

HAJAR BENJIDA

ATLANTA MADE US FAMOUS, 2018-ONGOING

To the casual passer-by, the Magic City strip club in Atlanta, Georgia, appears distinctly ordinary. The small grey building is perched on the side of a busy road, a glowing neon over the doorway. But to those in the know, it's a place where hip-hop history was made. It was once visited by 2Pac and Biggie, and has since hosted performances by Young Thug and 2 Chainz. On her first visit to the club in 2018, the photographer Hajar Benjida found herself drawn not to the music industry names who frequent it, but to the dancers who entertain them. Her project "Atlanta Made Us Famous" captures brief moments in the lives of these women – dancers, mothers, wives, breadwinners – each posing as a famous musician might, offering a mix of fierce confidence and palpable vulnerability. Distinct from the club's prevailing male gaze, Benjida presents an insight into the dancers' respective worlds. "I hope to show that their images hold power and importance beyond hip-hop and its surrounding culture," she says. "From my perspective, it's the dancers that shine as the stars of the city."

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"Atlanta Made Us Famous" is at TJ Boulting until January 28; tjboulting.com



From top: Barbi Billionz, Atlanta, GA 2019; Charlene, Atlanta, GA 2019. Opposite: Cleo and her son Andy at home, Stone Mountain, GA 2019