



SILVERLENS

pacita

Silverlens (Manila, Philippines)

Hall 2.1, Features, Booth T10

VIP Preview: 21 – 23 September 2021

Public Days: 24 – 26 September 2021



abad

endless blues

Art | Basel
Basel

Silverlens presents the work of late Filipino-American artist **Pacita Abad** (b. 1946, Batanes, Philippines, d. 2004, Singapore). A pluralist approach to image-making across cultures, histories, and styles underpins Abad's work throughout the decades, offering an informed and idiosyncratic global perspective on art-making as a cultural tradition rooted in many places at once. The presentation will focus on her ***Endless Blues*** series from the early 2000's. Produced towards the end of the artist's life, these works bring together Abad's fascination with batik fabric, her love for blues music, and embed the colour, energy, and vibrancy of a life on the road in diverse forms of abstraction. Silverlens presents a historically important artist, for the first time to the discerning public of Art Basel.





Portrait of the artist in her studio with the Masks from Six Continents commission for the Metro Center, Washington, D.C., 1990.

Photo by Paul Tanedo. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.

endless blues

- *Marv Recinto*

Empathy deeply informed Pacita Abad's life, practice, and interactions with others. Born in Batanes, Philippines, Abad travelled continuously, connecting with diverse groups of people along the way. Her journeys and dwellings around the world strengthened her compassion for difference, and rooted her art in reality. Whereas abstraction is often thought of as the absence of temporality, Abad's ***Endless Blues*** is this culmination of being in the world; her abstraction instead allows the ambiguous space for difference to manifest and thrive. ***Blues train to Yogya, Early one Morning,*** and ***Paris in the Fall*** illustrate this comprehensive understanding of life in all its unpredictability and totality.

In the early 2000s, galvanised by globally and personally turbulent intersections of her life, Abad embarked upon the Endless Blues series. The September 11 attacks and subsequent War in Afghanistan deeply affected the artist. Endless Blues is also an apt description of how I, and most of the world, felt after September 11 and the ensuing battle in Afghanistan. New York and Afghanistan are two of the places that I have always loved, having lived in lower Manhattan and hitchhiked around Afghanistan,' Abad lamented. 'Seeing disaster, tragedy and suffering hit people in both of those places brought me down.' Simultaneously, the artist had been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

The impact of these simultaneous pains caused her to turn inwards, spending long introspective hours in her studio immersed in the blues music of

musicians such as Ray Charles, Paul Butterfield, Koko Taylor, and Etta James. *Blues train to Yogya* from 2002 plays on 'Midnight Train to Georgia' by Gladys Knight & The Pips, replacing the destination with the Indonesian city Yogyakarta. The Blues Aesthetic is rooted in what historian Amiri Baraka calls a continuum of the African-American and African diasporic experience, a continuous exploration of the collective, generational, and personal history within music.

Similarly, Abad's work carries her own sympathies for the cultures she respectfully borrows from, alongside her personal memories. The Endless Blues series resound in her contemporaneous present; these paintings embody collective and personal histories within the moments of the artist's spontaneous and physical processes of creation.



Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Blues train to Yogya, exhibited in 'Pacita Abad: Through The Looking Glass', curated by Michelle Tan at The Esplanade, Singapore.

4 March - 23 April 2006

Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Blues train to Yogya

2002

oil, painted cloth stitched on canvas

94.49h x 70.87w in

240h x 180w cm

EXHIBITION HISTORY

Pacita Abad: Life in the Margins

Curated by Robert Leckie and Pio Abad

Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom

18 January – 5 April 2020

Pacita Abad: Through the Looking Glass

Curated by Michelle Tan

The Esplanade, Singapore

18 January – 5 April 2020

Photo by Max McClure.

Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Art Estate

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Blues train to Yogya (verso)

Photo by Max McClure.
Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Art Estate



Blues train to Yogya, 2002

oil, painted cloth stitched on canvas
94.49h x 70.87w in • 240h x 180w cm

Photo by Max McClure. Courtesy of Pacita Abad Art Estate

Blues train to Yogya, exhibited in 'Pacita Abad: Life in the Margins', curated by Robert Leckie and Pio Abad at Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom.

18 January - 5 April 2020

Photo by Max McClure.

Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.





Blues train to Yogyakarta, exhibited in 'Pacita Abad: Life in the Margins', curated by Robert Leckie and Pio Abad at Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom.

