

Alison Jacques now represents Pacita Abad

[Mark Westall](#)



Pacita Abad working in her studio ©? Pacita Abad Art Estate

[Alison Jacques](#) has announced representation of the Pacita Abad Art Estate, in partnership with Tina Kim Gallery in New York and Silverlens in Manila. Pacita Abad's (b.1946; Batanes, Philippines; d.2004, Singapore) first solo exhibition at the gallery will take place in 2027.

Speaking about her practice, Filipino American artist Pacita Abad once stated,

'I truly believe that, as an artist, I have a social responsibility for my painting, to try and make our world a little better'.

Abad's profound and passionate ambition was undoubtedly realised: she became a transnational pioneer of global art. Largely self-taught, her life and work resists categorisation, traversing geographical borders and formal artistic boundaries between social realism, figuration, abstraction, sculpture, glass and textiles. As a self-proclaimed 'ambassador of color', vibrancy was a mainstay in Abad's oeuvre, as was her pluralistic approach to image-making, which encompassed varied histories, cultures and styles.

Spanning three decades, Abad's practice was informed by an itinerant lifestyle; she travelled to sixty-two countries, eleven of which she lived in. Born to a political family in the northernmost province in the Philippines, Abad grew up in Manila, where both her mother, father and later brother, served in congress. Whilst studying political science at the University of the Philippines, Abad found herself immersed in student activism. When her family home in Manila was attacked by her father's political opponents, she left the Philippines to study law in Madrid. On a stopover in San Francisco to visit her aunt, Abad decided to settle in the city, taken by its creative scene and vibrant counter-culture, meeting artists, musicians and immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

In San Francisco, Abad enrolled in a masters at Lone Mountain College, and supported herself by working as a seamstress, utilising the skill her mother taught her as a girl. In 1973, she and her partner Jack Garrity embarked on an epic odyssey, hitch-hiking overland through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Philippines. This trip convinced Abad to devote herself to art and spawned her lifelong fascination with textiles as a universal art form. Collaborating closely with communities of textile makers in every place she visited Abad learned batik in Indonesia mirror-work in Rajasthan and

visited, Abad learned batik in Indonesia, timber work in Rajasthan, and incorporated Korean ink brush painting, Papua New Guinean macramé, amongst many more, cultivating an archive of references for an enriched mode of making.

Throughout her practice, Abad honed manifold techniques and keenly observed the world around her, which she absorbed and then transformed into syncretic artworks, woven through with politics. In an era of postcolonial liberation, Abad's life and work notably anticipated the arrival of 'globalisation' and the popularisation of artworld biennales that would follow in the 1990s. As she said of her work: 'my paintings tell the stories of people that I have met and talked to along my way'.

Many of Abad's multi-media canvases are rolled up like scrolls, and incorporate her signature 'trapunto', a quilting technique she developed in the 1970s. Formally inspired by Tibetan thangkas, these canvases were padded and stitched, before being embellished with lace, ribbon, buttons, sequins, beads, cowrie shells and found objects. For Abad, ornament and exuberance was a strategy, as art historian Professor Julia Bryan-Wilson articulates, to physically take up space and enhance the artwork's effect, so as to increase its power in the world. Her inclusive and relational practice was radically forward-thinking in its challenges to traditional notions of a single 'artist-genius', and its indifference to what is coded as 'low' art and what is deemed 'high'. 'As Pacita often said', Garrity recalled, 'she was an artist who painted from the gut'.

As well as indigenous craftspeople, Abad met and exhibited alongside artists including Alice Neel, Joan Mitchell, Guerrilla Girls, Alfonso Ossorio, Alma Thomas, Lois Mailou Jones, Joyce J. Scott and Howardena Pindell, marking her out as a truly intersectional, generational artist. As artist Faith Ringgold described, 'widely travelled, Abad creates her work from the point of view of an international woman of color.' This summation makes visible overlapping meanings – political, social, aesthetic, conceptual – allowing for 'color' to be read as a racial signifier, an account of diverse visual cultures, chromatic

information and as description of Abad's layered artistic approach. As an observer of the migrant experience, when asked about her artistic contribution to the US, Abad exclaimed: 'Color! I have given it color!'

Abad's recent major survey exhibition, curated by Victoria Sung, at the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2023) travelled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, MoMA PS1, New York and National Gallery of Ontario (2024-2025). A fully illustrated monograph including essay contributions by Professor Julia Bryan-Wilson, artist Pio Abad, and fellow curators Nancy Lim, Xiaoyu Weng and Ruba Katrib was published in 2023. Recent group exhibitions include, 'Foreigners Everywhere', 60th Venice Biennale (2024); 'Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textile in Art', Barbican, London (2024); 'Sweat', Haus der Kunst, Munich (2022); and the 11th Berlin Biennale (2020). Abad was also included in epoch-making exhibitions: 'Beyond the Border: Art by Recent Immigrant', Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (1999) and 'Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art', Asia Society Galleries, New York (1994).

Her work is held in numerous international museum collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC; Tate, London; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, South Korea; Galeri Nasional, Jakarta; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Jameel Art Center, Dubai; M+, Hong Kong; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan; National Gallery Singapore; National Museum of the Philippines, Manila; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Cuba; and Instituto Inhotim, Brazil.

Alison Jacques will present work by Pacita Abad at [Art Basel Paris 2025](#),

Stand C45 (22nd-26th October 2025).