

WALKER



Chronology of the Life and Work of Pacita Abad



Pacita Abad in scuba gear at the opening of her exhibition *Assaulting the Deep* at the Ayala Museum, Makati, Philippines, 1986. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate. Photo: Wig Tysmans.

Filed to [Sightlines](#)
Part of [Unapologetically Pacita](#)

Pacita Abad's life and work reveal an artist who regarded local traditions yet held a bold will to challenge global boundaries. With a needle or sketchbook always in hand, Abad's unique experience as a Filipina American artist traveling through more than 60 countries on six continents led her to reinvent the brilliant textures of the places she saw and retell the vivid stories of the people she met. This chronology was first published in the catalog for the exhibition *Pacita Abad* at the Walker Art Center on view from April 15th–September 3rd, 2023.

Pacita Barsana Abad is born in Basco, Batanes, on October 5. The small grouping of islands represents the smallest and northernmost province in the Philippines. Abad is the fifth of thirteen siblings born to her parents, Aurora Abad and Jorge Abad.

The United States recognizes the independence of the Republic of the Philippines after more than three hundred years of Spanish rule (1565–1898) and nearly a half century of American sovereignty (1898–1946).



Aurora and Jorge Abad with ten of their children, 1965. (front row, left to right): Victoria, Honorio, Florencio (Butch), and Martina; (back row, left to right): Jorge Jr., Bonifacio, Orenca (Rency), Pacita, Nicanor, and Bernardo. The youngest two siblings, Victor and Francisco, had not yet arrived. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1949

Jorge Abad, a professor of civil engineering, is elected to the Philippine House of Representatives. The Abad family moves from Batanes to Manila at the end of his first term. They return to Batanes for five months every two years for his reelection campaigns.

1961

A coalition of 120 majority developing countries not formally allied with the Warsaw Pact or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries establishes the Non-Aligned Movement. In 1995, Abad would participate in a major group exhibition titled Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries, organized by the National Gallery of Indonesia during the fiftieth anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia's independence. Curated by G. Sheikh, T. K. Sabapathy, A. Poshyananda, and Jim Supangkat, the exhibition features artists from over forty countries largely representing the Global South.

1962

After serving five terms in Congress, Jorge Abad is appointed secretary of public works and highways by President Diosdado Macapagal. Aurora Abad campaigns for her husband's seat and is elected to her first term in Congress.



Aurora Abad campaigning in Basco for governor of Batanes, 1986. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1964

Encouraged to follow in her parents' footsteps, Abad enters the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, Quezon City, where she studies political science.



Pacita Abad's graduation photo from the University of the Philippines, 1969. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1965

Ferdinand Marcos is elected president of the Philippines after representing the northern province of Ilocos Norte for three congressional terms (1949–59). After his inauguration, Marcos asks Jorge Abad to remain as secretary of public works and highways. Given his loyalty to the opposition party, Abad declines.

The US Immigration Act of 1965 abolishes the immigrant quotas based on national origin, leading to a new wave of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Decades later, Abad's ambitious body of work titled *Immigrant Experience* (1983–95) would center the lived experiences of immigrants of color.

Filipinx organizers Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz, Benjamin Gines, and Pete Velasco galvanize more than eight hundred farmworkers from ten grape vineyards in Delano, California, during the Delano Grape Strike.¹ In solidarity, the predominantly Mexican and Mexican American National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), led by Cesar Chavez, Julio Hernandez, and Gilbert Padilla, joins the strikes.

Over ten thousand protesters march through Berkeley and Oakland, California, against the Vietnam War.

1966

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale found the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California.

The anti-imperialist Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) is founded in Havana, in defense of human rights.

1967

Over one hundred thousand countercultural youths gather in San Francisco during what has been called the “Summer of Love.” The Haight-Ashbury district becomes the epicenter of the youth hippie counterculture, characterized by antiwar pacifism, the recreational use of mind-altering drugs, the creation of psychedelic rock, and sexual freedom. In *Loving v. Virginia*, the US Supreme Court rules antimiscegenation laws unconstitutional, ending nearly three centuries of the criminalization of sexual and marital relations between whites and non-whites.

The Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

1968

Pacita Abad graduates with a bachelor of arts degree in political science from UP. During her undergraduate years, she is active in the Batanes Youth Circle and other university clubs that promote civic participation. Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee found the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) at the University of California (UC) at Berkeley, coining the term “Asian American” as a distinct political identity.

Coalitions of students of African, Asian, Indigenous, and Latin American descent at San Francisco State College (present-day San Francisco State University) and UC Berkeley form the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) and protest the Eurocentric curricula at American universities. The two schools establish the first Asian American studies programs in the country that year.

More than 150 Chinese and Filipinx elders living at the International Hotel in San Francisco begin a nine-year-long anti-eviction campaign with grassroots, community, and student organizations.

1969

Abad begins her graduate law studies at UP.

Ferdinand Marcos runs for his second term as president. To cement his already-considerable popularity, he launches a \$50 million infrastructure project—largely funded by foreign debt. Time magazine calls the election the “dirtiest, most violent and most corrupt” in Philippine modern history, and the phrase “three Gs” was widely understood to reference the “guns, goons, and gold” by which Marcos won in a landslide.

Abad participates in her father's congressional reelection campaign in Batanes against Marcos party candidate Rufino Antonio. In the run-up to the election, a group of Suzuki Boys—named for the motorcycles they imported into and rode around Batanes—intimidate voters and tamper with ballot boxes. Antonio is declared the winner.

