

MoMA PS1 PRESENTS FIRST RETROSPECTIVE OF PACITA ABAD OPENING APRIL 4

LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, April 2, 2024— MoMA PS1 presents the first major retrospective dedicated to artist Pacita Abad (b. Philippines, 1946–2004), organized by the Walker Art Center. On view from April 4 through September 2, 2024, *Pacita Abad* spans the artist's 32-year career and features over 50 works, most of which have never been on public view, drawn from private and public collections across Asia, Europe, and the United States. The presentation includes vibrant paintings, works on paper, and trapuntos—the painted, stitched, and stuffed canvases she began making in the 1980s and for which the artist is best known. While engaged with artistic and political dialogues during her life, the depth, range, and inventiveness of her work is only now coming to prominence. Commemorating the extensive contributions of an innovative yet under-recognized figure, *Pacita Abad* celebrates the artist's feminist and transnational outlook, commitment to social justice, and belief in the transformational power of creativity.

In 1970, Abad migrated to the United States to escape political persecution in the Philippines, after she led a student demonstration against the authoritarian Ferdinand Marcos regime (1972–86). Driven by this experience, she centered political refugees and those who were oppressed in her work. In 1977, Abad enrolled in the Art Students League in New York for a year to study anatomy, still life, and figurative painting. Although she became a US citizen in 1994, she lived an itinerant lifestyle in various countries—including Bangladesh, Yemen, Sudan, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia—where she encountered local makers across the globe who furnished her with a wealth of ideas, techniques, and materials to draw upon when creating her trapuntos. Her works were designed to be portable, and she often used textiles, demonstrating her appreciation for the female and non-Western labor associated with the craft, which has been historically undervalued. The exhibition highlights the significance of her immigrant experience and the development of her practice celebrating non-Western art forms.

The works in the exhibition are organized in loosely chronological order with overlapping themes that span decades. On display are powerful 1970s Social Realist works, which depict people escaping persecution and poverty. In the Immigrant Experience series (1983–95) of mixed media trapunto paintings, she depicted diasporic communities from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, reflecting her conviction that artists have a “special obligation to remind society of its social responsibility.” Also on view are works inspired by Indigenous masking traditions, including *Masks from Six Continents* (1990–93), installed for the first time in 30 years. Abad's engagement with patterned abstraction was inspired by jazz and blues music, and her works capture the unique spontaneity of the musical styles, showcasing her energetic interplay between figuration and abstraction as well as her engagement with people, places, and critical issues of her time.

Pacita Abad is organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. The exhibition is curated by Victoria Sung, Phyllis C. Wattis Senior Curator at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive and former Associate Curator, Visual Arts, Walker Art Center, with Matthew Villar Miranda, curatorial fellow, Visual Arts, Walker Art Center. MoMA PS1's presentation organized by Ruba Katrib, Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, MoMA PS1, with Sheldon Gooch, Curatorial Assistant, MoMA PS1.

Pacita Abad embarks on a major North American tour to several prominent institutions, beginning at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis followed by presentations at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), MoMA PS1, and concluding at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The exhibition is accompanied by a 352-page catalog, the first major publication on Abad's work, produced by the Walker. In addition to the most comprehensive documentation of the artist's work to date, the volume is edited with text by Victoria Sung, and includes contributions from Julia Bryan-Wilson, Professor of

LGBTQ Art History at Columbia University; Ruba Katrib; Nancy Lim, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA; Xiaoyu Weng, former Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the AGO; and Matthew Villar Miranda as well as a comprehensive oral history edited by Pio Abad and Sung with 20 contributors, including artists, curators, family members, and friends.

SUPPORT

Major support for *Pacita Abad* is provided by John L. Thomson.

Additional support is provided by Lonti Ebers.

The Walker Art Center organized the exhibition with major support provided by Martha and Bruce Atwater; the Ford Foundation; the Henry Luce Foundation; the Martin and Brown Foundation; Rosemary and Kevin McNeely, Manitou Fund; and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 champions art and artists at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of our time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. Founded in 1976 by Alanna Heiss, the institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a nineteenth century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and 12 to 8 p.m. on Saturday. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$10 suggested admission; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York State residents and MoMA members. Free admission for New York State residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Tickets may be reserved online at mo.ma/ps1tickets.

Visitor Guide: Discover even more from MoMA PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit moma.org/ps1.

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