

## Huguette Caland: An Artist of Cheeky Beirut

Blake Gopnik, Tuesday, December 2, 2014



This is a view, front and back, of one of the radical kaftans designed, and actually worn, by the Lebanese artist Huguette Caland in Beirut in the 1970s. It and others like it, as well as some very flesh-forward paintings—Judy Chicago, eat your heart out—are now on display in Caland's solo show at Lombard Freid gallery in New York. Today it's almost impossible to imagine any woman in the Arab world (let alone the daughter of a nation's founding president, which is what Caland was) risking such outré and risqué behavior. Then, of course, Lebanon was still “the Paris of the Middle East,” complete with miniskirts, bikinis, and radical gender art. That shows how much things have changed, and how quickly—but also, most important, that there's no reason they couldn't just as easily change back.