Abad and other students organize demonstrations in Manila to protest the fraudulent election, capturing the media's attention and inspiring student demonstrations elsewhere. In an act of retaliation, the Abad family home in Manila is machine-gunned at night. No one is hurt. The Commission on Elections and the Supreme Court of the Philippines rule in Jorge Abad's favor and declare him the winner.



Pacita Abad (seated, with handbag) and student demonstrators meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos (far right, seated at desk) after marching to Malacañang Palace, 1969. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) opens with California governor Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan in attendance. Widely perceived as First Lady Imelda Marcos's vanity project, the CCP is housed in a sprawling Brutalist-style complex with the aim of defining and promoting a nationalized Philippine art. Abad would exhibit works at the CCP twice, in 1985 and 2003.

1970

In what becomes known as the First Quarter Storm, Philippine student activists and workers protest rising inflation, increasing poverty, and rampant political corruption. The administration's violent dispersal tactics radicalize many—including Abad's siblings—against the Marcos regime.

Abad leaves Manila with the intent of finishing her law degree in Madrid. On the way to Spain, she visits an aunt in San Francisco. After deciding to apply to graduate programs in the United States, she works part-time as a secretary for a foundation providing medical care and refugee assistance in Laos, Cambodia, and Nepal. She also takes in work as a seamstress.



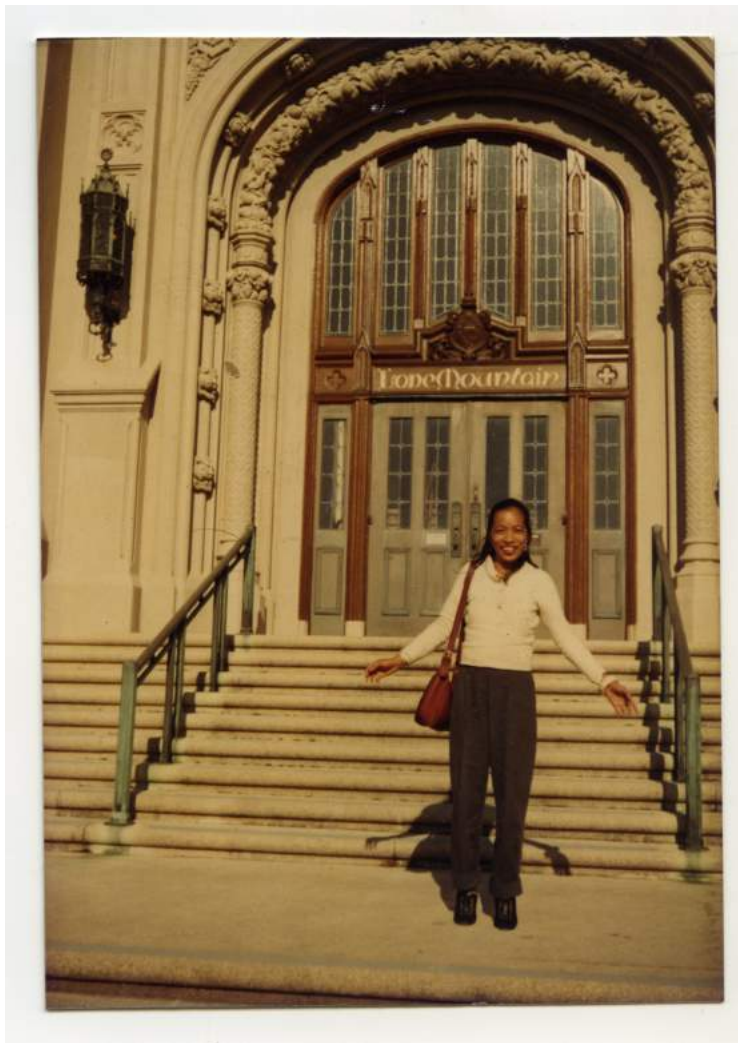
Pacita Abad, wearing a bright yellow crocheted shawl, riding a cable car in San Francisco, 1971. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

As a result of the debt-funded infrastructure spending during his reelection campaign, Marcos enters into an unpopular debt-restructuring deal with the International Monetary Fund.

1971

Abad enters the master's program in history at Lone Mountain College (later acquired by the University of San Francisco) where she writes her thesis on Philippine history, titled, "The Role of Emilio Aguinaldo in the Acquisition of the Philippines by the United States from Spain: 1898." She becomes aware of Asian American social and political organizing in the Bay Area and is part of a group of students that invites labor organizer Larry Itliong to speak at an event in San Francisco.

Abad meets painter George Kleiman. They marry and later live in the Haight-Ashbury district. Though the two would separate shortly after, Abad credits Kleiman with introducing her to the art world.



Pacita Abad at Lone Mountain College, San Francisco, 1971. Courtesy Pactita Abad Art Estate.

1972

Marcos declares martial law, prohibiting public demonstrations, restricting media, and shutting down both chambers of Congress. Over the course of fourteen years, his administration would target political dissidents, including opposition leaders, journalists, student activists, and farmworkers, leading to mass incarceration and extrajudicial killings. Abad's brother Florencio (Butch) is arrested in 1978 and again in 1980 with his wife, Dina.

1973

After completing her master of arts degree at Lone Mountain College, Abad applies to law school and receives a scholarship to attend the UC Berkeley School of Law. A month later, Abad attends a regional World Affairs Conference in Monterey, California, where she meets Jack Garrity, a graduate student from Boston studying international finance at Stanford University.

