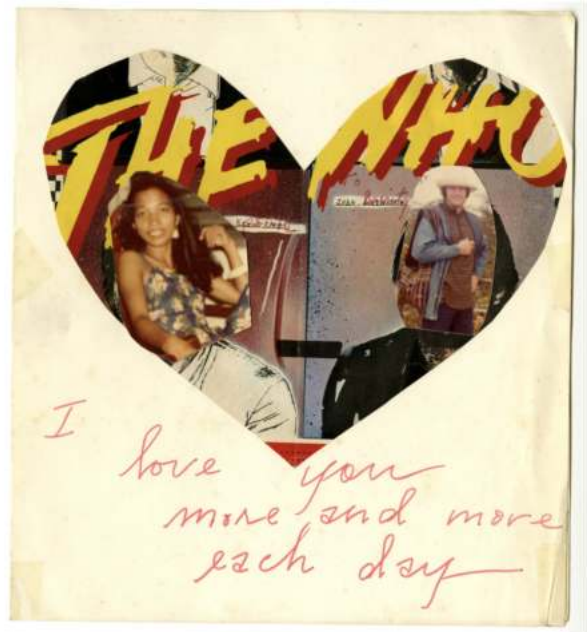


Cantor Arts Center

Stanford University acquires the Pacita Abad Archives

Spanning Pacita Abad's visionary 32-year career, during which she created over 5,000 artworks and lived in and traveled to more than 60 countries, the Pacita Abad Archives will expand the study and legacy of an extraordinary international artist



(May 29, 2025—STANFORD, CA) The **Cantor Arts Center** and the Department of Special Collections at **Stanford University Libraries** are proud to announce the acquisition of the **Pacita Abad Archives**, a vast collection of archival materials and ephemera spanning over 30 years of the visionary artist's career, from the mid-1970s in the Bay Area through to her passing in 2004. As a generous gift of the **Pacita Abad Art Estate**, the Archives shed light on the artist's global, peripatetic life and her body of work known for its exuberant embrace of color, incorporation of textiles from her travels, and exploration of human rights, identity, and activism.

"It has been a pleasure to work with the Pacita Abad Art Estate in establishing a permanent home for Abad's archives here at Stanford," comments **Veronica Roberts, John and Jill Freidenrich Director of the Cantor Arts Center**. "Born in the Philippines, Abad arrived in San Francisco in 1970, and decided to become an artist here. Stanford is a fitting home for Abad and her intellectual legacy, particularly in light of the Cantor Arts Center's Asian American Art Initiative. Both her art and her papers reveal a life led to the fullest and will allow future generations to better appreciate the breadth of her passions and influence."

The **Pacita Abad Archives** spans 120 linear feet, containing photographs, unpublished works, sketches, exhibition records, correspondence, and personal artifacts, which will continue to expand posthumously. As part of the acquisition, the Pacita Abad Art Estate has allocated funds to the Libraries to support a dedicated archivist, who will catalog and digitize the materials, ensuring their long-term accessibility. Notable highlights from the Archives include the first textile Abad ever acquired, a Turkish

Cantor Arts Center

needlepoint made using red, green, purple, and metallic threads, and various menus that she created for social gatherings at her home—a hub of cultural exchange. The Archives also features images documenting her worldwide travels, 20 oral histories, as well as the schematic for her final public art installation in Singapore—a vibrant bridge ornamented with over 2,000 concentric circles completed shortly before her passing—offering unparalleled insight into Abad's connection with the diverse artist and artisan communities around the world that she engaged with and championed.



Due to her student political activism against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, **Pacita Abad** (1946–2004) first left the Philippines in 1969 and traveled to the Bay Area to study law. There, she met her husband, Jack Garrity, with whom she embarked upon a one-year journey hitchhiking across Asia from Istanbul to Manila, an unexpected trip which inspired her to change course and pursue a career as an artist. Upon their return to the Bay Area, the couple took up residence in a cabin in the Stanford Foothills, while Garrity continued his studies in Stanford's MBA program and Abad worked at the University's Medical Center. This period of their life was captured by Abad in an early work, which depicts Garrity at home in their cabin. Titled ***Foothill Cabin*** (1976), this painting was acquired by Cantor in 2023, and is currently on view at the museum.

