

15-Minute Activity:

Hassan Hajjaj’s art often includes critiques of consumer culture. Consumer culture refers to a way of life (culture) that emphasizes buying things (consuming). Buying is a cornerstone of affluent 21st-century economies. Consumers (that’s us) often derive a sense of identity from the things we buy. For example, think about clothes that have a company’s name on them. If you buy and wear those clothes, you’re telling people something about yourself. (You’re also providing free advertising for the company.)

Given that that’s what consumer culture means, how does Hassan Hajjaj’s art comment on that culture? With a partner, look at the images of Hajjaj’s work for content that refers to consumer culture. Why do you think Hajjaj has included these references? For example, in “Arab Vogue,” why do you think there are two soda bottles (shaped much like Coca-Cola bottles but filled with non-Coca-Cola-colored liquids)? By including them, what do you think Hajjaj might be saying about consumer culture? Look for other references to consumer culture. Write a statement that summarizes what you think Hajjaj is saying about consumer culture in his work. Refer to examples to support your statement.

This lesson meets this Common Core Standard:

RL/RI.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.