

# Spike Island

PRESS RELEASE

PACITA ABAD

*LIFE IN THE MARGINS*

18 January to 5 April 2020

Preview: Friday 17 January 2020, 6–8.30pm



*Life in the Margins* is the first exhibition in the UK by Filipino American artist Pacita Abad (1946–2004). Curated in collaboration with London-based artist Pio Abad, the exhibition includes twenty large-scale ‘trapunto’ paintings and works on fabric made between 1983 and 2002.

Trapunto refers to a quilting technique that Abad began experimenting with in the late 1970s in which canvasses are padded and stitched before being painted and layered with a range of printed textiles and objects, including buttons, rickrack, sequins and shells. Characterised by their vibrant colour and intricate construction, these works combine a broad range of styles, subjects and techniques, from social realist tableaux incorporating indigenous textiles to richly detailed abstractions inspired by Korean ink brush painting, Indonesian batik and Papua New Guinean macramé.

This pluralist approach to image-making across cultures, histories and styles underpins Abad’s work throughout the decades. Focusing on her depictions of the experiences of immigrants and her engagement with diverse cultural traditions, the exhibition at Spike Island offers an idiosyncratic perspective on transnational art and culture.

– Ends –

Image: Pacita Abad *The Sky is Falling, the Sky is Falling* (1998) Oil, plastic buttons and beads, painted cloth on stitched and padded canvas, 300 x 270 cm. Work courtesy the Pacita Abad Art Estate. Photograph courtesy Pioneer Studios, Manila.

For further information and high-resolution images please contact Jane Faram, Communications Manager at Spike Island on [jane.faram@spikeisland.org.uk](mailto:jane.faram@spikeisland.org.uk) or +44 (0)117 9292266.

#### ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

- Born in the Philippines in 1946, Pacita Abad studied painting at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. and the Arts Student League in New York. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila; National Museum, Jakarta; Hong Kong Arts Centre; Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila; Bhirasri Museum of Modern Art, Bangkok; The National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; and the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Boston, among others. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including: *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art*, a travelling exhibition organised by the Asia Society, New York (1996); *Beyond the Border: Art by Recent Immigrants*, Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (1994); *La Segunda Bienal de la Habana* (1986); and the *2nd Asian Art Show*, Fukuoka Art Museum (1985). Her work can be found in the collections of Tate Modern, London; M+ Museum, Hong Kong and the National Gallery of Singapore. She died in Singapore in 2004.

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Pio Abad (b. 1983, Manila) lives and works in London. He has recently exhibited at Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai (2019); Kadist, San Francisco (2019); the 2nd Honolulu Biennial, Hawaii (2019); the 12th Gwangju Biennial (2018); Para Site, Hong Kong (2017); Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2016); 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2016) and EVA International Biennial, Limerick (2016). In 2018, Abad and Joselina Cruz curated *A Million Things to Say*, the first survey of Pacita Abad's work at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila.
- *Life in the Margins* at Spike Island is Pacita Abad's first exhibition in Europe since 2003.
- Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, located close to Bristol's harbourside. It is a place where artists and the public can meet, enabling audiences to engage with artists' research and production. Within the 80,000 square foot building, Spike Island offers visitors a year-round programme of internationally relevant exhibitions, events and activities, as well as providing working space for artists, designers and creative businesses. The link between the production and presentation of art on this scale and under one roof is unique within the UK. Spike Island's programme emphasises the commissioning of new ambitious work and often provides artists their first significant gallery exhibition in the UK. Spike Island Exhibition Services support the development of commissions, including in-house post production facilities for artists' film and video, audio visual technical services and equipment provision for ambitious moving image installations, on site fabrication workshops, resin rooms, skilled art technicians and fabricators.

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