Abad decides to defer her law school acceptance and travel across Asia with Garrity for a year. The couple begins hitchhiking overland from Turkey to the Philippines, passing through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Abad collects and wears traditional fabrics and jewelry throughout their journey.

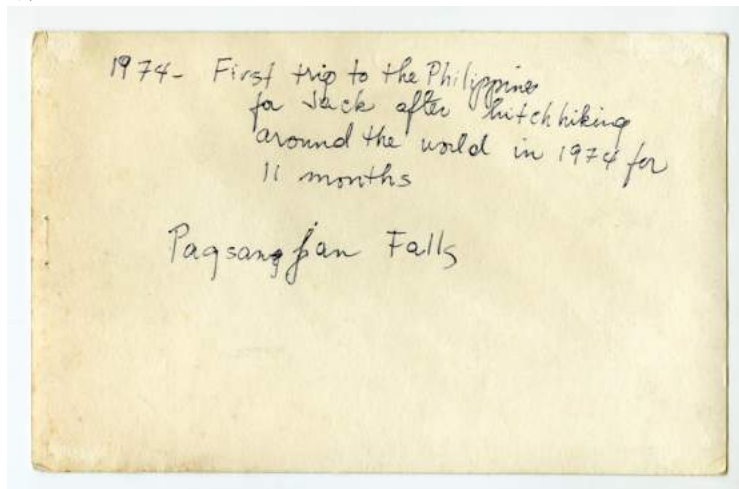
1974

Arriving in the Philippines after four years abroad, Abad and Garrity explore her native country for two months. In the mountainous region of northern Luzon, known as the Cordilleras, Abad visits Ifugao, Bontoc, and Kalinga Indigenous peoples and meets photographer Eduardo Masferré, who would later sell native sculptures to Abad from his own collection.

In the Muslim regions of Marawi, Cotabato, and Zamboanga in Mindanao, Abad meets Maranao, T'boli, Manobo, Yakan, and Sama peoples and becomes inspired by native textile traditions such as the T'boli t'nalak weave. Abad and Garrity return to California and move into a cabin on the outskirts of Palo Alto while Garrity finishes his studies.



Pacita Abad and Jack Garrity traveling by boat through Pagsanjan Falls, Philippines, 1974.



Abad's handwritten photo caption on the reverse. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

Abad forgoes her law school scholarship and, to the surprise of her family and friends, begins painting. Marcos enacts the Labor Code of the Philippines, creating three government agencies for the recruitment and placement of migrant workers abroad, or “overseas Filipino workers” (OFW). Abad later makes the trapunto painting *Torments of a Filipino Overseas Worker* (1995) as part of her *Immigrant Experience* series (1983–95).

1975

Abad and Garrity move to Tours, France, where Garrity finishes his last semester at Stanford and plays ice hockey professionally. Later, they travel to Egypt, Greece, and Italy.

1976

Garrity starts a new job in the Congressional Budget Office, and the couple moves to Washington, DC. Abad takes painting classes for the first time at the Corcoran School of Art. She also works as a research assistant at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

At the end of the year, Abad and Garrity go to Guatemala for a monthlong trip, and she starts painting churches, Mayan ruins, and rural villages. Before returning, she trades her Western-style clothes for handwoven huipil blouses and dresses bought at Mayan village markets.

1977

Abad meets neighbor Alma Thomas, the sole Black woman artist of the Washington Color School, and visits her home and studio. Thomas later sees Abad’s paintings and encourages her to keep working at her craft.

Abad stages her first exhibition of early paintings at her Fifteenth Street, Washington, DC, home and studio.

Abad and Garrity move to New York City. She studies anatomy, still life, and figurative painting at the Art Students League of New York with John Heliker and Robert Beverly Hale.

1978

Abad and Garrity move to Dhaka, Bangladesh, where Garrity works for one year as a transport economist. Abad meets Syed Jahangir at the Shilpakala Academy and encounters the work of artist Zainul Abedin, who famously depicted the famines in Bengal during the region’s colonial period and fight for independence.

Abad travels by boat, car, bus, and rickshaw, painting landscapes and people in the cities and villages of Bangladesh. At the end of the year, she meets journalists reporting on the Teknaf refugee camp and learns about the plight of the Rohingya refugees fleeing Burma (now Myanmar).

Abad meets textile artist and designer Surayia Rahman, known for empowering women affected by poverty and war, who introduces her to the stitched art of kantha.

Abad travels to Burma and meets the Chakma peoples, noting the parallels between their textiles and those of the Indigenous peoples of the northern and southern Philippines.

Abad travels to countries in the region and visits a Tibetan refugee camp in Nepal, where she sees monks roll and carry painted and appliquéd Buddhist thangka paintings. These rolled paintings would later inform Abad's peripatetic studio practice.

Abad visits Rabindranath Tagore's house-turned-museum in Calcutta, whose modernist style is inspired by malanggan (New Ireland) and Haida woodcarving. These encounters encourage Abad's growing interest in social realism and, later, the incorporation of Indigenous material traditions into her artworks.

Abad's father passes away unexpectedly, and she returns to Manila for the funeral.

On her return to Dhaka, Bangladesh, she holds an exhibition of paintings at her Dhanmondi studio.

Abad shows her Bangladesh paintings at the Manila Garden Hotel in her first exhibition in the Philippines.

1979

Garrity's work brings the couple to Sudan for three months. Abad paints landscapes and portraits in Juba, Khartoum, Omdurman, and Wau.

Curator Abdullah Shibrain invites Abad to show these paintings at the Exhibition Hall in Khartoum.

