

NATHALIE KARG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Huguette Caland - *Silent Letters*

May 25 – June 26, 2016

Opening Reception: Wednesday, May 25, 6 – 8 pm

Nathalie Karg Gallery is pleased to announce the opening of *Silent Letters*, the first solo exhibition of Huguette Caland in our gallery.

The daughter of Lebanon's first post-colonial president, 85-year old artist Huguette Caland studied at the American University in Beirut in the 1960s before moving to Paris to begin her creative career. Leaving her husband and children behind, Caland developed an artistic style that combined a sensual representation of the body with a minimal form of abstraction. She carried the erotic content of her work into the design of stitched caftans, which led to a celebrated collaboration with French fashion designer Pierre Cardin in 1979. Migrating to Los Angeles in the late-'80s, Caland continued exploring a surreal form of feminist expression, while developing her own style of process art.

Like the experimental Swiss modernist Paul Klee, Caland has the ability to simultaneously work in different styles. Whether she is creating something figurative or abstract, line is always central to her art. She works intuitively and organically, without making studies. Referencing her native culture, Caland's spirited work has been inspired by Byzantine mosaics and patterned textiles, yet most of the works in this show, which were made between 1998 and 2001, investigate a more geometric mode of abstraction. Nonrepresentational art, the works in *Silent Letters* are accumulations of marks and lines that impact both the mind and the eye, meditatively.

Exploring the physical process of moving brushes wet with ink and acrylic paint across paper and canvas until they nearly dry out, the black and white works capture Caland's pensive gesture as she shifts from starting on one side and then the other. Experimenting with line further, she constructs grids with repeated marks on the planes of the gray and blue and gray and brown pieces in the show, while complicating matters by adding pencil marks or using color. Sharing a kinship with the works of Bernard Frize and Sol LeWitt over process, Agnes Martin in concept and Adolf Wölfli and Martin Ramirez for obsessiveness, Caland's linear pieces composed in ink and acrylic on paper, panel and canvas expose the methods by which they are produced.

Likewise, the six square canvases in the show reveal their handling, but are cloaked in an air of mystery through the juxtaposition and layering of color. More akin to Carmen Herrera's geometric division of the plane and Mark Rothko's sense of atmospheric depth, these works vibrate through Caland's employment of green, yellow and black, while conveying an aura that beckons back to her first painting, a monochrome titled *Red Sun*, which she made to mark the death of her father in 1964. Possessing the same sublime spirit with which she set forth on her artistic journey more than 50 years ago, this visionary composer of line and energy is still euphorically at play.

– Paul Laster

The exhibition will run from May 25th through June 26th and complements Caland's concurrent participation in *Made in L.A. 2016: a, the, though, only* at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

For more information please contact: info@nathaliekarg.com