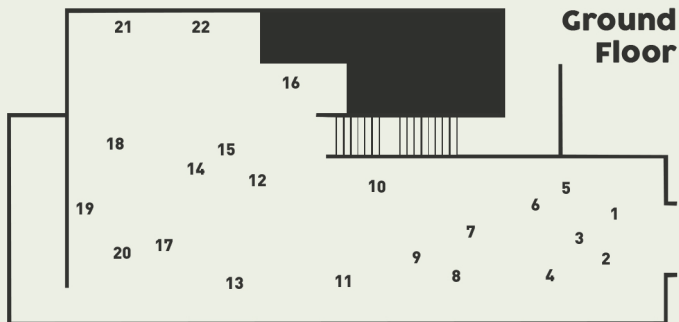




**pacita
ababad
a million things to say**

12 April - 1 July 2018



GROUND FLOOR

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Bacongo III, 1986 | 12 Shallow Gardens of Apo Reef, 1986 |
| 2 European Mask, 1990 | 13 Sepoc Wall, 1986 |
| 3 Bacongo VI, 1986 | 14 Puerto Galera II, 1983 |
| 4 Bacongo VII, 1989 | 15 Dumaguete's Underwater Garden, 1987 |
| 5 Masai Man, 1982 | 16 Hundred Islands, 1989 |
| 6 Pacita Sailing, 1987 | 17 The Sky is Falling, The Sky is Falling, 1998 |
| 7 Through the Looking Glass, 1996 | 18 Put a Lime in My Coconut, 2002 |
| 8 Recluse, 1994 | 19 I Have One Million Things to Say, 2002 |
| 9 The Sparks, the Heat and the Glow, 1998 | 20 Endless Blues, 2001 |
| 10 Anilao at Its Best, 1989 | 21 Blue, 2002 |
| 11 My Fear of Night Diving: Assaulting the Deep Sea, 1985 | 22 Sampaloc Walls, 1985 |

MEZZANINE

L.A. Liberty, 1992

My Eyes are Hungry

"The thing I like about what I see when I create something is the amount of work involved in it. Creating the surface, I get really occupied with that, building it up whether it is just painting or adding mirrors, shells, and beads. That is exciting. And in many of my work the reality of using different indigenous materials is important to me."

(Ian Findlay-Brown, Asian Art News, Assailing the Senses, 1994)

The narratives spun to unfold the bearings of contemporary art in the Philippines are ones anchored on locality and context, contained within a regionalism that negotiates a myriad of histories and colonialisms, the deep furrows of diaspora characterized by ease and estrangements, and on-going search for identity with its many discontents. The very nature of the Philippines as an archipelago also necessarily entreats us to employ imaginative navigational devices, to perceive and divine routes that some have previously traversed but with sails re-aligned by accumulated materials and knowledges.

Diagramming such movements is important to be able to map out the disorienting flow of art works produced by Pacita Abad. Born in Batanes, Abad was the daughter of a congressman, who had hopes for her becoming a lawyer. However, the course of Abad's life changed after a year of travelling in 1973 to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Taiwan and Hong Kong. After which, she decided to take up painting. Abad later married a developmental economist, Jack Garrity, whose work predisposed them to travel to developing countries. Her experiences in each place informed her subject matter from the start; traditional art practices like ink-brush painting in Korea, paint brushing on silk in the Dominican Republic, batik painting in Indonesia, tie-dye in Africa, macramé in Papua New Guinea, were techniques she introduced either singly or several in one art work.

As an Asian female artist trying to work as a painter, Abad was very much aware of the existing prejudices that came with it. While the artist's self-exoticization [for example, her use of the double entendre: woman of colour] allowed her a degree of control as to how her work was received, contextualized and exhibited; viewed in the contemporary context, these notions become problematic and their use too idiosyncratic. *Pacita Abad: A Million Things To Say*, offers a move away from this tendency and instead proposes a productive re-construction of Abad's categories of self and her place in art history. It marks an introduction towards a serious re-examination of Abad's body of work.

In order to understand Abad, one must also consider the historical time in which she was working. Abad was part of the historical moment when the Philippines was undergoing great political change, something she was involved with at its cusp.

