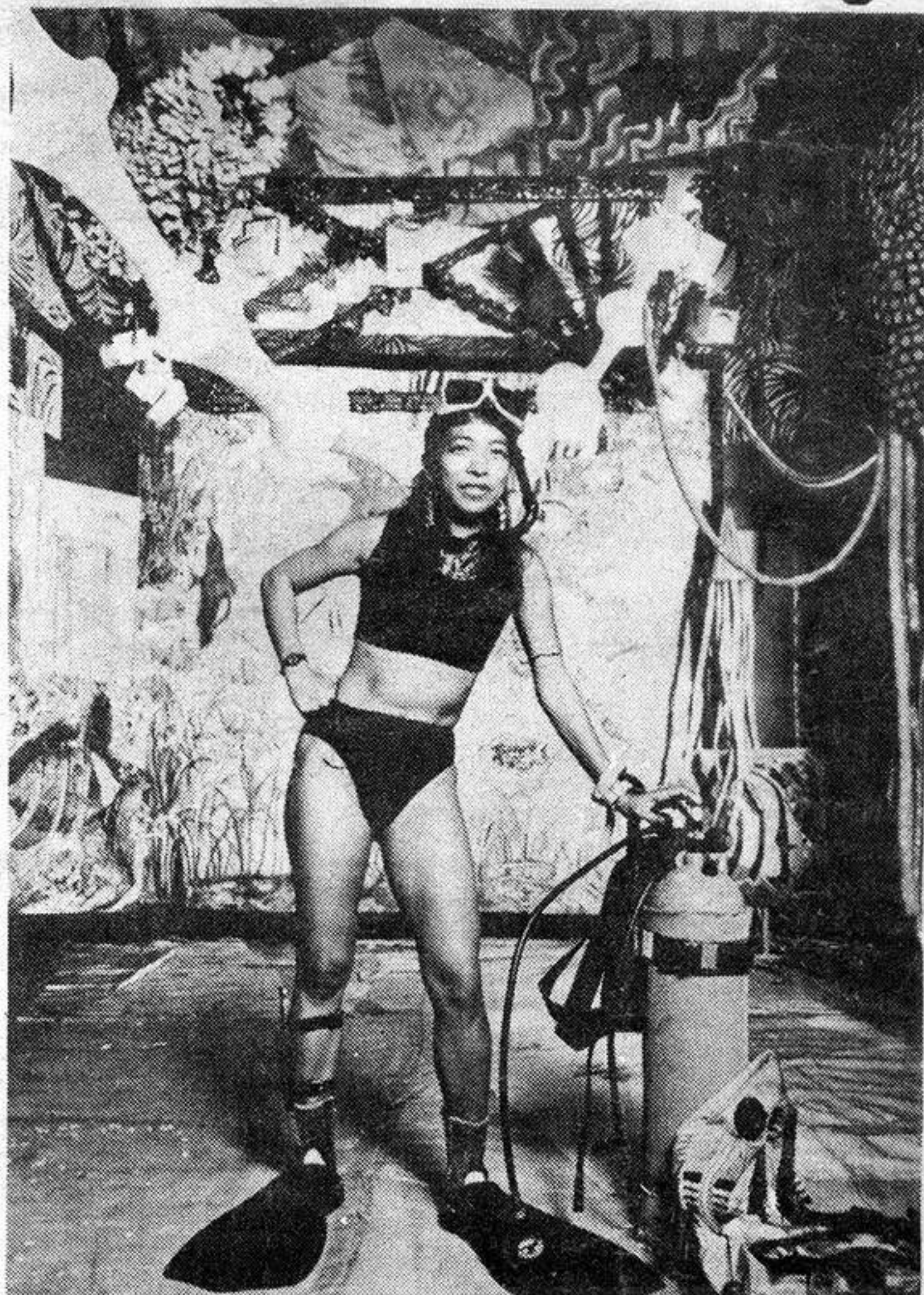




PACITA Abad with a trapuntoe

A splash of colour means much to Pacita



THE artist poses for one of her works

COLOURFUL PERSONALITY

By Mary Luk

PAINTER Pacita Abad was one of the anti-Marcos Filipinos when the country was in political unrest in 1984.

Pacita had not taken part in any anti-government campaigns but she expressed her anger through paintings.

In March that year, she gave an exhibition featuring the destruction her country had undergone since the assassination of Benigno Aquino.

Paintings of blood bath riots, strikes and portraits of Aquino were vividly depicted. The show stirred the feelings of the public and was splashed all over the newspapers.

"Artists should have social responsibility," said Pacita whose father is a Minister and mother a Congresswoman. "My exhibition was a social and political statement of the public."

The show was one of the events that won Pacita the TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men) award. She is the first woman to have received this prestigious award and is described by the TOYM body as a 'young, dynamic and original artist imbued with a global outlook for the understanding of the less fortunate and oppressed.'

Pacita is also the first and youngest woman to have given a retrospective exhibition in the Philippine museum.

Her appearance suggests a Westernised outlook and one can also easily see her love for colour, in the manner of

her dress.

Wearing a Bo Derek-like hairstyle, pink eye-shadow, pink lipstick and long purple earrings, she was swathed in a bright and colourful T-shirt.

"I am a colourist," she said. "I am inspired by the colourful tropical environment of the Philippines."

Art lovers who wish to enjoy the colourful world of Pacita should view her debut Hongkong exhibition at the Arts Centre. The exhibition lasts 20 days, starting today.

The displays include 26 oversized hung-on-pole trapuntoe paintings in attractive colours, 18 small paintings and 12 serigraph.

Trapuntoe, Pacita explained, is an Italian term meaning stuffing. A trapuntoe is normally used as a large wall hanging. The piece of art is highlighted with buttons and stitches for a three dimensional effect.

Most of her acrylic on canvas are non-figurative, but the colours speak the mood and spirit.

Inspiration for these paintings, Pacita said, came from the environment of the 65 countries she has travelled to. Subject matter revolves around tropical insects, animals and buildings.

Pacita says the willingness to try is the golden gate to sharpen a painter's skill.

"Working on big canvas has many advantages. It's more free and expressive. The works can also be hung on buildings to be seen by the public.

"Most of my works are unframed because art should also be felt and touched by viewers. In future, paintings should not be confined to walls."

The 40-year-old says that art entered her life only a decade ago when she studied history in San Francisco. To make both ends meet, she worked as a curator.

But it was the work in

the museum which had inspired her so much and she began to fall in love with art.

Having completed her master degree of history, she pursued art studies at Washington DC's Corcoran School of Art and The Art Students League of New York.

She started with figurative paintings using oil and charcoal. Subse-

quently she developed her works into the present form.

"I always wanted to meet people. So I studied law in the Philippines hoping to be a lawyer. But after I came into contact with art, my desire to be a painter was definite. A painter can reach a much wider range of people," she said.