18 January - 5 April 2020

Photo by Max McClure.

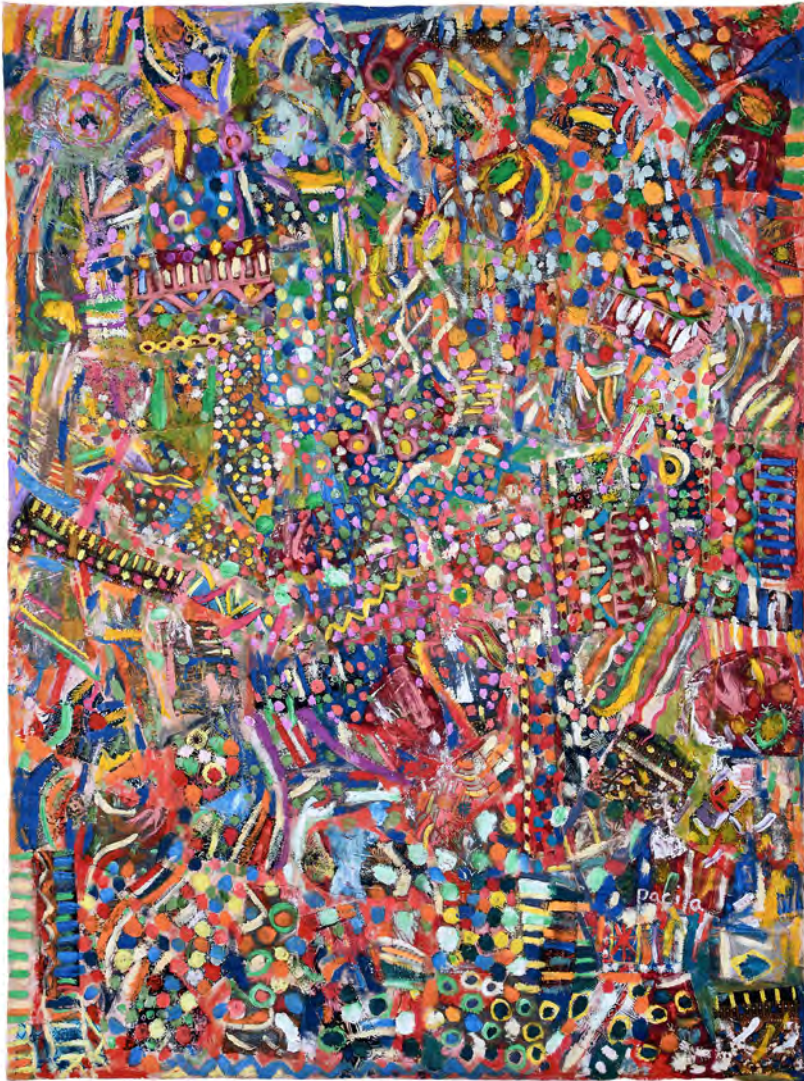
Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.

First, she would incorporate *batik* and *ikat* fabric – Indonesian fabric made from various methods of dyeing – by sewing them onto colour ground canvases. Abad first introduced these fabrics into her practice in 1994 while living in Indonesia, a continuation of incorporating the fabrics and textiles she acquired in her travels into her own artwork in an empathetic act of assemblage. Not only does this process of stitching imbue a dimension of cultural history, it also serves as a persistent link to Abad's mother who said sewing, cooking, and typing granted women independence. Eventually, Abad mastered these skills and brought sewing to the canvas which allowed her to expand the surface. Looking at the versos of these paintings provides a clearer sense of the material's placement, as well as the various coloured threads which add an extra dimension of care.

“I have always been fascinated by textiles, but when I lived in Indonesia, I was overwhelmed by the intricate beauty of *batik* and the boldness of the *ikats*. After awhile, I began sewing them onto my paintings. Somehow the luminous oil paints and the vivid batiks go hand-in-hand, and you can see the effect in *Blues train to Yogya* and *Feast for the senses*.”