The couple moves to Bangkok, where Abad shows her paintings of Sudan at the city's Oriental Hotel. She paints scenes of temples and markets.



Pacita Abad at the opening of the exhibition *The People of Wau* at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, 1979. The artist wears a tie-dyed dress from Nairobi, Kenya. Her painting *Abuk and Tong* (1979) is visible behind her. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

The Cambodian Civil War causes a humanitarian crisis. Hundreds of thousands of Cambodians seek refuge at the Thai border. Abad sketches and paints portraits of those fleeing Pol Pot's brutal regime. These works form the *Cambodian Refugee* series (1979–80), and she exhibits them in Bangkok at the Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art.

Abad's younger sister Victoria visits the couple and joins an NGO that provides medical aid to Cambodian refugees in camps along the Thai border.

1980

Abad and Garrity move to Sudan for another two-month assignment. Abad and Garrity move to Boston for the next two years while Garrity pursues graduate studies in economics at Boston University. Abad produces her first prints and lithographs while working at the Art Institute of Boston.

Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr., leader of the Philippine pro-democracy party Lakas ng Bayan, gains momentum and becomes Marcos’s most vocal critic. Aquino suffers a heart attack and seeks treatment in the United States, where he spends the next three years in exile near Boston. Abad meets with members of the Aquino family during this time. Military forces under the command of Ferdinand Marcos assassinate Macli’ing Dulag, a leader of the Butbut peoples, known for his opposition to the Chico River Dam project in northern Luzon.

1981

Abad meets weekly with a group of women artists: Maria Fang, Barbara Newman, and Joanna Kao. With guidance from Newman, who made figurative soft sculptures, puppets, and dolls, Abad experiments with stitching and stuffing her two-dimensional works, resulting in a novel technique she calls “trapunto.”

Abad creates her first trapunto painting, *African Mephisto*, which begins her *Masks and Spirits* series. The figure’s dress is inspired by woven baskets she collected in Omdurman, Sudan.

Abad receives a three-month artist residency at Altos de Chavón in the Dominican Republic and exhibits portraits of working people in the exhibition Streets of Santo Domingo. She travels to Haiti and is influenced by Afro-Caribbean textile traditions, particularly the sequined Drapo Vodou (voodoo flag).

1982

After a twelve-year absence, Abad returns to Manila for the next four years while Garrity works for the Asian Development Bank, overseeing projects in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and South Korea. After traveling through the highlands of Papua New Guinea, Abad begins a series of trapunto paintings inspired by the peoples of Goroka, Lae, Mount Hagen, and Madang. She integrates her trapunto paintings with locally sourced cowrie shells, bones, and feathers. In Indonesia, she learns about traditional shadow puppets, or wayang, which will become a major motif in her paintings.

1983

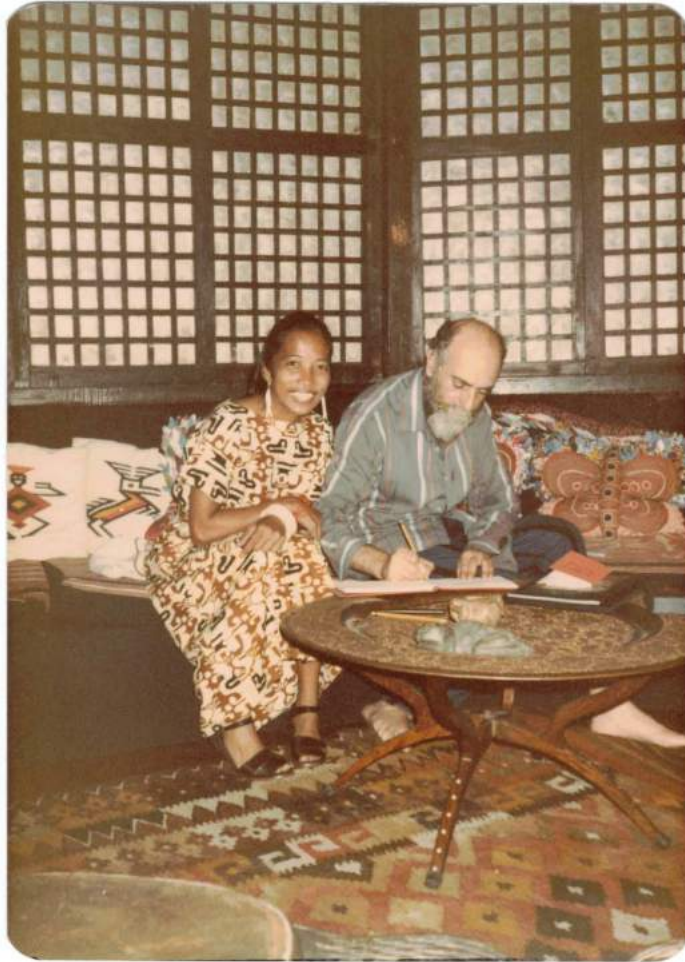
Marcos government conspirators assassinate Benigno Aquino on the tarmac of Manila International Airport. Enraged, Abad retreats to her Manila studio and paints *Death of Ninoy*, where it hangs during her time in the Philippines.