Having lived in and traveled to more than 60 countries over the course of her 32-year career, Abad developed an international identity due to her frequent travels with Garrity, whose work as a development economist took him all over the world. The diverse cultural imagery and artistic traditions that she encountered shaped her own worldview as an artist and manifested in a vast body of work that spans all manner of colorful masks, intricate underwater scenes, and abstract compositions.

Her international travels made her acutely aware of the difficult lives that most women lead around the globe and heightened her sensitivity to the severe political, social, economic and environmental challenges she encountered across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Given her history as a political activist, Abad unsurprisingly created early socio-political paintings of the urban poor, displaced people, political violence, refugees and immigrants in countries where she worked, and is further encapsulated by her *trapuntos*—quilted paintings where fabric is stitched and stuffed rather than stretched—for which she

Cantor Arts Center

is best known. With these works, Abad's innovative material and conceptual approach redefined the representation of those on the margins of society, fostering a new global solidarity to reshape the language of contemporary art. The Cantor is honored to own one of her most significant and monumental works, *100 Years of Freedom: From Batanes to Jolo* (1998), a work featured prominently in her recent retrospective organized by the Walker Art Center.



Abad produced more than 5,000 works across a wide range of mediums, such as painting, sculptures, textiles, works on paper, ceramics, and glass. Under the stewardship of Pacita Abad Art Estate, the artist's work is represented by Tina Kim Gallery and Silverlens Galleries and included in **over 45 museum collections** around the world. The **Walker Art Center** in Minneapolis recently mounted a major retrospective of her work, curated by **Victoria Sung**, that traveled to the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art** (SFMOMA), **MoMA PS1**, and the **Art Gallery of Ontario** between 2023 and 2025. This retrospective, alongside the inclusion of her work in the 2024 Venice Biennale, both contributed to and underscored Abad's profound legacy as an artist.

"As an Asian-American woman working with textiles in a Western-dominated art world, Pacita encountered significant barriers. Yet, she continued to expand the scope of contemporary art beyond Europe and America. Her art stands as a celebration of color and empathy, and her legacy serves as a model for those who challenge norms, envision new futures, and champion global equity," **says Jack Garrity, Director of Pacita Abad Art Estate.**

Cantor Arts Center



"Stanford University Libraries have enjoyed a strong collaboration with the Cantor's Asian American Art Initiative, and as part of this ongoing partnership, the AAAI has played a key role in supporting the acquisition of archives of prominent Asian American artists, making the University an essential resource for the study of their work. After seeing the tremendous impact her traveling retrospective exhibition had, we're proud to take on the stewardship of Pacita Abad's archives as a natural extension of this groundbreaking Initiative," adds **Lindsay King, Head Librarian of Bowes Art and Architecture Library at Stanford University**. "Offering students and researchers the opportunity to engage with her Archives alongside her original works at Cantor will provide an invaluable resource for our intellectual community."

The Pacita Abad Archives joins the Libraries' growing collection of archives of Asian American artists, including those of **Ruth Asawa** (1926–2013) and **Bernice Bing** (1936–1998), alongside the Catalogue Raisonné of **Martin Wong** (1946–1999), and the Cantor's recent acquisition of three major artworks by Abad—an early painting, *Foothill Cabin* (1976); a print, *If My Friends Could See Me Now* (1993); and the monumental *100 Years of Freedom: From Batanes to Jolo* (1998)—strengthening the museum's commitment to building one of the most significant collections of Asian American art and furthering the mission of its **Asian American Art Initiative** (AAAI). Founded by **Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander**, Robert M. and Ruth L. Halperin Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, and **Marci Kwon**, Assistant Professor of Art History, the AAAI is a cross-departmental, institutional commitment at Stanford dedicated to the preservation, collection, exhibition, and study of work made by Asian American artists. The acquisition of the Pacita Abad Archives significantly expands the AAAI's ability to amplify and steward the history of Asian American art by making a unique collection of materials on one of the most notable Asian American artists of the 21st century publicly accessible via the Department of Special Collections at Stanford University Libraries.