The urgency to identify as part of a nation undergoing such political trauma was there, and Abad responded by producing paintings of events taking place elsewhere, but which echoed similar situations occurring in the Philippines: refugees in Cambodia, Yemeni homes after the riots, Laotian immigrants losing their identity. "When I'm in a country....I ask "What would I do in six weeks which would represent this country and which I would like to paint? I need to make that moral statement about a place."¹

The narratives which Abad painted to speak about contemporary art and culture in the Philippines were often located elsewhere. Immigration for her was an important issue but more so when she observed the US becoming more disturbed with a changing 'multiethnic society of legal and illegal immigrants.' Her work was 'multi-ethnic' as it brought together experiences across cultures—Bangladesh to Sudan, Sudan to Jakarta, Jakarta to Boston, Washington D.C. to Manila, Yemen to Singapore—her creative trajectory dictated by her constantly shifting location.

Importantly, she also referenced and painted a multiplicity of conditions which were not of her lived experience, but which, at the same time was the story of her life—encountering refugees, engaging with overseas Filipinos, finding herself at the edges of societies which she visited, affected by their plight, but separate from their fates and destinies at the same time. The ease of her diasporic existence was her estrangement from theirs.

¹Reyes, Cid, "Pacita in My Mind," *Today*, 12.12.2004

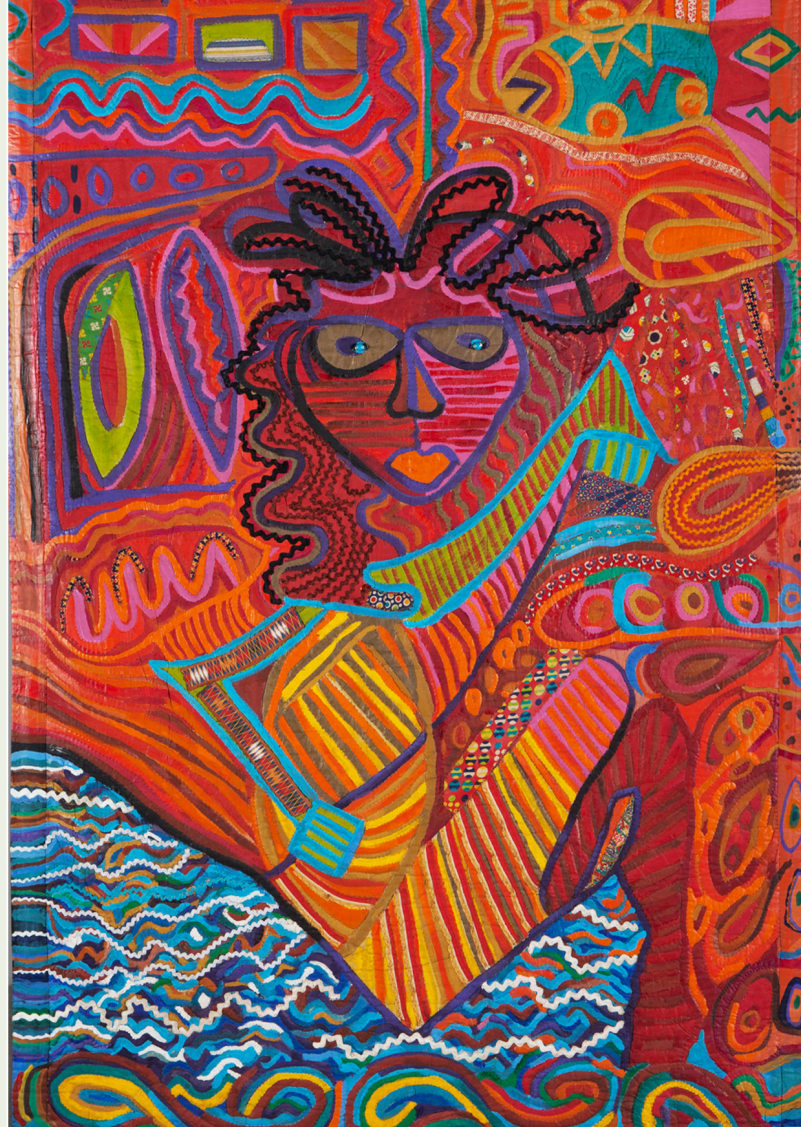
Pacita Sailing, 1983
Acrylic, rick rack ribbons, painted cloth on
stitched and padded canvas | 270 x 140 cm
Pacita Abad Art Estate

In the late-seventies and early eighties Abad worked a quilting method, trapunto, onto her canvasses, and layered objects on top of her quilted material: stones, sequins, glass, buttons, shells, mirrors, printed textile. This, which the artist called *trapunto* painting, would help define Pacita Abad. The technique, and the process of layering, stuffing, stitching and collaging of objects on painted canvas, and its final form as textile work arrive as discussions of craft are shown and presented within the modality of contemporary art. Abad herself recognized this as work which was more process-orientated, but continued her characteristic use of vibrant colours and accumulated material.