Pacita Abad

from Endless Blues. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Early one morning

2003

oil, painted cloth stitched on canvas

94.49h x 70.87w in

240h x 180w cm

EXHIBITION HISTORY

Pacita Abad: Through the Looking Glass

Curated by Michelle Tan

The Esplanade, Singapore

18 January – 5 April 2020

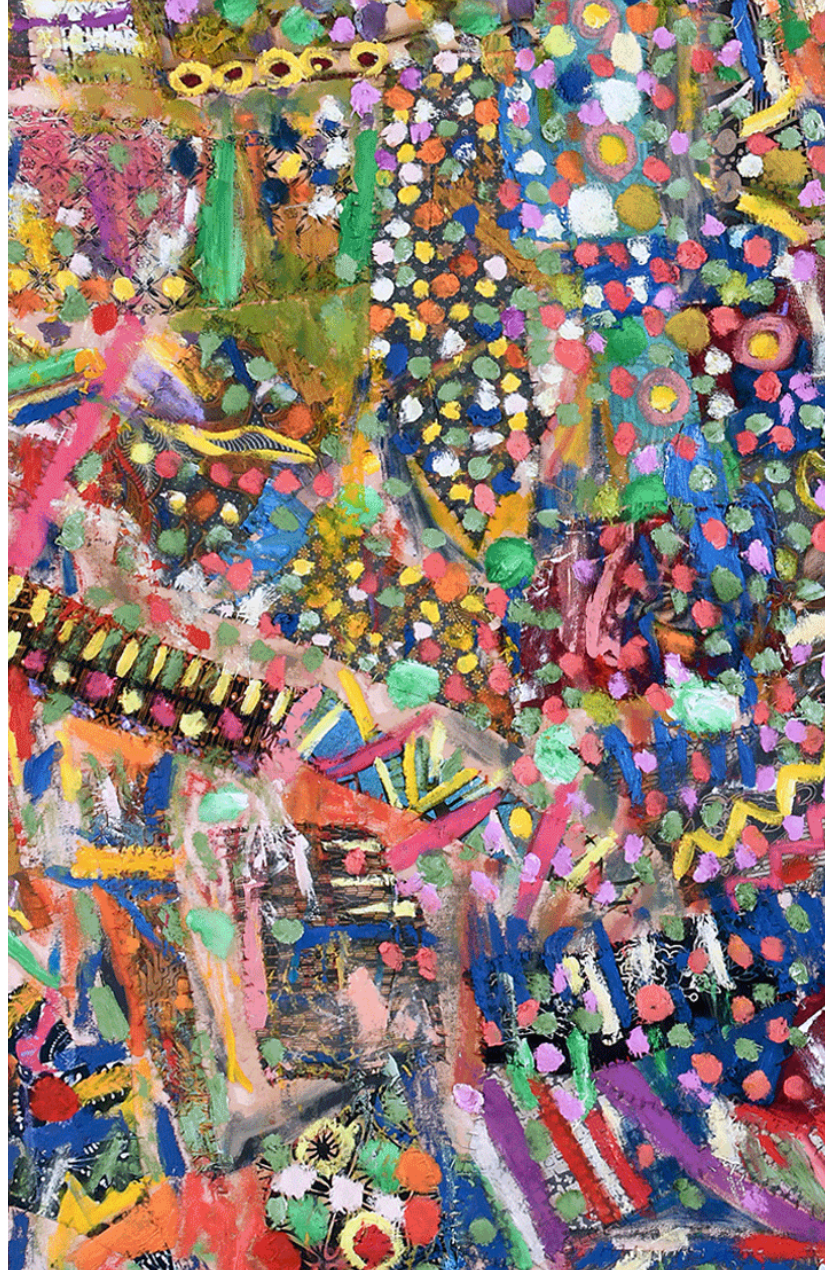
Photo by Peter Lee.

Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.

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Abad's physical gesture of improvised layering and resurfacing of pigment result in the frenetic patterns seen across the fabric. The corporeal action encapsulates the spontaneous multiplicity of emotion – nostalgia and solemnity, but also optimism and vigour – on behalf of herself and others: 'Like the blues, my paintings are always strong, sometimes sad, a bit nostalgic and very colourful.' In ***Early one morning*** from 2003, for example, the master colourist deploys a cacophony of seemingly chaotic colour and form with harmony; the painting initially appears overwhelmingly warm with pink, red, and orange tones, however, complimentary dashes, circles, and zigzags of cooler tones balance the composition.