Pacita Abad with her painting *Death of Ninoy* (1983). Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1984

Abad opens her first major solo show, *Pacita Abad: A Philippine Painter Looks at the World*, curated by Arturo Luz at the Museum of Philippine Art (MOPA), Manila. It includes over 120 works inspired by her travels to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sudan, Thailand, and the Philippines. Abad and Garrity travel to New York and see the exhibition "*Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*" at the Museum of Modern Art. The two question the exhibition's Eurocentric bias and ethnographic view of non-Western artists. Abad hosts Austrian painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser, a survivor of Nazi Germany, at her studio during his visit to Manila. Abad and Hundertwasser find that they share interests in animism, environmentalism, and the plight of war refugees.



Pacita Abad sits with artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

On a layover during a flight from Manila to San Francisco, immigration officials apprehend Abad in Hawaii and detain her in Oakland, California. US authorities release her the next day after determining they have falsely accused her of possessing a fake green card.

1985

Abad receives the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of the Philippines award. She controversially becomes the first woman in TOYM's twenty-six-year history to receive the honor.



Pacita Abad (center) celebrating her Ten Outstanding Young Men Award with family and friends in Manila, 1984. To her right is her mother, Aurora; to her left, Jack Garrity and her brother Jun. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

Abad shows ten of her “political expressions” paintings, including *Death of Ninoy*, at Pinaglaban Galleries, in Manila. She meets Philippine artists Santiago Bose, BenCab (Benedicto Reyes Cabrera), Impy Pilapil, Gus Albor, Fernando Modesto, Nestor Vinluan, Filimon “Fil” Delacruz, Manuel Baldemor, Jerry Araos, Phyllis Zaballero, Paz Abad Santos, and Agnes Arellano, among others.

Abad travels with Garrity to Seoul and learns *sumukhwa*, or ink brush painting, a traditional style noted for its subtle, monochromatic palette and nature symbolism. Her trip leads to a series of abstract *trapunto* paintings based on repeated rice stalk patterns.

While joining Garrity in Sri Lanka, Abad starts the seventeen-foot-high *trapunto* painting *Marcos and His Cronies*, based on a Sinhalese exorcism mask of the demon *Maha Kola*. It will take her ten years to complete the work. Surrounded by eighteen masked figures representing various corrupt cabinet members, Marcos is depicted devouring the Philippine people. The mask representing his wife, Imelda, is studded with costume jewelry.

Her solo exhibition *Pacita Abad: Paintings of People and Landscapes of Batanes*, curated by Ray Albano, opens at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).



Pacita Abad piecing together the painted fabric panels that would become *Marcos and His Cronies* (1985–95), at the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1984. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1986

Abad returns to Washington, DC, with Garrity, who starts working for the World Bank.

Along Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) in Manila, over two million citizens hold three days of nonviolent demonstrations against electoral fraud and decades of state brutality. The People Power Revolution, or EDSA Revolution, succeeds in removing Marcos and his supporters from Malacañang Palace. The Marcos family flees to Hawaii. Ninoy Aquino's widow, Corazon Aquino, becomes the eleventh president of the Philippines.

Abad returns to Manila and shows *Assaulting the Deep Sea*, an immersive installation at the Ayala Museum, in Makati, Philippines, that features large-scale trapunto paintings of underwater scenes inspired by her more than eighty dives among many of the Philippine islands.



Pacita Abad in scuba gear at the opening of her exhibition *Assaulting the Deep* at the Ayala Museum, Makati, Philippines, 1986. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate. Photo: Wig Tysmans.

Abad exhibits at the 2nd Havana Biennial, which brings together the work of nearly seven hundred artists from fifty-six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. There, she meets artists Leon Golub, Juan Sanchez, Marina Gutierrez, Josely Carvalho, May Stevens, and the Guerrilla Girls, as well as critic Lucy Lippard.

With Filipino Americans Anita Marina, Leonor (Noree) Aureus Briscoe, and Jon Melegrito, Abad founds the Philippine Arts, Letters, and Media Council (PALM) in Washington, DC.

1987

Abad travels to Mexico and sees the works of Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, Francisco Zuniga, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rufino Tamayo, and Frida Kahlo—artists known for their national populist styles that integrate regionalist visual traditions.

Abad participates in the International Art Show for the End of World Hunger, a four-year traveling exhibition that goes to museums in eighteen countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

Abad befriends neighbor Loïs Mailou Jones (1905–1998), an artist who blends Indigenous African and Caribbean imagery into her textiles, paintings, and designs. The two artists share stories of their travels in France, Africa, and Haiti.

1988

In conjunction with the 1988 Summer Olympics held in Seoul, Abad is one of one hundred international painters invited to exhibit at the Olympiad of Art at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. She exhibits her trapunto painting *Trapo*. Abad teaches the classes *Trapunto Painting: Canvas Collage and Art to Wear* at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Abad meets fellow Filipino American artist Alfonso Ossorio at the Creeks, a mansion in East Hampton, New York, housing the artist's studio and his massive and intricate assemblages of natural and industrial materials. Both Abad's and Ossorio's works incorporate objects from their global travels.



Pacita Abad with artist Alfonso Ossorio. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.
Abad creates costumes for the play *Lola Ita's Tales of Enchantment* at the Apple Core Theater, New York.

1989

Abad participates in the 3rd Havana Biennial along with three hundred artists from forty-one countries.

1990

In New York, the New Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem open the exhibition *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s*. It includes more than ninety-four artists who challenge notions of sexuality, race, gender, religion, and politics and reflect on how these issues have shaped what sociologist James Davidson Hunter would soon call the “culture wars.” Abad wins the Metro Art Award and installs a fifty-foot mural entitled *Masks from Six Continents* at the Metro Center subway station in Washington, DC, which remains on public display for three years.