There are no easy categories for Pacita Abad. The exhibition *Pacita Abad: A Million Things to Say*, hopefully allows for a more detailed consideration of her work and its expansive contemporaneity. Abad's understanding of the idea of the global preceeded many of her contemporaries, a complex understanding often disguised under the weight of colour, material, and her persona. In 2002, Abad said of how she goes about working on her art: "I think global, not racial. I go out, learn the wider horizon, develop and evolve..."² Such a reflection can only come from, in Abad's case, her itinerancy, her continuous crossing of countries and cultures, plotting the variables and coordinates across a map while shaping a multiplicity of narratives rarely seen today.

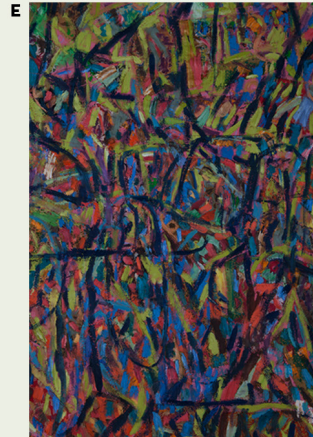
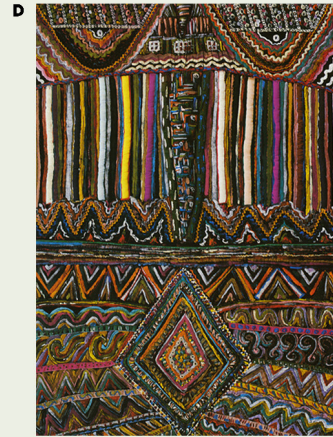
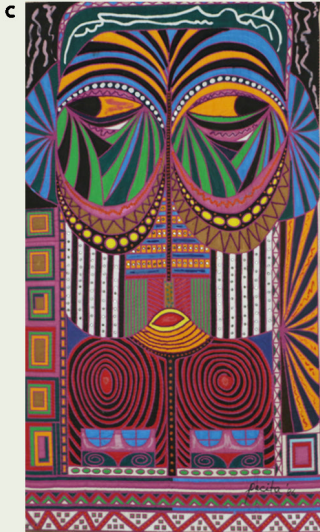
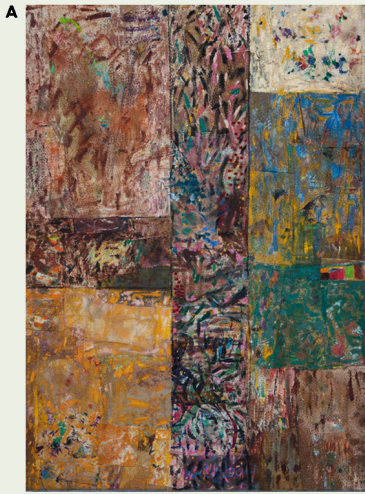
Joselina Cruz and Pio Abad

²Yraola, Dayang, "Pacita Abad, Minding Her Own Business,"
Art Manila, Vol. III, series 4





My Fear of Night Diving: Assaulting the Deep Sea, 1985 | oil, acrylic, cotton yarn, broken glass, plastic beads & buttons, stitched padded canvas | 334 x 439 cm
Lopez Museum and Library



A *The Sparks, The Heat and The Glow*, 1998 | Oil, acrylic, buttons, sequins, painted and dyed cloth stitched on canvas | 210 x 149 cm

B *Hundred Islands*, 1989 | Oil, acrylic, glitter, gold thread, buttons, lace, sequins on stitched and padded canvas | 183 x 234 cm

C *Baongo III*, 1986 | Acrylic on stitched, silk screened and padded canvas | 258 x 150 cm

D *Masai Man*, 1982 | Acrylic, plastic beads, rick rack ribbons, painted cloth on stitched and padded canvas | 203 x 143 cm

E *Put a Lime in my Coconut*, 2002 | Oil, painted batik and printed cloth stitched on canvas | 253 x 180 cm

All artworks on this spread courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate



Puerto Galera II, 1983 | Oil, acrylic on muslin, hand-sewn trapunto | 259.08 x251.46 cm | Private Collection

Public Program

April 12 | In-Conversation | Benilde SDA Cinema, 12th Floor

A discussion about Pacita's life, travels and influences with Jack Garrity from the Pacita Abad Art Estate and co-curator of the exhibition, artist Pio Abad.

