewpoint of 15 youths of today's Morocco. They are Atlanta, Manon, Samir, Hamza, Hammad, Youssef, Tarik, Hassan, Bouchra, Ayoub, Zhor, Elias, Achraf, Jean-Mario and Jemma. They speak Arabic, French, English and most importantly, the international, borderless language of acrobatics, with phenomenal energy.

The Acrobatic Group of Tangier

At the roots of the Acrobatic Group of Tangier is an inspired woman: Sanae El Kamouni, who in 2013 gathered a group of Moroccan acrobats for a project featuring new contemporary acrobatic creations. Convinced that a new history could be invented with these artists, she asked director Aurélien Bory to join her in Tangier and create the first contemporary Moroccan acrobatics show.

Several shows were created - *TAOUB* (Aurélien Bory- 2004), *Chouf Ouchouf* (Zimmermann & de Perrot-2009), *Azimut* (Aurélien Bory 2013), *Halka* (collective creation of the Acrobatic Group of Tangier with the participation of Abdeliazide Senhadji - 2016). The Acrobatic Group of Tangier puts popular culture at the heart its project, a militant and democratic culture, accessible to all. Questioning, conserving, and giving value to Moroccan acrobatics are its priorities. It bases its operations on the constant search for links between an ancestral art and contemporary creation, a territory and its population.

In this double-dialectic that characterizes it, tradition and contemporary creation, Morocco (in Africa) and France (in Europe), The Acrobatic Group of Tangier brings us face to face with extraordinary world subjects of today and takes its place in the ranks of the most innovative quests in contemporary acrobatics.



Photography © Hassan Hajjaj



Photography © Virginie Meigné

Biographies

MAROUSSIA DIAZ VERBEKE - THE THIRD CIRCUS

Circographer*/director and tightrope acrobat (sometimes walking on the ceiling). Climbing trees - looking for something to do - doing her own show without realising it in the smallest circus tent in the world, practising in the biggest attic in the Cote D'Azur - dropping out of Mathematics to go to circus school (ENACR) - hesitating between the highwire and slack rope, mixing the two - persevering at the CNAC (National Acrobatics School), creating the show *Notes On The Circus* with the Ivan Mosjoukine Collective with passion, dramaturgist for *Vide (Vacuum)* co-written with Fragan Gehlker and Alexis Auffray - reads, interviews, meets, films those that she discovers, maintains a connection with the circus - hitchhikes across the Atlantic on a sailboat, arrives in Brazil by chance, and connects - invents a third circus and the notion of circography* - creates CIRCUS REMIX solo - currently on tour - works with the 'Instrumento de Ver' company in Brazilia - and prefers, above all, to find out why the circus is a language in itself. - ha ha! letroisiemecirque.com

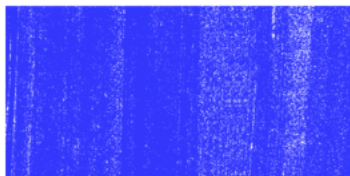
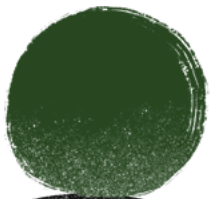
*Circography: neologism designating the production and direction of circus (also means "let's go crazy" in Lithuanian, but it's a coincidence)

HASSAN HAJJAJ

Hassan Hajjaj joined the Tangiers Acrobatic Troupe and circographer Maroussia Diaz Verbeke* to develop the visual universe of the show *FIQ! (Wake up!)* through scenography and costumes. In *FIQ! (Wake Up!)* Hassan Hajjaj conjugates elements of Moroccan culture in an explosion of colours, allowing a juggling of the traditional and the non-conventional, oriental influences and occidental inspiration, pop art and styling to create a coloured and hybrid universe. This alliance between pop and kitch, full of connecting humour, as the show seeks to blend traditional heritage and modern, urban spirit, through creating dialogue, with finesse, between the past and the contemporary era, the orient and the occident, the imagery of ordinary folk and scintillating luxury.