This Early one morning
was done in the
House of the artist and his
wife in the
year 1840

Early one morning (verso)

Photo by Peter Lee.
Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Early one morning, 2003

oil, painted cloth stitched on canvas
94.49h x 70.87w in • 240h x 180w cm

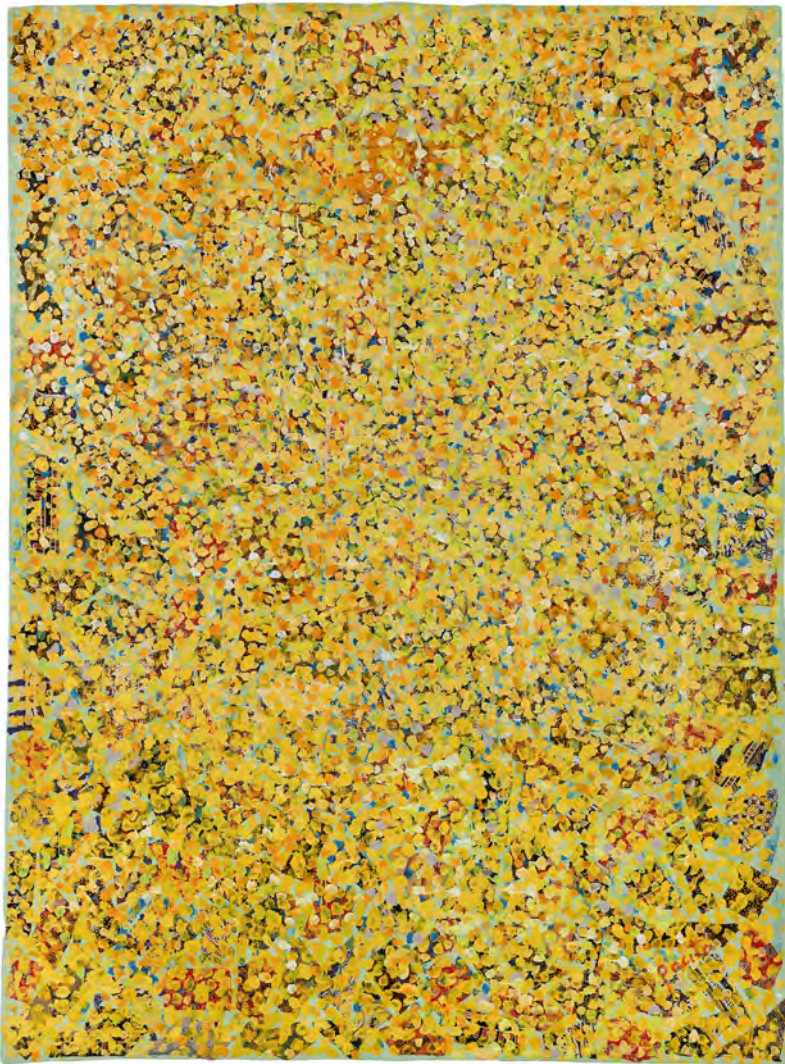
Photo by Peter Lee. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Early one morning, exhibited in 'Pacita Abad: Through The Looking Glass', curated by Michelle Tan at The Esplanade, Singapore.