April 26 | Differentiating Material Design, Art & Craft | MCAD Manila

This one-day event will run in collaboration with Benilde's School of Fashion and Textiles. Join Lulu Tan-Gan and department professors for insight and discussion on Design, Art and Craft followed by in-lab classes on Fabric Construction, Surface Design and Process.

May 19 | Exploring Conservation : In partnership with the Lopez Museum | MCAD Manila

Conservation laboratories are often described as balancing the functions of an art studio, a forensic laboratory, and an environmental monitoring unit. Pacita Abad's show required multiple textile conservation techniques to be conducted to enable the work to be fit for display. Join the discussion on this and conservation practice with experts from the Philippines' leading Art Conservation department at the Lopez Museum.

May 24 | Pauline J. Yao : Public Lecture | Benilde SDA Cinema, 12th Floor

Pauline J. Yao is Lead Curator of Visual Art at M+, the new museum for twentieth and twenty-first century visual culture being built in Hong Kong. She has held curatorial positions at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and worked as an independent curator and writer in Beijing for six years, during which time she co-founded the storefront art space Arrow Factory.

June 3 | Open House : Dominga Street Community Event | MCAD Manila

MCAD invites everyone on Dominga Street for free entry, food, family activities and tours around around the Museum and the Pacita Abad show.

June 30 | Contextualizing the Female Narrative | MCAD Manila

Roundtable discussion with Brenda Fajardo, Silvana Diaz, Agnes Arellano and Imelda Cajipe Endaya.

Full details for each program are available on our website
www.mcadmanila.org.ph

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND DESIGN (MCAD)

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Pacita Abad
Art Estate



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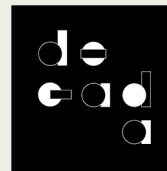
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Mae Bañez



2018 marks the 10th anniversary of MCAD. The Museum delivers programming and content that encourages engagement with art and culture, its practice and production, as well as its presentation and interpretation. MCAD remains reflexive and responsive to changes in society, politics and the production of ideas.

For more information about the MCAD's 10-year anniversary, check out www.mcadmanila.org.ph/mcad-is-10

1946 – Pacita Barsana Abad is born on October 5th in Basco, Batanes, to Aurora Barsana Abad and Jorge Abad. She is the fifth of thirteen children.

1949 – Her father, Jorge Abad, is elected as Congressman of Batanes and the family moves from Basco to Manila at the end of his first term.

1964 – Abad enters the University of the Philippines with plans to follow in her parents' footsteps and enter politics.

1968 – She graduates with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in 1968 and begins to study law. Her political involvement in opposition to the Marcos regime prevents her from completing her studies at the university. While organising student demonstrations in Manila to protest fraudulent elections, her family home in Manila is targeted by being sprayed with bullets.

1969 – Abad leaves Manila with the intention of finishing her law degree in Madrid.

1970 – She takes up a degree in Asian history at the University of San Francisco where she writes her dissertation on Emilio Aguinaldo, the first president of the Philippine Republic. She meets George Kleiman who introduces her to the art scene in San Francisco, whom she is married to briefly. She is offered a full scholarship at University of California, Berkeley for the Boalt Law school.

1973 – Abad attends a World Affairs Conference in Monterey, California where she meets Jack Garrity, a Stanford University student from Boston. She defers her scholarship for a year, deciding to travel across Asia with Jack Garrity.

The couple spends 12 months hitchhiking overland from Turkey to the Philippines, passing through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Along the way, they come across dissident filmmakers against the Shah in Tehran, Russian tanks entering Afghanistan through the Salang Tunnel and Pashtun tribesmen in the Khyber Pass. They stay at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, learn of the Sikhs hatred of Indira Gandhi and visit Kuomintang opium villages in the Golden Triangle. The trip had an enormous impact on her. She becomes fascinated by Asia, its people and its cultures.

She returns to the Philippines 4 years after having left.

1974 – Upon her return to California, Abad decides not to pursue her law degree to become an immigration lawyer; instead she decides to become a painter.

1975 – She and Garrity move to Washington D.C., where she begins her formal art training at the Corcoran School of Art. At the end of 1975, she leaves for Guatemala for six weeks and starts painting churches, Mayan ruins and rural villages.

1976 – Abad has her first exhibition of 70 paintings at her 15th Street studio in D.C

1977 – Moving to New York City, she lives and works in a studio on 23rd Street next to the Chelsea Hotel. She attends the Art Students League of New York and meets fellow Filipino-American painter Alfonso Ossorio, spending time at 'The Creeks', his studio mansion in East Hampton.