Colour, Light and Vitality

The presence of colours in the circus, as in Hassan Hajjaj's work, translates the desire to transmit a luminous and dynamic vitality. A lively, hungry energy, ready to expend itself for pleasure, like that the acrobats deploy to jump and turn in the air. Here, as in the circus, no gloom. Profundity and more solemn elements are treated with frivolity and with panache. It's this generous and enthusiastic mentality, which informs the writing of *FIQ!*





Photography © Philippe Fleury

With heartfelt thanks to:

Acrobatic Group of Tangier / Maroussia Diaz Verbeke

Artists (from Tangier, but also from Rabat-Salé, Casablanca, Larache...):

Mohamed Takel (floor acrobat), Samir Lâaroussi (porter), Hamza Nacéri (floor acrobat), Hammad Benjkiri (porter), Manon Rouillard (acrobat, balance, floor acrobat), Youssef El Machkouri (porter, floor acrobat), Ayoub Rouifi (floor acrobat), Hassan Taher (floor acrobat, balance), Bouchra El Kayouri (aerial acrobat), Aboubakar Sidiki Hamidou (breakdancer, acrobat), Zhor El Amine Demnati (hip-hop dancer), Ilyas Bouchtaoui (footfreestyle, dancer), Achraf El Kati (floor acrobat), Jemma Sneddon (acrobat), Jean-Mario Milanese (porter, acrobat) and Dj DINO

Director / Circography*:

Maroussia Diaz Verbèke

Assistant Director:

Sanae El Kamouni

Acrobatic Advisor:

William Thomas / Cie BAM

Carrier and banquine supervision:

Basile Narcy and Maxime Solé

Creation of scenography and costumes:

Hassan Hajjaj

Creation of aerial apparatus:

Emma Assaud

Costume supervision:

Bouchra Salih and Emma Assaud

Technical director / sound technician:

Cécile Hérault

Light and sound design:

Laure Andurand, Marine David

Sound technicians:

Joël Abriac, Tom d'Herin, Rémy Caillavet

Stage technician:

Jordane Sabatier

Original music:

Dj Key

Artistic director of the Tangier Acrobatic Group:

Sanae El Kamouni

Production, diffusion & development:

Jean-François Pyka

Administration & Development:

Aizeline Wille

General logistics and tour supervision:

Romane Blandin et Simon Nguyen

Photo Exhibition and graphic conception:

©Hassan Hajjaj

***Circography**: neologism designating the production and direction of the circus (also means "let's go crazy" in Lithuanian but it's a coincidence)

A Halka Association Production (Paris - France) in co-production with the Scenes du Maroc association (Tangiers - Morocco)

Co-producers & artist residencies:

Les Nuits de Fourvière, Lyon International Festival international Lyon (69) *

- Le Manège, Reims National Theatre (51)
- CIRCa, national circus centre, Auch, Gers, Occitanie (32)
- Plateform 2 Pôles Circus in Normandie | La Brèche in Cherbourg/Cirque Théâtre
- d'Elbeuf (76)
- Agora, National Arts centre - Cirque de Boulazac-Aquitaine (24)
- La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel (77)
- Châteauvallon National Theatre (83)
- La Verrerie d'Alès, national circus centre Occitanie (30)
- Théâtre de Grasse, Accredited circus and dance theatre (06)
- L'Institut Français in Paris (75)

The Halka Association receives support from:

The Cultural affairs dept of Ile-de-France (DRAC artistic creation aid)
The Ministry of Culture (DGCA - artistic creation aid), l'Institut Français in Paris, the Ile de France region, Spedidam and the City of Paris.

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- BMCI Foundation (Morocco)
- BNP PARISBAS Foundation
- DROSOS Foundation
- The provincial delegation for culture, Tangiers (Morocco)
- L'Institut Français of Marrakech / Maison Denise Masson (Morocco)
- Movenpick Mansour Eddahbi Marrakech and its Palais des Congrès / Marrakech (Morocco)
- Le Théâtre Nomade, Casablanca (Morocco)

 www.groupeacrobatiquedetanger.fr

 [groupeacrobatiquedetanger](https://www.instagram.com/groupeacrobatiquedetanger)



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And Artist Management

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Sabr Hemming

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Technical Theater Specialist

THE ARTS CENTER CREDITS

With very special thanks to our Front of House Team!

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Marketing:

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Public Relations by Hanover Middle East.

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Laure Assaf, Eduardo Lage Otero, Lee Gurdial Kaur Singh

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