"Pacita Abad Archives will seed research, exhibitions, and educational opportunities at Stanford and beyond" adds **Marci Kwon, Co-Founder of the Asian American Art Initiative and Assistant**

Cantor Arts Center

Professor of Art History. "Her vibrant work offers myriad possibilities to new generations of artists, scholars, and activists, modeling solidarity and connection beyond the borders of nation and ethnicity."

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ABOUT THE CANTOR ARTS CENTER

Serving the Stanford campus, the Bay Area community, and visitors from around the world, the Cantor Arts Center provides an outstanding cultural experience for visitors of all ages. Founded when the university opened in 1891, the historic museum was expanded and renamed in 1999 for lead donors Iris and B. Gerald Cantor. The Cantor's collection spans 5,000 years and includes more than 41,000 works of art from around the globe. The Cantor is an established resource for teaching and research on campus. Free admission, tours, lectures, and family activities make the Cantor one of the most visited university art museums in the country.

ABOUT STANFORD LIBRARIES

The Stanford University Libraries are a dynamic network of libraries, librarians, information technology specialists, and a vast collection of academic resources that are dedicated to supporting research, teaching, and learning at Stanford. The Libraries hold over [fifteen million items](#) in various genres and formats, including e-resources; [fifty subject specialists](#); [twenty campus libraries](#); and a [broad spectrum of services](#). The Libraries' archival collections span 96,000 linear feet of materials, 235,000 rare books, and 300 terabytes from hundreds of local and distant collections. These holdings include a large and growing collection of artistic photographs as well as photographs and documents about the history of civil rights in the Mexican American, African American and Asian American communities such as the documentary photographic collections of Bob Fitch and David Bacon; the political papers of both local and state politicians, such as the recently acquired papers of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein; historical maps featured in the David Rumsey Map Collection; and the incredibly diverse history covered in the Silicon Valley Archives. The archival collections and more are available in the Libraries' Department of Special Collections and in the Stanford Digital Repository and are accessible through finding aids in the Online Archive of California. The Libraries' physical and digital spaces are designed to promote freedom and discovery, making knowledge-seeking more meaningful, more personal, and more connected than ever. The opportunities for contributing to and transforming the commonwealth of knowledge are wide and deep at Stanford University Libraries.

IMAGES

Image 1: Pacita Abad (American, born in the Philippines, 1946–2004), *Foothill Cabin*, 1976. Oil on canvas. Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University. Patricia Geary Johnson Asian Art Acquisitions Fund, 2023.175. © Pacita Abad Art Estate LLC. Image 2: Collage made by Pacita Abad, c. 1980-81. Pacita Abad archives (M3075). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford Libraries, Stanford, California. Image 3: Pacita Abad and Jack Garrity outside the Foothill Cabin, c. 1975-76, Pacita Abad archives (M3075). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford Libraries, Stanford, California. Image 4: Pacita Abad (Philippine-American, born in the Philippines, 1946 – died in Singapore, 2004), *100 Years of Freedom: From Batanes to Jolo*, 1998. Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, Patricia Geary Johnson Asian Art Acquisitions Fund, 2023.178. Photo courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate. Image 5: Pacita Abad in her Jakarta studio, c. 1994. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

VISIT THE MUSEUM

Cantor Arts Center
328 Lomita Drive at Museum Way

Cantor Arts Center

Stanford, CA

T: 650-723-4177

<https://museum.stanford.edu/>

Wednesday & Friday: 11:00am – 6:00pm

Thursday: 11:00am – 8:00pm

Saturday & Sunday: 10:00am – 5:00pm

FREE ADMISSION

VISIT THE LIBRARIES

Stanford University Libraries

Cecil H. Green Library (main library)

[557 Escondido Mall](#)

[Stanford, CA 94305-6063](#)

(650) 723-1493

<https://library.stanford.edu/>

Monday to Thursday: 8:00am – 12am

Friday: 8:00am – 6:00pm

Saturday: 10:00am – 6:00pm

Sunday: 12:00pm – 12:00am

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