1978 – Abad transfers to Dhaka, Bangladesh for a year after Garrity gets a job as a transport economist. She travels through the riverine country by boat, car and bus, painting landscapes and people in the cities and villages. Her father passes away unexpectedly and she returns to Manila distraught that her father never saw her artistic work.

She holds an exhibition of her paintings at her Dhanmandi Studio in Dhaka. Her first exhibition in the Philippines is held at the Manila Garden Hotel.

Her travels bring her to Sudan for three months where she works on paintings about the Dervishes of Omdurman and the people of Southern Sudan.

1979 – Travelling with international aid groups assisting the Cambodian refugees camped along the Thai border, Abad relocates to Bangkok, during which she sketches and paints portraits of the refugees. She holds an exhibition entitled 'Portraits of Kampuchea' at the Bhirasri Institute of Art in Bangkok. She also holds an exhibition of 'Paintings of Sudan' at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok.

1980 – She and Garrity move to Boston and for the next two years live in a large, unheated loft near Beacon Hill. Working at the Art Institute of Boston she produces her first prints and lithographs.

1981 – She begins to develop trapunto painting, a technique of stitching and stuffing her painted canvas to give them a quilted, three dimensional effect.

She also has solo exhibitions at the Boston University Art Gallery, Walters Art Gallery at Regis College and the Museum of the National Center of African-American artists in Boston.

1982 – After a twelve-year absence, Abad returns to live in Manila for the next four years while Garrity works for the Asian Development Bank, overseeing development projects in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Korea.

She joins him during his travels and makes two long trips that would make lasting impressions on her work. After travelling to Papua New Guinea, she begins a series of 15 paintings based on the tribes in Goroka, Lae, Hagen and Madang that combine her trapunto technique with local cowry shells, bones and colours extracted from vegetable dye. In Indonesia, she becomes fascinated by the wayangs, the traditional shadow puppets. Over the next fifteen years, she would create 110 wayang paintings.

1983 – Enraged by the Aquino assassination, the artist retreats to her studio after the assassination and immediately paints entitled 'The Death of Ninoy.' The work hung in her studio throughout her stay in Manila.

1984 – She holds a solo exhibition entitled 'A Painter Looks at the World' at the Museum of Philippine Art curated by Arturo Luz. The exhibition includes 120 paintings from her years of traveling.

She receives the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Award for the most outstanding young artist in the Philippines – the first woman to receive the prize.

Abad travels to Seoul , Korea to learn brush painting. This leads to a series of abstract paintings entitled 'Oriental Abstractions' based on rice stalk patterns. She shows these works in solo exhibitions at the Luz Gallery in Manila and the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

1985 – She travels to Japan to participate in the 2nd Asian Art Show at the Fukuoka Art Museum where she exhibits a trapunto painting entitled 'Santa Mesa Walls.'

In Manila, she mounts three solo exhibitions: 'Scenes from Batanes' at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, curated by Ray Albano; 'Pacita and her Friends' at the Luz Gallery; and 'Assaulting the Deep Sea', an immersive installation at the Ayala Museum featuring large-scale trapunto paintings of underwater scenes around the Philippine islands. An avid scuba diver, she arrives at the opening wearing her scuba gear and fins.

1986 – Abad returns to Washington DC with her husband who starts working for the World Bank. She is invited to exhibit at the 2nd Havana Biennial. Established in 1984, the Biennial was intended to place Havana at the centre of the Third World map by bringing together works from across Latin America and the Caribbean. The 1986 iteration expands the geographic reach of the Biennial by including artists from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. It was, arguably, the first world-wide exhibition of contemporary art, a claim that would be made by the exhibition 'Magiciens de la Terre' three years later. She follows this with trips to Mexico exposing her to the works of Diego Rivera, José Orozco, Francisco Zúñiga, David Siqueiros, Rufino Tamayo and Frida Kahlo.

She returns to Dhaka to participate in the 3rd Asian Art Biennale.

1988 – In conjunction with the 1988 Summer Olympics held in Seoul, she is selected as one of the 100 international painters to exhibit at the 'Olympiad of Art' at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Korea.

1989 – She receives an Individual Visual Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

1990 – Abad wins the Metro Art Award and installs a 50-foot mural entitled 'Six Masks from Six Continents' at the Metro Center subway station in Washington D.C., which remains on display for three years.