Photograph of Pacita Abad's *Masks from Six Continents* (1990–93) at the Metro Center, Washington, DC, 1990. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

Abad receives the first of three artist residencies at the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, during which she creates lithographs, woodcuts, and pulp-paper works. She produces the lithographs *African Mephisto*, *If My Friends Could See Me Now*, and *Filipina: A Racial Identity Crisis* with Eileen Foti.

Abad travels to the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Jordan and experiments with sand paintings.

1991

Abad's mother passes away. A lifelong inspiration to the artist, Aurora Abad ran their household of twelve children and at times housed and fed fifty other students; she represented Batanes as both congresswoman and governor.

Abad receives two artist-in-residence fellowships at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center in Hyattsville, Maryland, where she creates prints and paper-pulp collages. She produces a large-scale woodblock print with Helen Frederick.

Abad becomes a member of the board of directors for the Alternative Museum, in New York; Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, in Washington, DC; and Arlington Arts Center, in Virginia.

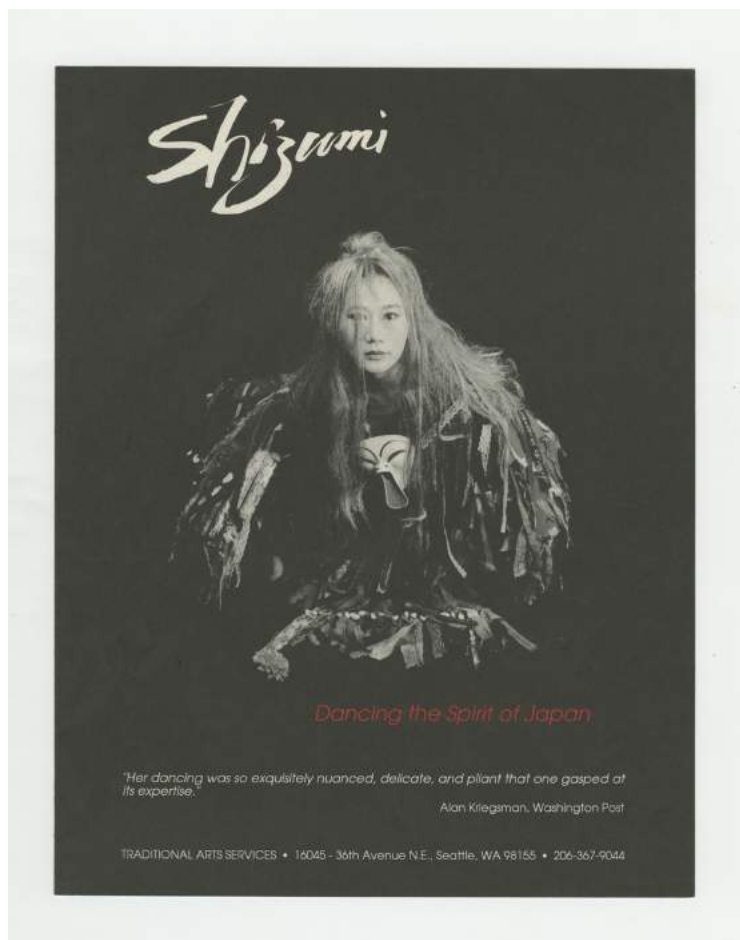
Abad travels to Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and South Africa and works on small, handmade-paper collages, paints on bark, and learns how to make mud-cloth textiles.

After learning of the detention of tens of thousands of Central American men, women, and children fleeing violence at the US southern border, she paints *Caught at the Border*.

1992

A jury acquits the four police officers who beat motorist Rodney King, sparking violent conflicts between Black, Latinx, and Korean American communities in what has become known as the Los Angeles Riots. One year later, Abad creates the work *Korean Shopkeepers*.

Abad creates costumes for the Pacific Bridge Theater Company play *Long after Love*, performed at the Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.



Brochure featuring the dancer Shizumi, wearing a costume designed by Pacita Abad in Yukio Mishima's *Long after Love*, performed at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Asian Art in 1992. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

The Kennebunkport Order forcibly repatriates thousands of refugees to war-torn Haiti. Abad begins her trapunto painting *Haitians Waiting* at Guantanamo Bay.

Abad produces the work *L.A. Liberty*, depicting the likeness of the Statue of Liberty as a brown-skinned woman. During a visit to Ellis Island in New York, she recognizes that the more than one million immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America—many of whom first landed at Angel Island in San Francisco Bay—have been excluded from the story of American immigration.



Pacita Abad and her friend Miriam Vermeiren with *L.A. Liberty* (1992) on the occasion of Abad's exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, 1994. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1993

Along with artists Hung Liu, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Howardena Pindell, and Joyce J. Scott, Abad participates in the group exhibition *Women's Spirit* at Bomani Gallery, San Francisco. The exhibition will become notable for presenting work by five women artists of color who would each receive critical attention decades later.

Abad takes part in the group exhibition *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art*, curated by Margo Machida and organized by the Asia Society Galleries in New York. Exploring how politics and history shape selfhood, the exhibition features twenty artists including Marlon Fuentes, Manuel Ocampo, Zarina, Tseng Kwong Chi, and others. Its extensive tour includes the Tacoma Art Museum, in Washington; Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis; Honolulu Academy of Arts, in Hawaii; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, in San Francisco; MIT List Visual Arts Center, in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the Blaffer Gallery, at the University of Houston, Texas.



