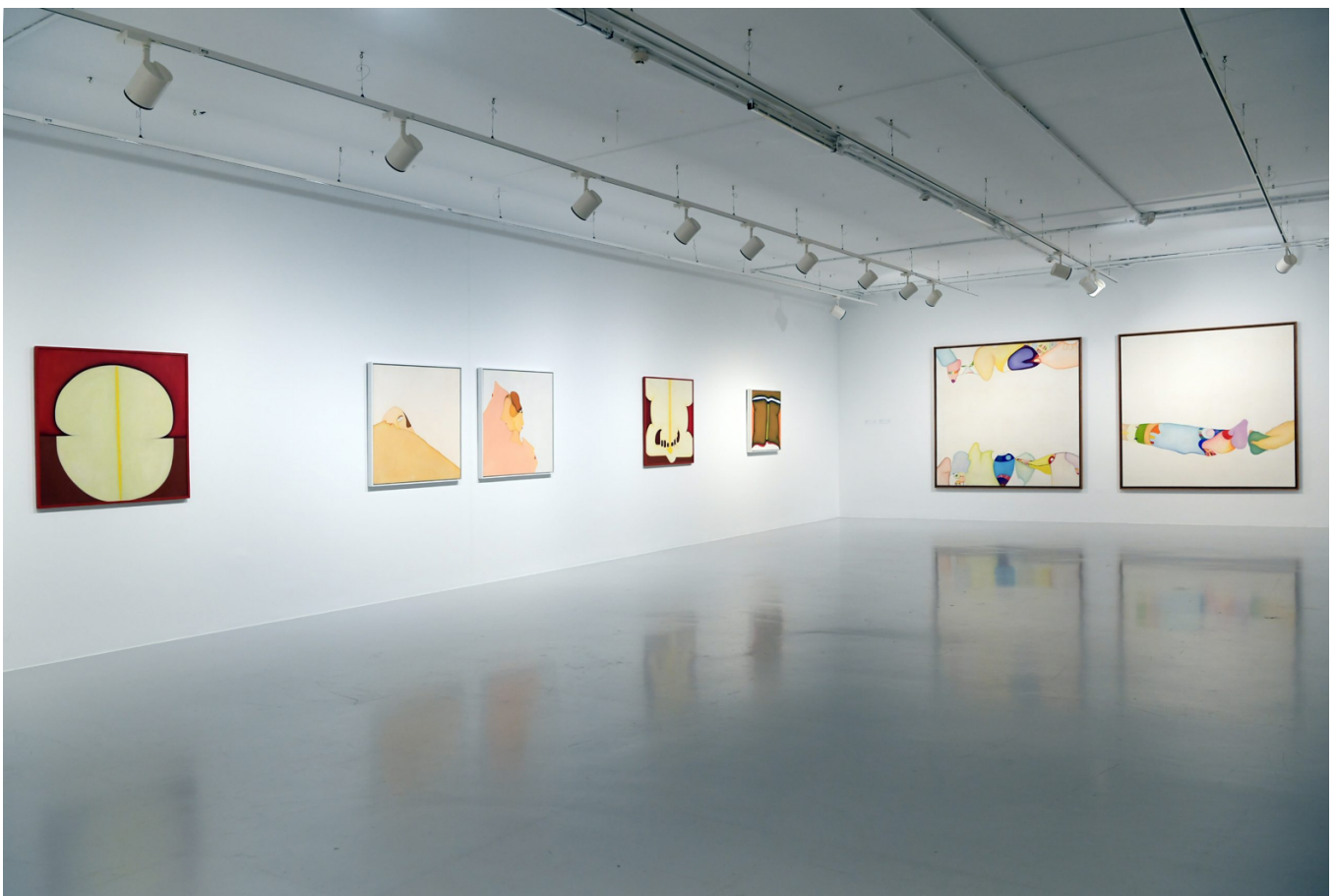


# Huguette Caland's Restless Joie de Vivre

Divided into geographical chapters, "Faces and Places" catalogs the artist's desire for constant change, be it physical or ideological.

by [Mohamad Khalil Harb](#) November 25, 2020



Installation view of Huguette Caland: Faces and Places, 2020, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (all images courtesy Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art)

*DOHA, Qatar* — Huguette Caland was born in 1930 to a Lebanon on the cusp of decolonization. Her father, Bechara El Khoury, became the president of the first Lebanese Republic in 1943, a position that burdened her with the rigid demands of public life, but accorded her a certain class mobility as she attained degrees in law and later on in art. Caland began

charting her own life after her father's passing in 1964, entering a world of her own. Her resistance to labels and her devotional love for experimentation transcends her practice, using different mediums from oil to ink to sculpture and textiles. Her varied and wildly compelling works come to life in the exhibit *Huguette Caland: Faces and Places* at [Mathaf: the Modern Museum of Arab Art](#).

In the Beirut of the 1960s, an era often labeled in the fraught and classed prism as "the golden age," Caland shed the tight-fitting and western clothes of her class and adopted the caftan. The radicalism of her sartorial choices is not to be underestimated. The caftan was not a desired dress in French-minded elite circles as it represented an ideologically Arab aesthetic. In designing and wearing such garments, she used the breeziness and loose-fittingness of the caftan to resist the Eurocentric male gaze universalized through haute couture.