

Madeleine Haas

Docent "Close-up on Art" Study Paper

Title: Untitled, 2009
Artist: Huguette (El Khoury) Caland, Lebanese, 1931
Gift: Gift of artist courtesy of Aldis Browne Fine Arts
Medium: Paint on stretched canvas
Date: 2009, Venice California

Huguette Caland considers herself as a "Line Person." She uses delicate lines that are inspired by Byzantine mosaics and hand woven rugs that were hung in her childhood home in Beirut, Lebanon. She was the daughter of Lebanon's first post-colonial president Bechara El Khoury. Huguette Caland is a contemporary artist, fashion designer, curator and an important figure in the Los Angeles cultural scene.

In 1952, she married Paul Caland, nephew of the publisher of Lebanon's newspaper "L'Orient." This created family problems and was considered an act of defiance because the newspaper merged with her uncle's rival publication "Le Jour." This situation was evidence of the beginning of her independent actions and thoughts. From then on, she blurred her boundaries in her personal and creative life.

Huguette Caland studied art at the American University in Beirut in the 1960's. After the death of her father, she moved to Paris leaving her husband and children pursue her creative endeavors. In the beginning of her career, she painted and sculpted erotic, semi-abstract body shapes which seemed influenced by Georgia O'Keeffe and the Women's Political Movement of the 60's. Minimalism and Abstraction were developed in her style, which carried over into her collaboration of stitched caftans with French fashion designer Pierre Cardin in 1979.

In the late 80's, Caland moved to Los Angeles. She was working again with organic forms of feminist expression while developing her own textile-like compositions that she continues to develop today. Her most current work was exhibited at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. She is said to "possess the same sublime spirit with which she set forth with on her artistic journey more than fifty years ago. She is a creator of line and energy and is still joyously playing with it."

I selected this artwork because the beautiful magenta invited me to look and question the artist's process. At first glance, I assumed the piece was an ancient artifact, rather than a contemporary painting dated 2009. The description indicates that it is paint on stretched canvas. I couldn't believe it. The detail and cross-hatched tiny lines are so delicate that it gives the feel of an old worn carpet on a disintegrating piece of canvas. In my opinion, this piece fits into the category of contemporary art that has been inspired by weaving and textiles seen throughout her life. As her life and process continues, her work becomes even more minimal as indicated in her last show this year in the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Her process is intuitive and organic with line as the most important element. "A meditative impact is experienced by both the mind and the eye."

2016 huguette caland.askart.com/artist
2016 www.artsy.net/artist/huguette
2016 made in L.A. 2016 hammer museum



