



Pacita Abad: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know



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Wikipedia/Pacita Abad

Pacita Abad pictured in October 1990.

Pacita Abad is the Filipino artist who was honored with a [Google Doodle](#) on July 31.

[Abad](#) was born in Basco, Batanes, an island in the South China Sea, in 1946. The island is located in the Philippines between Luzon and Taiwan. Abad left her homeland in 1970 and began her career in art in the United States. Abad studied at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., and at The Art Students League in New York City. In 1984, Abad was the first woman to be given the Ten Outstanding Young Men award, causing an uproar when she broke the gender barrier after 25 years of the award, according to [Daily Express](#).

During her career, Abad worked on canvas, paper, bark cloth, metal, ceramics and glass. Abad is credited with creating more than 4,500 works, according to her [website](#). Her work has been displayed in more than 70 countries. Among her most famous works was her artwork on a more than 150-foot long bridge in Singapore, which was one of her final works.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Following Her College Graduation, Abad 'Never Stopped Traveling or Painting'

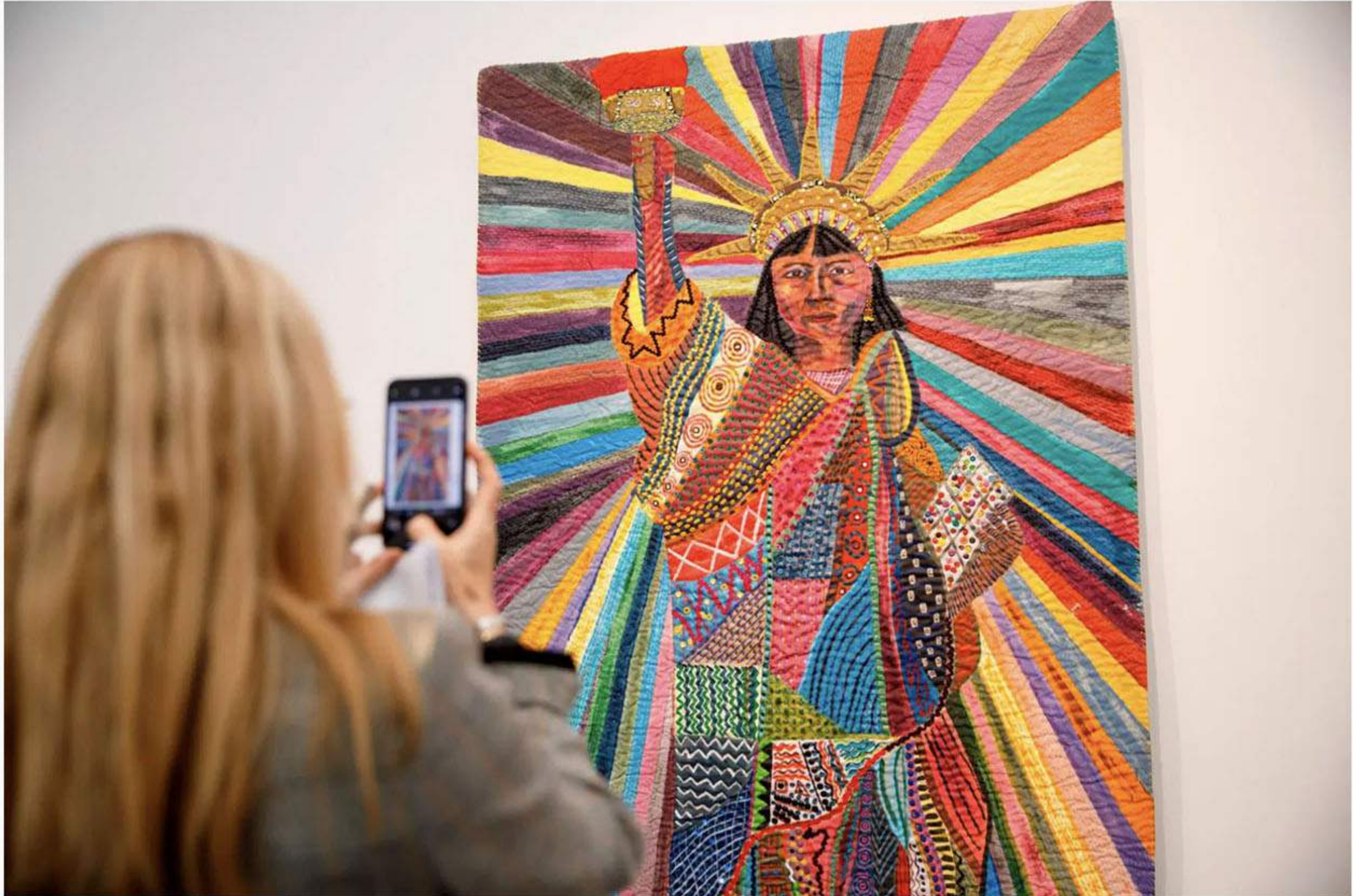


According to Abad's profile on the [U.S. Department of State website](#) as part of its Art in Embassies cultural diplomacy program, following Abad's graduation she "never stopped traveling or painting." Abad is quoted as saying that while she was traveling she began to "paint the globe." Abad lived on five continents and spent time in Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan and New Guinea. Abad's work can be "characterized by constant change, experimentation and development from the 1970's, right up until her passing," according to the state department website.

