

# Huguette Caland, "Early Works: 1970–85"

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Friendly warning! We're working hard to be accurate. But these are unusual times, so please check that events are still happening.

Huguette Caland, the daughter of Lebanon's first president, studied art during the 1960s at the American University in Beirut before she moved to Paris. She developed a distinctive combination of Pop Art and fluidly Minimalist abstraction, depicting the body in ways both sensual and erotically charged. Later, she created a series of caftans, which, besides alluding to her Levantine background, led to a 1979 collaboration with French fashion designer Pierre Cardin. In the late '80s, Caland migrated to Los Angeles, where she continued to explore her unique form of feminist expression.

This delightful show focuses on the formative years of the artist, now 83. *Exit* (1970) presents a montage of cartoonish faces, breasts and genitalia, painted in a flat, varied palette. By 1973, Caland was rendering images, like the crotch and buttocks in *Bribes de Corps (Body Fragments)*, as rounded, tangential planes of smooth colors.

Just as compelling are the embroidered caftans made between 1970 and 1975. Displayed on cutout plywood mannequins with exaggerated features (all crafted by Caland), the garments are decorated with humorous, figurative motifs, including, in one instance, the curvaceous contours of a naked woman.

This brief introductory survey is rounded out by a suite of drawings made between 1973 and 1985. Sinuous and surreal, they reveal the essential role they played for an artist who's still under-known, though perhaps a

little less so than before.—*Paul Laster*

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