

Pacita Abad: Common Ground



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PHOTO: STPI – CREATIVE WORKSHOP & GALLERY

Filipino-American queen of confectionery circles Pacita Abad's kaleidoscopic works take centre stage at STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery.

Born in 1946, the late artist upended artistic hierarchies long before the art world's current turn to craft and traditions of the Global South. Amid a new global appreciation of the artist at major museums and biennales, STPI has brought out some of the works she created during her 2003 residency there.

Her paper-pulp collages and three-dimensional assemblages incorporate mirror embroidery from India, ink-brush painting from South Korea and batik from Indonesia, using her trademark trapunto method – involving quilting and padding and the stitching of cowrie shells.

The many circles – sometimes a fish lens into an idyllic landscape, other times the screws that hold a “self portrait” together or intricately designed like a seal carving – are her unifying motif. She described the shape as “direct, simple, modern, universal, intimate, fascinating and playful”.

Have a gander, too, at the Alkaff Bridge just outside STPI, which Abad designed for Singapore in the final years of her life, partly while undergoing radiotherapy for cancer.

It was almost at risk of being repainted grey in 2018, but a successful fund-raising effort put a stop to this. Today, the conspicuous bridge spanning the Singapore River has become a symbol for Singapore-Philippines bilateral relations.

Where: STPI – Creative Workshop & Gallery, 41 Robertson Quay

MRT: Clarke Quay/Fort Canning

When: Till Dec 13, Mondays to Saturdays, 10am to 7pm

Admission: Free

Info: str.sg/5Pgv