

Pacita Abad exhibition to open at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila



adobo magazine • November 24, 2024 • 0 comments • 174 likes • 3 minutes read



📷 Pacita Abad, Photo Courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate

MANILA, PHILIPPINES — *Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter* is a new exhibition opening on November 28, 2024 at the **Metropolitan Museum of Manila** (The M Museum) that takes a bold, fresh look at the late artist Pacita Abad's formative years, positioning her firmly as a Filipino painter, first and foremost. The Batanes-born artist herself stated in a 1985 interview that while her peripatetic life, which took her to over 60 countries around the world, influenced her work greatly, "...I'd rather be known as a Filipino painter, wherever I am."

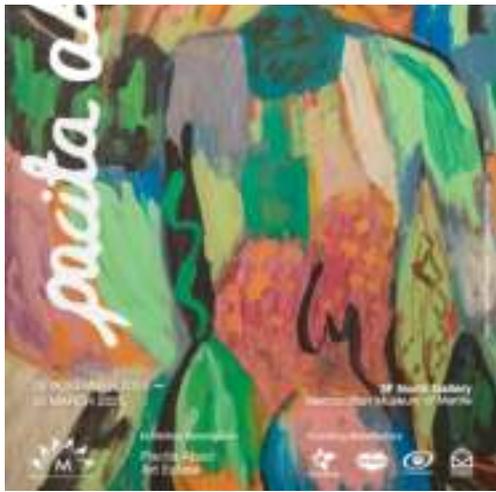
In *Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter*, curator **Clarissa Chikiamco** focuses on the first 10 years of Pacita's artistic practice, from 1976, the year she began her formal art studies at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., to 1986, the last year she was based in Manila after returning to the Philippines in 1982. Drawing entirely from local collections, the show traces Pacita's growing confidence and motivations as a Philippine painter active at home and overseas.

Pacita described herself as "a colorist more than anything else, and an expressionist." The exhibition showcases her confidence in using color to express not just herself, but her Filipino identity.



Included are the series of vibrant still-life paintings she produced while taking art classes at The Art Students' League in New York in 1977, as well as works inspired by





Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter

28 November 2024 – 30 March 2025

3F North Gallery, Metropolitan Museum of Manila

her many travels. From 1976 to 1982, Pacita traveled to Guatemala, Nepal, Myanmar, Kenya, Sudan, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. She and her husband Jack Garrity, an economist, relocated several times, to Bangladesh, Thailand, and the United States. Exposure to new cultures and people were fonts of inspiration that also deepened her sense of social responsibility, which was reflected in her work – something she also attributed to her Philippine background.

Her later works in the exhibition pay homage to her native country; back home she found renewed artistic stimulation, seeing the country “through the eyes of a painter.” The couple moved back to Manila in 1982 with the Asian Development Bank, and remained in the Philippines until 1986.

By then, Pacita had developed her special technique of trapunto painting, which she began in 1981. She painted canvases, often large, then stuffed and hand-stitched them. She also sewed other materials, such as buttons, ribbons, and shells onto the works, assisted by her sister Rency Baroña.

Until recently, Philippine museums and galleries were the primary patrons of Pacita’s work. Major international museums, particularly in Europe and North America, overlooked her practice, despite Pacita sending more than a hundred proposals offering to exhibit her paintings.

Global recognition came posthumously, following a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design in Manila in 2018. Since 2020, her work has been in international biennials, most recently in Venice, as well as solo museum exhibitions in Bristol, Dubai, Minneapolis, San Francisco, New York, and Toronto. Her paintings are in more than 50 museum collections around the world.



Pacita Abad by Willa Zakin, Courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate



Pacita Abad Self Portrait, 1985, Metropolitan Museum of Manila Collection



Pacita Batanes 1985, Courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate

Clarissa noted, “While Pacita had an international practice, the Philippines remained deeply influential to her work. Major cultural institutions in the Philippines were among the first to give her due recognition during her lifetime and after her death. Now that she has reached global acclaim, it is timely to remember and celebrate her as a Philippine painter through an exhibition in her home country.”

The Pacita Abad Estate said in a statement, “*Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter* at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila commemorates the 20th anniversary of her passing and marks a homecoming for Pacita, following a hugely successful touring retrospective, that opened at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in April 2023, and subsequently travelled to SFMoMA in San Francisco, MoMA PS1 in New York City and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, where it will conclude in January 2025.”

“Returning home was always important to Pacita. However many countries she traversed and cities she exhibited in, she always made time to bring her work to Manila and to a Filipino audience. This exhibition continues that spirit of homecoming and revisits important early works, many unseen for over three decades, that Pacita made during her multiple returns to the Philippines.”

The **M Museum President Tina Colayco** added, “With Pacita Abad currently showing in Toronto, and at three other galleries in New York and Switzerland, we are proud to have this tribute exhibition honoring our very own Filipino artist, who is part of our permanent collection, on her 20th death anniversary. While her *trapuntos* have been widely exhibited overseas in recent years, her early paintings are equally powerful and evocative, and reveal a painter of extraordinary talent and confidence.”

Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter runs from November 28, 2024 to March 30, 2025.

#Metropolitan Museum of Manila

#Pacita Abad

#The M Museum