Installation view of the exhibition *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* (1994, organized by the Asia Society Galleries, New York) at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1995. On the wall at the back are two of Pacita Abad's trapunto paintings, *I Thought the Streets Were Paved with Gold* (1991) and *How Mali Lost Her Accent* (1991), which appeared alongside works by Hung Liu, Tseng Kwong Chi, and Zarina. Photo: Barbara Economon for Walker Art Center.

Abad participates in the group exhibition *Beyond the Borders: Art by Recent Immigrants*, curated by Betti-Sue Hertz, Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York. The exhibition showcases the impact of immigrants on American culture and features works by thirty artists, including Shirin Neshat, Mo Bahr, Dinh Le, and Allan deSouza.

Abad participates in the group exhibition *Touch: Beyond the Visual*, curated by Angela Adams and Paula Owen. Organized by the Hand Workshop, Richmond, Virginia, the exhibition features works by twenty artists, including Joyce J. Scott, John McQueen, and Renée Stout, who use unconventional materials to explore multisensory experience and illusion.

Abad conducts painting workshops for elderly Alzheimer's patients in Maryland nursing homes. She gives workshops on trapunto painting at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, in Richmond, and at art centers throughout the state.

Abad moves to Jakarta, Indonesia, where Garrity starts working for the Indonesian conglomerate Gajah Tunggal Group.

1994

Abad travels throughout Indonesia and continues working on her series based on traditional Indonesian wayang puppetry, incorporating batik and ikat elements. She researches the Ramayana and Mahabharata in Indonesia and spends time with the puppet masters (dalang) Tizar Purbaya, in Jakarta, and Ki Sigit Sukasman, in Yogyakarta. Over the next fifteen years, she will create more than one hundred wayang paintings. Later, in 2000, James de Rave of Kedaung Ceramics commissions Abad to hand paint a limited-edition, 144-piece dinnerware set based on her paintings of wayang kulit.

Abad is officially naturalized as a US citizen and is sworn in at the Washington Monument.

The artist is featured in a CBS television documentary called *Pacita Abad: Wild at Art*, directed by Kavery Kaul and produced by Asian Women United, in San Francisco, an organization founded in 1976 that seeks to represent Asian American women's experiences through writing and film. Abad receives a fellowship from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and begins work on her series *Immigrant Experience*. She later presents these paintings in a solo exhibition titled *Pacita Abad: Artists + Community*, curated by Angela Adams, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, in Washington, DC.



Pacita Abad leading a workshop for students at Oyster Bilingual Elementary School, Washington, DC, 1994, on the occasion of her exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate. Photo: Rick Reinhard.

1995

With artist Paz Abad Santos, Abad holds a joint exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila entitled *Thinking Big*, showing a selection of trapunto paintings across her career, including works from the *Abstractions*, *Immigrant Experience*, and *Masks and Spirits* series. Curated by Cora Alvina, the exhibition includes *Marcos and His Cronies (1985-95)*.

Flor Contemplacion, an overseas Filipina worker (OFW), is sentenced to death in Singapore after unsupported charges of murder. This case sheds light on the abuses of Filipinx domestic workers abroad. Abad creates the trapunto painting *Contemplating Flor*. Hong Kong has a large community of OFWs who live in poverty and face daily discrimination. Frustrated by their lack of political representation and government support, Abad creates *Filipinas in Hong Kong*.

Abad receives an Excellence 2000 Award for the Arts given by the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC.

1996

Abad participates in *Memories of Overdevelopment: Philippine Diaspora in Contemporary Art*, at the University Art Gallery, University of California, Irvine. Curated by Pamela Bailey, Cirilo Domine, Vicente Golveo, Catherine Lord, and Yong Soon Min, the exhibition takes place one hundred years after the Philippine Revolution against Spain and after fifty years of independence from the United States.

The artist is selected to participate in the US State Department's Art in Embassies program. US embassies in Asia and Africa hang six of Abad's trapunto paintings, including those from her Immigrant Experience and Asian Abstractions series.

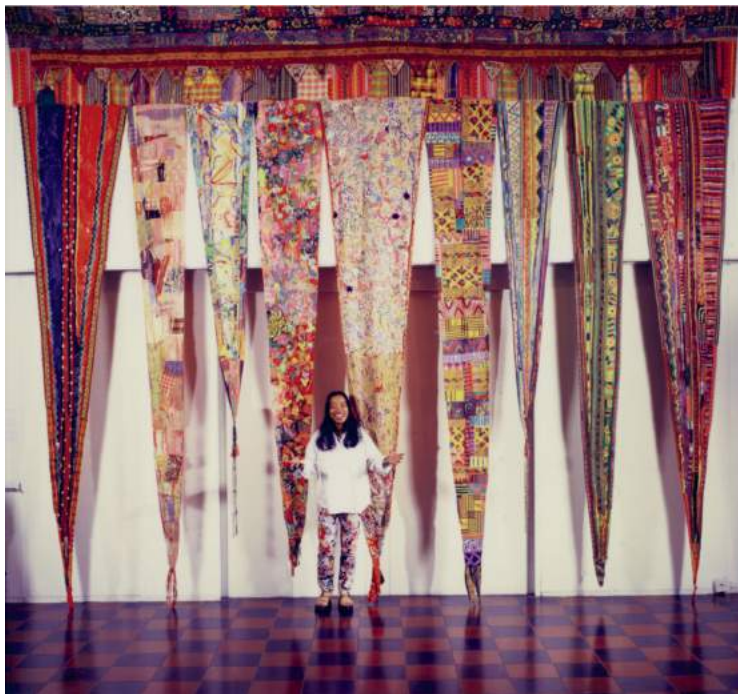
1997

Abad travels through Java, Sumatra, Sumba, and Sulawesi, gathering materials for her batik and ikat paintings. She participates in the World Batik Exhibition in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, demonstrating the deep influence of batik on her artistic practice.

