

ASIA

MAGAZINE

Fortnightly

Weekend December 8-10, 1989

FACE TO FACE



Abad: Finding expression through colour and risk-taking.



ed nudes of a local Muslim woman, then displayed them.

The fourth of 12 children, Abad was born in the province of Batanes in the northern Philippines. Her late father, a former minister of public works, encouraged her to study law. Little did she know that her part-time job, art coordinator at the University of San Francisco, would change the direction of her life.

She lives in Washington, DC, with her husband, an American economist, and travels extensively teaching and lecturing.

WHEN PACITA ABAD DISCOVERED the world of painting, the legal profession lost an aspiring practitioner.

Today, the 43-year-old former law student directs all her energies to dazzling the eye. Her unusual style and colourful personality have made her one of the Philippines' best known artists.

She mastered *trapunto*, a 14th century Italian-inspired method of using cloth, the texture and thickness of quilts, as canvas.

Clothes are among her canvases. The buttons, beads and sequins she sews on her husband's garments are not his idea.

Daring as she is flamboyant, her "trademarks" include orange and green fingernails and hair worn in corn rows. A collection of paintings, shown in the Philippines during 1984, depicted her native country in turmoil. Death threats arrived as well as the honour of being included in the nation's "Ten Outstanding Young Men" award.

When a group of paintings on sea themes debuted in Manila, she arrived at the opening in scuba diving gear. During one globe-trotting adventure, she defied tradition in Dacca, Bangladesh, and paint-

mist, and travels extensively teaching and lecturing.

