

Huguette Caland: Tête-à-Tête

May 27, 2020 - September 5, 2021

Wednesday: 12 pm - 6 pm

Thursday: 12 pm - 8 pm

Friday- Sunday: 12 pm - 6 pm

In the late 1960s, at the age of thirty-nine, Huguette Caland (b. 1931, Beirut, Lebanon; d. 2019, Venice, California) left her family in Beirut and relocated to Paris to pursue a career as an artist. Embracing the intrinsic sexuality of the body in her early canvases, Caland briefly came to international prominence in the 1970s. It is this explicit manner in which she expresses sensuality through drawing that has precipitated her recent resurfacing. Caland's pen, pencil, and color pencil drawings from the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, at first appear abstract, but closer observation of the deliberate lines reveals intertwined body parts, caressing lovers, and carnivalesque portraits of topsy-turvy figures. Extending her drawing practice to fashion during this era, Caland created a series of one hundred caftans, and embroidered many of these with schematic images of breasts and female genitalia. The tension between the nakedness of the human body and the fabrics that conceal it once again became a central theme in Caland's drawing practice in the early 1990s, both in the artist's delicately crosshatched ink drawings that resemble woven textiles and in her series of nude mannequins embellished with these same designs. Even in her later forays into abstraction, the vitality of the human body and spirit remains palpable as fragments of figures and geographic elements from her past and present surface amidst brightly colored drawn and patterned landscapes.

From May to September 2021, The Drawing Center presents *Tête-à-Tête*, Caland's first solo museum exhibition in the United States. Bringing together works on paper and canvas from the past five decades—as well

as caftans, mannequins, sculptures, and notebooks on which she wielded her pen—the exhibition shows how Caland used the candidness and mutability of drawing to unravel taboos associated with representing female sexuality.

Curator: Claire Gilman Exhibition