1998

Indonesia's President Suharto resigns following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which leads to the extreme devaluation of the rupiah. As mass riots break out in Jakarta, Abad sketches the makeshift barricades and the city's burned-down Chinese shops and banks. Over six months, Abad creates the monumental abstract trapunto painting *The Sky Is Falling, the Sky Is Falling*.

Abad participates in Bayan, a centennial celebration of Philippine independence at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila, curated by Cora Alvina, where she shows *100 Years of Freedom: From Batanes to Jolo*. The large-scale artwork incorporates textile fragments from every province of the Philippines.



Pacita Abad at the opening of her exhibition *Abstract Emotions*, at the National Museum, Jakarta, Indonesia, with *100 Years of Freedom: From Batanes to Jolo*, 1998. Abad participates in the group exhibition *At Home and Abroad: 20 Contemporary Filipino Artists*, which opens at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and travels to the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, and the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. The exhibition explores the complexities of heritage and race embodied by Philippine identity and includes work by artists Santiago Bose, Paul Pfeiffer, Stephanie Syjuco, Lani Maestro, and Dindo Llana, among others.



(left to right) Gaston Damag, Paul Pfeiffer, Pacita Abad, Stephanie Syjuco, and Didi Dee in San Francisco, 1998. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

1999

Abad creates costumes for the play *Luna: Comic Drama and Art to Wear*, produced by Gilda Cordero Fernando and directed by Manny Chaves at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

2000

Abad spends three months in Rajasthan, India, where she is inspired by its textile, culinary, and garment traditions. She begins a group of works that incorporates beads, mirrors, buttons, tin, and elaborate embroidery in a group of works that she calls *The Sky Is the Limit*.

Abad receives the Pamana ng Pilipino Award in Manila for outstanding achievement in the arts.

Abad moves to Singapore after seven years in Jakarta.

2001

Abad visits Myanmar for six weeks and makes work inspired by the country's architecture, peoples, and culture.

Abad and Garrity start building a new studio and home in Batanes, situated on a cliff overlooking the West Philippine Sea. The building's thick limestone and coral-colored walls incorporate elements of traditional Ivatan architecture. The couple call their new home Fundacion Pacita.

Abad becomes an artist-in-residence at Lindshammar Glassworks, Sweden, where she learns to paint glass.

On the way to Texas to start her residency at the Southwest School of Art and Craft in San Antonio, Abad stops in New York to visit Ground Zero two weeks after the September 11 attacks. She creates three commemorative murals as part of the *9/11 Phoenix Project* in collaboration with thirty local women artists.

Abad goes to Washington, DC, where she learns that she has advanced lung cancer.

2002

Abad returns to Singapore and undergoes chemotherapy and radiotherapy. While undergoing the treatments, she begins the last of her large-scale trapunto paintings, called the *Endless Blues* series. Abad exhibits these works in a solo exhibition entitled *The Sky Is the Limit* at the Esplanade in Singapore.



The Sky Is Falling, the Sky Is Falling (1998) being installed at the Singapore Esplanade, 2002. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

2003

Kenneth Tyler, a key figure in postwar American printmaking, opens the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI). Abad is one of the first artists selected for a three-month residency. She creates *Circles in My Mind*, a series of fifty-six mixed-media paper works incorporating lithography, relief, screenprinting, and hand-colored paper pulp.



Pacita Abad and Pio Abad with Singapore Tyler Print Institute master papermaker Rick Hungerford (left) at the University of the Philippines, Quezon City, 2004. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

While at STPI, she conceives of the idea to paint the nearby 180-foot-long Alkaff Bridge spanning the Singapore River. The Singapore government approves her proposal at the end of the year.



Pacita Abad's ArtBridge, Singapore, 2004. Courtesy Pacita Abad Art Estate.

2004

While undergoing radiotherapy treatment, Abad works with a team to paint the once-gray Alkaff Bridge. Inaugurated on January 29, the bridge —now known as the Singapore ArtBridge—includes fifty-five colors and 2,350 painted circles.

Abad travels to the Philippines in September to open her final exhibition, *Circles in My Mind*, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, surrounded by family and friends.

Abad returns to Batanes to finish her last paintings at Fundacion Pacita. She returns to Singapore due to her rapidly deteriorating health.

On December 7, Pacita Abad passes away in Singapore after a three-year battle with cancer.

Through Fundacion Pacita, Abad's family helps promote the growing and vibrant community of artists in Batanes to this day.



Pacita Abad's former home and studio, Fundacion Pacita, is dedicated to this day to the growing community of artists in Batanes. Rjruiiii, CC BY-SA 3.0 , via Wikimedia Commons. Photo: Opal Bala.

Compiled by Matthew Villar Miranda, in consultation with the Pacita Abad Art Estate, from archival materials, published interviews, and firsthand conversations with the artist's collaborators, friends, and family.

ENDNOTES

1. *Textile Collages: Pacita Abad's Painted Textiles*. Pacita Abad Art Estate, https://issuu.com/pacitaabad/docs/painted_textile_collages_by_jkgarri?fr=sNjVIMTE0OTg3NDg, 18. ↩
2. *Pacita Abad*, Victoria Sung, ed., exh catalog (Walker Art Center: Minneapolis, 2023), p. 28. ↩

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