

The Karl Benjamin X Comme des Garçons Project

November 9, 2019 – January 25, 2020

Los Angeles, CA. In conjunction with Comme des Garçons and the Estate of Karl Benjamin, Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present *The Karl Benjamin X Comme des Garçons Project*. This collaborative exhibition will feature Rei Kawakubo's innovative designs for the Comme des Garçons SHIRT Spring 2020 collection, with the garments displayed alongside the paintings by Karl Benjamin (1925-2012) which inspired them.

The kaleidoscopic forms and tessellated patterns of Benjamin's paintings are vividly recreated in the intricate patchwork and complex printing of Kawakubo's menswear designs. The shards and rhomboids that float across Benjamin's canvases in cheery shades of peach, butter yellow, and sky blue are liberated from their two-dimensional plane, reimagined and reassembled into as many as 23 individual textile panels. The punchy hot pink and burnt orange circles and triangles which lock neatly together in Benjamin's "VC" series spill out from the bounds of the canvas into riotous all-over printed Oxfords.

In addition to the shirts and paintings, photographs documenting the construction of the garments will also be on view, demonstrating the extraordinary care and workmanship behind their creation. Kawakubo possesses a high level of fidelity to her craft, mirrored by Benjamin's neat, hard edges and thoughtfully designed compositions.

Kawakubo strives for newness in all her designs, attempting always to create in ways that have never been done or seen. Benjamin dedicated his long career to the tireless investigation of color relationships and optical effects, employing a geometric abstract vocabulary that was not always in vogue. While this collaboration between a cutting-edge designer and mid-century abstract painter may at first seem incongruous, it is clear that Kawakubo and Benjamin are linked by shared commitment to realizing the honesty of their creative energies, without regard to trend or external influence.

The Founder and Creative Director of Comme des Garçons, Rei Kawakubo is widely acknowledged as one of today's most groundbreaking and influential designers. A major exhibition of her work was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in 2017. Karl Benjamin's work has been featured in numerous museum exhibitions and is included in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, among others.

Louis Stern Fine Arts is the exclusive representative of the estate of Karl Benjamin.