Abad's [profile on Artsy](#) says she was influenced in the 1970s by social realist painter Ben Shahn. That led Abad to create works that portrayed refugees and "urban street scenes." [Abad's website](#) says that following her graduation from college, she "never stopped being a gypsy."

Abad said in an [interview with The Philippine Star](#) that her ideal working space was wherever she found herself; that could sometimes be a hotel room. Abad said her mother and sister would regularly help her sew, according to The Philippine Star.

2. Abad Died in 2004 Following a Battle With Lung Cancer



Getty

A woman takes a picture of an artwork titled 'L.A. Liberty' by Pacita Abad at the Frieze Art Fair in London on October 2, 2019.

Abad died in December 2004 following a battle with lung cancer at the age of 58, [the Independent reported](#). Abad created her work on the Alkaff Bridge in Singapore a few weeks before her death. Abad's sister, Victoria, [told Channel News Asia in November 2018](#) that at the time Abad completed the bridge, she was in a wheelchair. Victoria Abad said, "She said to the doctor, 'I'm going to die anyway, can't I just finish the bridge? Why won't you just let me work?' She signed it at the end. That's how amazing she was. Even in the last days of her life, she was still working."

Abad is [buried in the Fundacion Pacita Batanes Nature Lodge](#) in Basco, Batanes.

Abad was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2001, according to [The Kahimyang Project](#).

3. Abad Was Forced to Leave the Philippines Due to Her Activism Against the Country's Dictator, Ferdinand Marcos



Abad's [Brooklyn Museum profile](#) says she studied political science at the University of the Philippines, graduating in 1970.

That bio says that Abad left the Philippines because of her activism against the country's dictator at the time, Ferdinand Marcos. [The Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) wrote in 2018 that it was Abad's parents who forced her to travel to the United States. Abad's nephew Pio Abad [told ABS CBN](#) in 2018 that, "In fact, she was supposed to be the one to enter into the world of politics."

Upon arrival in the U.S., Abad studied Asian history and law at the University of San Francisco. Abad worked as a typist and seamstress during this time, her Brooklyn Museum profile says.

4. Abad Married Twice During Her Life to George Kleiman & Jack Garrity



LinkedIn/Jack Garrity

Jack Garrity pictured on his LinkedIn page.

Abad was married for a period of time to fellow artist George Kleiman. It was Kleiman who introduced Abad to the artistic scene in San Francisco. Their marriage ended in divorce. Following her marriage, Abad returned to Asia to hitchhike with the man who would become her second husband, Jack Garrity. Abad met Garrity in 1973.

According to his LinkedIn page, Garrity is the director of the Pacita Abad Art Estate in Washington, D.C. A Philippine Daily Inquirer article in 2018 said that most of Abad's work remains in private storage.

Mary Jessel Duque wrote in The Philippine Star in September 2018 that thanks to Garrity's work at the World Bank, the couple regularly traveled to the developing world.

5. Abad Said She Felt She Had a ‘Social Responsibility ... to Try to Make Our World a Little Better’



A woman views an artwork titled 'I thought the streets were paved with gold' by Pacita Abad at the Frieze Art Fair in London on October 2, 2019.

Abad is quoted on [her Brooklyn Museum profile](#) as saying, “I have a social responsibility for my painting, to try to make our world a little better.” Abad’s profile closes with a quote addressing her feminism:

Although I have tried to raise awareness of these issues through my paintings, I know that it is but a small effort to help address these problems and so much more needs to be done. As women, we all have an obligation to help improve the lives of other women, both in our own countries and around the globe.

Garrity was [quoted](#) in 2018 as saying of his wife:

Pacita was global even long before the long arms of globalization embraced the art world. But more than that, her understanding of the global and the global artist was complex and compassionate — an understanding that is called for in the times now. This is the impetus for re-introducing and revisiting her work. What does it mean to be a global artist? How can we learn from artists who have been forging these arts long before you could see a BenCab hanging [next to] an international artist in a convention in Hong Kong?