

Pacita Abad's Plunge into the Deep

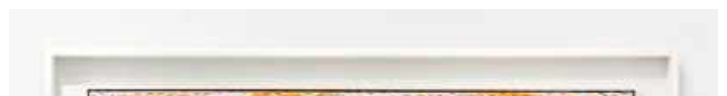
27 JUNE 2024 | EXHIBITIONS



Pacita Abad, *The Far Side of Apo Island* (1989). Oil, acrylic, gold thread, plastic buttons, lace, sequins on stitched and padded canvas. 224.8 x 175.3 cm. Courtesy Tina Kim Gallery, New York.



Pacita Abad, *Portuguese man o' war* (1986). Acrylic, gauze, yarn on canvas. 180 x 58 cm. Courtesy Tina Kim Gallery, New York.





Pacita Abad, *Hundred Islands* (1989). Oil, acrylic, glitter, gold thread, buttons, lace, sequins on stitched and padded canvas. 200.7 x 299.7 cm. Courtesy Tina Kim Gallery, New York.



Pacita Abad, *Brown fish* (2000). Oil, sequins stitched on canvas. 72 x 95 cm. Courtesy Tina Kim Gallery, New York.

Dorian Batycka [described Pacita Abad](#) in 2020 as 'undoubtedly a world citizen, her legacy resonating far beyond the place where she was born'. But only in the past few years has Abad's work been shown extensively in the U.S., where she spent much of her life.

The late artist's retrospective travelled around major U.S. institutions including Walker Art Center, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and [MoMA PS1](#). This year she is included in the [Venice Biennale](#)'s central exhibition, *Foreigners Everywhere*, cementing her global recognition.

Now, Abad's prismatic canvases are on view at [Tina Kim Gallery, New York](#), in the solo exhibition [Underwater Wilderness](#) (27 June–16 August 2024).

After nearly drowning as a child, the Filipino American artist overcame her fear of water by learning to dive in Thailand in the 1980s. She became a proficient scuba diver, completing 80 dives around various Philippine islands.

These underwater adventures inspired a series of large-scale paintings that capture the immersive aquatic world. Often named after dive locations or exotic creatures she discovered, these works depict the sea's vibrant colours, vastness, and diversity.

Abad's paintings were never flat; she aimed to capture the movement and textures beneath the ocean's surface. This led her to develop trapunto, a quilting technique that creates a three-dimensional effect by hand-stitching and stuffing two layers of cloth.

Painted and adorned with sequins, beads, buttons, and shells collected from her travels, her works highlight her meticulous attention to detail and continuous exploration of new mediums, techniques, and materials.

Underwater Wilderness coincides with Abad's retrospective at MoMA PS1 (4 April–2 September 2024), which will travel to the [Art Gallery of Ontario](#), Toronto, this fall (9 October 2024–19 January 2025).



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ARTIST PROFILE

Pacita Abad

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