1992 – A solo exhibition of her large scale trapunto paintings, entitled 'Abstract Emotions', is shown at the Philippine Center in New York City.

1993 – She takes part in the group exhibition 'Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art', curated by Margo Machida and organised by the Asia Society. The exhibition tours the United States until 1996, travelling to Tacoma Art Museum in Washington D.C., Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Honolulu Academy of Fine Arts in Hawaii, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, MIT List Visual Arts Center in Massachusetts and the Blaffer Gallery at the University of Houston in Texas.

1994 – Receiving a fellowship from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Abad begins work on 'Immigrant Experience', a series of paintings that combine the social realist inclinations of her earlier work with the trapunto technique that she was developing. She later presents these paintings in an exhibition entitled 'The American Dream' at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C.

Participates in several exhibitions, including a group show entitled 'Beyond the Border: Art by Recent Immigrants' at the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York City, curated by Betti-Sue Hertz and a solo exhibition at the National Museum in Jakarta entitled 'Wayang, Irian and Sumba'.

She moves to Jakarta where her husband starts working for the Indonesian conglomerate Gajah Tunggal. Meanwhile, she travels throughout the country and continues working on her series based on traditional Indonesian puppetry, incorporating batik and ikat elements in her paintings.

1995 – Abad holds an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila entitled 'Thinking Big', with Paz Abad Santos curated by Cora Alvina, showing her large trapunto paintings. The exhibition includes a 20-foot high painting called 'Marcos and His Cronies' a.k.a. 'The Medicine Man' which depicts Marcos surrounded by 18 diseased masks, representing his various corrupt cabinet members, including Imelda Marcos, studded with costume jewelry.

She also has solo exhibitions in Manila entitled "Postcards from the Edge" at Galleria Duemila and "Twenty-four Flowers" at Liongoren Art Gallery.

1998 – Her second exhibition at the National Museum in Jakarta presents paintings from her series, 'Abstract Emotions'. One work is entitled 'The Sky is Falling, The Sky is Falling', was painted when the value of the Indonesian rupiah falls from 2,000 to 15,000 to a US dollar.

As the Suharto regime collapses, Abad stays in Jakarta making sketches of the makeshift barricades and the burned out Chinese shops and banks in the city.

She participates in the group exhibition 'At Home and Abroad: 21 Contemporary Filipino Artists', which travels to the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston and the Metropolitan Museum in Manila.

2000 – Abad moves to Singapore after seven years in Jakarta. She also receives the Pamana ng Pilipino award in Manila for outstanding achievement in the arts.

She begins the millennium by spending six weeks in Rajasthan, India, returning to her studio to work on her "Sky is the Limit" series, her homage to India.

A few months later, she launches at the Koi Gallery in Jakarta, her 144-piece "Wayang Dinnerware Collection" that she designed, painted and made in collaboration with James de Rave of Kedaung, an Indonesian ceramic manufacturer.

2001 – After her exhibition in Singapore, she discovers that she has advanced lung cancer at George Washington hospital. She undergoes chemotherapy and radiotherapy, but discontinues the treatments. Her exhibitions like "Sky is the limit", "Endless blues", "Batik Dinnerware collections", and "Circles in my Mind" are shown this year.

2002 – She returns to Singapore and begins works on a new series of large trapunto paintings and undergoes further treatment.

Her solo exhibition, 'The Sky is the Limit', opens at the Esplanade in Singapore. This is soon followed by 'Endless Blues' at the Artfolio Gallery.

2003 – Abad becomes the first female artist selected for a three-month residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) and creates 'Circles in My Mind' a series of 56 mixed media paper works incorporating lithography, relief and screenpainting and hand-coloured paper pulp.

While at STPI, she conceives of the idea to paint the 55 metre-long Alkaff Bridge spanning the Singapore River. Her proposal to paint the bridge is approved by the Singapore government just as she finds out that her cancer has spread to her brain and spinal canal.

2004 – She undergoes further treatment while the painting of the Alkaff Bridge commences. Having her radiotherapy sessions in the morning and then immediately working on the Bridge project.

Once done the painted bridge is covered with 55 colours and 2,350 circles and inaugurated on the 29th of January.

She travels to the Philippines as her condition deteriorates. Though confined to a wheelchair, she opens her exhibition, 'Circles in My Mind', at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. She returns to Batanes to visit her newly built studio on the island and finish her last paintings. However, her health forces her to return to Singapore.

On the 7th of December, Pacita Abad passes away after a three-year battle with cancer.



Photograph courtesy of Wig Tysmans, 1985

