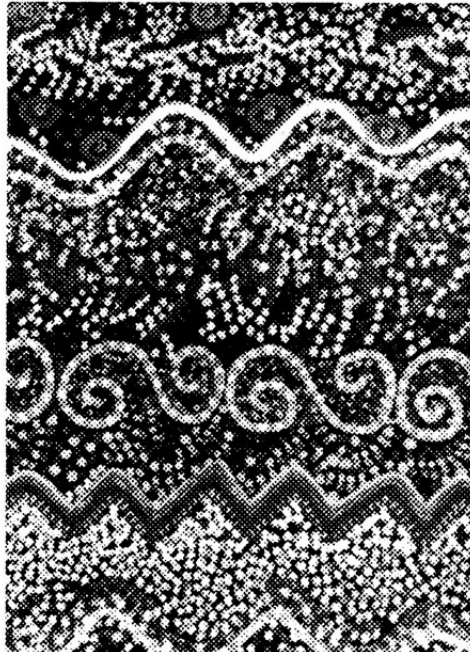


Eye Wash

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The Washington Artists' Tabloid



Pacita Abad, "White Path", 1988 Mixed Media, 40" x 26" Photo: D. Cieslikowski

PACITA ABAD

Trapunto Paintings
March 21 - April 8
Franz Bader Gallery
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
(Downtown)
(202) 659-5515

The natural exuberance flowing from Pacita Abad as she speaks about herself and her artwork can also be felt emanating from the colorful, luxurious canvases she produces.

Pacita is not intimidated by color, nor is she modest in her use of color — indeed she is compelled to explore all of the possibilities to be discovered by combining many hues of acrylic and fabric paints with a myriad of materials and objects applied to the painted surfaces. In her hands, these various materials are used to make the artwork more than decorative, because one senses her need to push the surfaces to the limit of her energies and desires. She is extremely comfortable with and unafraid of the consequences of her organization and utilization of so many different things.

A world traveler, Pacita, who is a native of the Philippines, absorbs what she sees in a landscape, in nature, in people and their surroundings, and transmits this information to her trapunto paintings with an energy that transcends the ordinary.

The wide variety of materials that Pacita incorporates in her paintings....buttons, tiny mirrors, glass, gold thread, shells, beads, embroidery and fabrics.....were gleaned from her travels to India, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and other countries. By using the trapunto technique, a traditional Italian method of quilting which requires stuffing certain areas with cotton which have been stitched into shapes, the surface becomes raised.

Pacita paints, embroiders, cuts, sews and attaches various objects to her work in order to emphasize with staccato clarity certain shapes and forms. When these objects and materials are sewed to the canvas, textures can be felt as well as seen, and the painting becomes animated.

In several of the smaller works, you feel a rhythmic flow as tiny colored buttons, attached in close formation march along a trail. Serpentine paths of color which wind through some compositions lead you through a route which allow intimate discoveries along the way. In some paintings, the surface patterns reveal sweeping painterly passes made with the brush. In others, large units of colored dots form patterns of their own.

The large wall hangings suggest the rich tapestries of a bygone era, a time of opulent interiors, when walls were hung with decorative or scenic works of art. The smaller works take on the appearance of textiles which incorporate repeated lines, dots and shapes.

An outstanding figurative work in this exhibit, called "Pacita Sailing", seems to proclaim that she is very secure as she traverses the world in a "ship" designed to take her where she wants to go.

Contributed by Shirley Koller