

From a Park Bench to Filming

Saskia and Emmanuel

- 1 At seventeen Emmanuel was homeless and sleeping on a park bench. Now he is a well-known fashion designer and musician who just released his second single, called Fabulous with his band Cushh. Emmanuel (27), who likes to go by only his first name, owns an expensive home in Richmond, London and divides his time between London and Los Angeles, where he has made videos with top producers.
- 2 Emmanuel was born in the UK, but his parents took him with them to their native Nigeria when he was a boy. At 17 he returned alone, excited to be back in London again. "I got on a bus and thought 'when I see an area I would like to live in, I'll get off.' That turned out to be Ealing, but the council said they couldn't give me anywhere to stay. I just wandered out and saw a park nearby. As I didn't have anywhere else to go, I stayed there for three months.
- 3 It was very, very hard and lonely but I never doubted that things would change. I used to write things on my hand, things like poems and songs and the amount of money I would make. When you are out on the streets by yourself you have to keep very strong."
- 4 Eventually, the council put him in a B&B accommodation, sharing a room with two much older men. He had two full-time jobs to fund his education, studying IT and Business Information at Greenwich University. He started Cushh with long-term friend Saskia Lockey and used social networking such as MySpace and YouTube to promote his music. The music video for Fabulous was shot in LA by Daniel Zirilli who worked with a lot of celebrities ranging from the Rolling Stones to Tupac.
- 5 When speaking about his past Emmanuel says: "It's like I was on a runaway train with no one in the driver's seat, but now I am driving it. My success is a dream come true but I have worked really hard for this. It shows what you can do with determination."



bewerking: Evening Standard, October 2012