



**pacita
abad**
a million things to say

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Study Guide | Elementary

Bodies of water have always been a subject matter in art. Depicted in motion or calm, they not only create the overall mood but also suggest symbols. Pacita Abad depicted some of the Philippines' best known sites for swimming and diving such as Anilao in Batangas, Puerto Galera and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and Dumaguete in Central Visayas. These are the places where Pacita explored and went diving. The solitude, beauty and dangers she experienced in the water became the inspiration and subject matter she explored in some of her trapunto paintings.

PRE-VISIT

Where did it come from?

- Ask the children what natural bodies of water have they seen/been to. Have them describe the sensation of being in these bodies of water : what did it feels like, what sounds, smells or tastes they associate with certain bodies of water and how they differ. If they have not been to a natural body of water, have them describe what they imagine the sensation of being in these bodies of water would be like.

You can prompt them by asking questions such as:

- What color do you think it is?
- How deep is it?
- What animals might you see there? What do you think they look like?
- What kind of plants might you see there? What do they look like?
- After describing verbally their experience (either imagined or otherwise) with bodies of water, have the children draw this experience. You can show them pictures of seascapes and marine life that they can use. Encourage them to use different colors and materials available to create the texture, sound and taste (if possible).
- Let each of the children show their work in front of the class. Ask them describe what or where that body of water they depicted is and share what is their favorite part of their experience with that body of water. Then, have them compare and contrast that experience with that of being in a swimming pool. Ask them if there are more swimming pools than natural bodies of water, where you might find swimming pools and why this is so.
- To round off the discussion, have the children reflect on why bodies of water are important and why are they beautiful. You can ask the following questions during the show and tell:
 - Why do you think bodies of water are beautiful?
 - What do you like most about the bodies of water?
 - What do you think will happen when we don't have bodies of water anymore?
 - How can you take care of the bodies of water?

Blue is the color typically associated with water. It is one of the colors used by Pacita Abad in her works.

- Talk with the children about the color blue. You can ask the following questions:
 - Where do you see the color blue? Do you see it in objects? In nature?
 - Do you like the color blue? Why or why not?
- Using materials (ideally paint) let the children create different shades of blue and then paint or draw an image using any or all of these shades. Ask them to explain how they created the different shades of blue and why they used the color/s for their work.
- Explain to them that while they were able to create the color blue and various shades of blue, it was not always so: (<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-a-brief-history-of-blue>).
- Introduce them to the color wheel as well as 'temperature' of colors (cool colors , warm colors).

VISIT

Where did it come from?

- Bring the children in-front of the paintings with underwater themes. Have them note (by writing down or drawing) the colors, shapes, lines, directions created by the lines, etc. Ask the following questions:
 - Which work has the most number of colors? The least number of colors? Ask them to identify what are the colors that appear in the works?
 - Which work has the most number of shapes? the least number of shapes? What are the shapes that appear in the works?
 - Which work has the most number of ornamentation? the least number of ornamentation?
- Point out the other materials used to create the details in the works

What are these materials supposed to stand for? Why did Pacita use it?

These materials are sewn into or glued into the canvas which is padded. This is Pacita Abad's take on trapunto, a method of quilting for which functional machines and specialized needles are rare.

Have the children imagine what Pacita may have used? How long it would have taken her to make one piece? Have the children think of other materials which they could use to create the details in work. And how the qualities of these materials helped Pacita decide to use them. Point out certain materials used, especially hidden or not obvious ones. Finally, ask them how heavy do they think each piece is?

- In exploring the gallery, have the children note that Pacita's trapunto series included also mask figures and abstracts. Have them compare and contrast pieces, the different colours, the different styles.

After exploring the exhibit, gather the class in a circle, or on top the Mezzanine. Have them talk about all the paintings they saw. What was their favorite one? Why is it their favorite? Did they like it? Why or why not? What did they learn about Pacita Abad? Or learn about making Art?

POST-VISIT

- Pacita's Underwater Wilderness series presents a world that only scuba divers have experienced. While the children may not have a diver's license yet, they do have access to information, especially images of the world underwater and perhaps they have even snorkeled on holiday? Have them look at images taken from 10-20 years ago by nature programs compared with images taken now. Have the children compare and contrast the images and ask them what they have learned about the condition of the underwater world. Is the underwater world still a wilderness? Still unknown? Still magical and mysterious? If not, how has it been tamed? Is this good or bad? What do they think we will find in the future?
- Read books about the ocean and taking care of it. Ask the children if the pictures in the books as well as in the exhibition's paintings are the same. Why or why not? You can also ask them if the book's illustrations and Pacita's paintings were able to capture the ocean's beauty and scenery. Why or why not? Here are some book suggestions:
 - "On the Reef" by Judith and Shandley McMurray
 - "A Hole in the Bottom of the Sea" by Jessica Law, Jill McDonald, and The Flannery Brothers
 - "Swimmy" by Leo Lionni
 - "Ocean Seasons" by Ron Hirschi and Kirsten Carlson
 - "Enough Water? A Guide to What We Have and How We Use It" by Steve Conrad
 - "Flotsam" by David Wiesner
 - "Life in the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer Sylvia Earle" by Claire A. Nivola
- From this, have a class project in which the children will create a poster and/or a slogan calling for action to clean the waters and protect life in them. They can also send a letter to authorities in charge of taking care of the environment, pointing out the good work that they have done and areas for improvement.

Through works of art (poetry, music, dance, etc), the children will state what action/s they will do to help in the efforts to protect and preserve the environment. After the presentation, they can ask their audience to commit to an action that will help with this.