4 March - 23 April 2006

Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Paris in the Fall

2003

acrylic, painted cloth stitched on canvas
94.49h x 70.87w in
240h x 180w cm

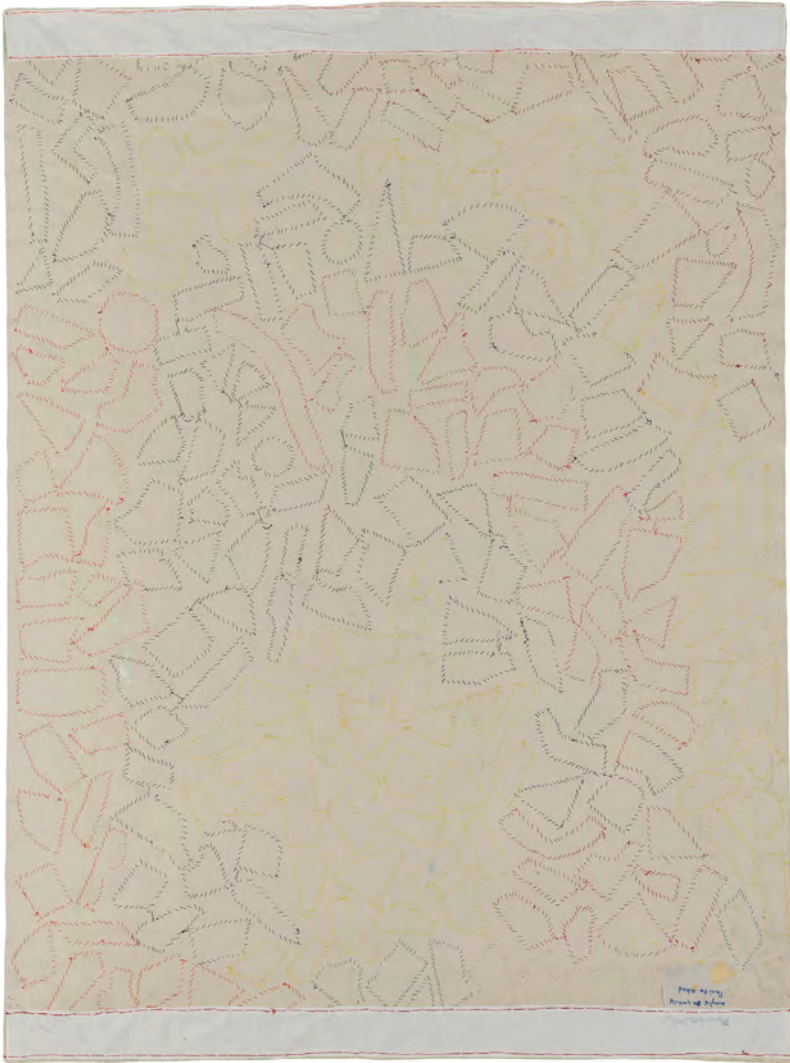
Art Basel 2021 is the first time *Paris in the Fall* will be exhibited to the public.

Photo by Peter Lee.
Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.

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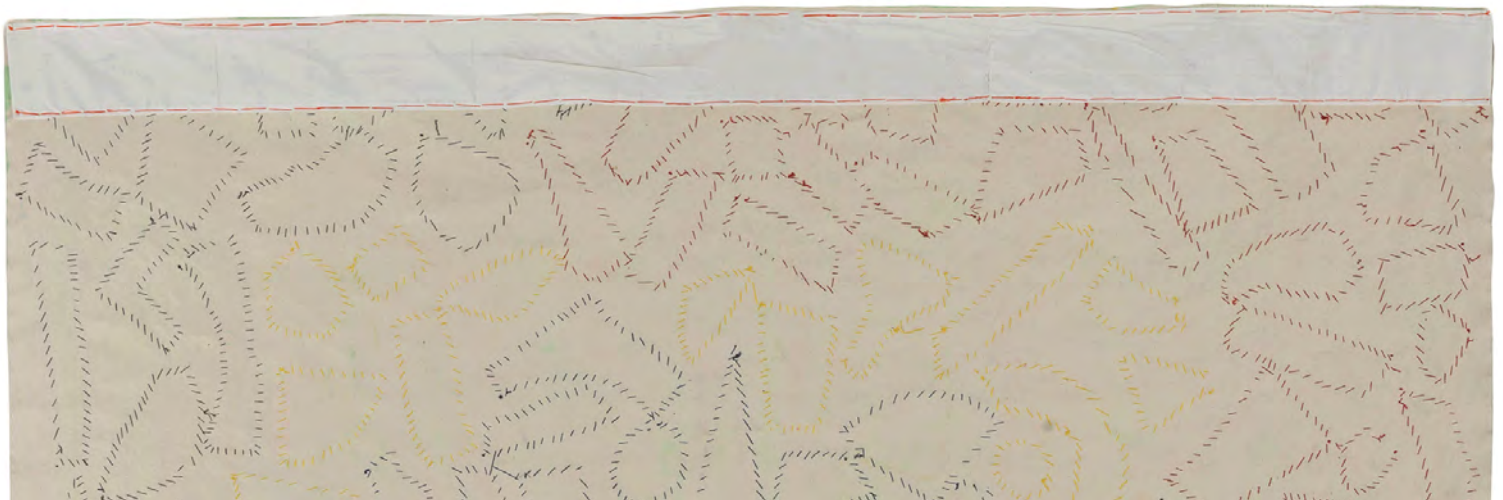


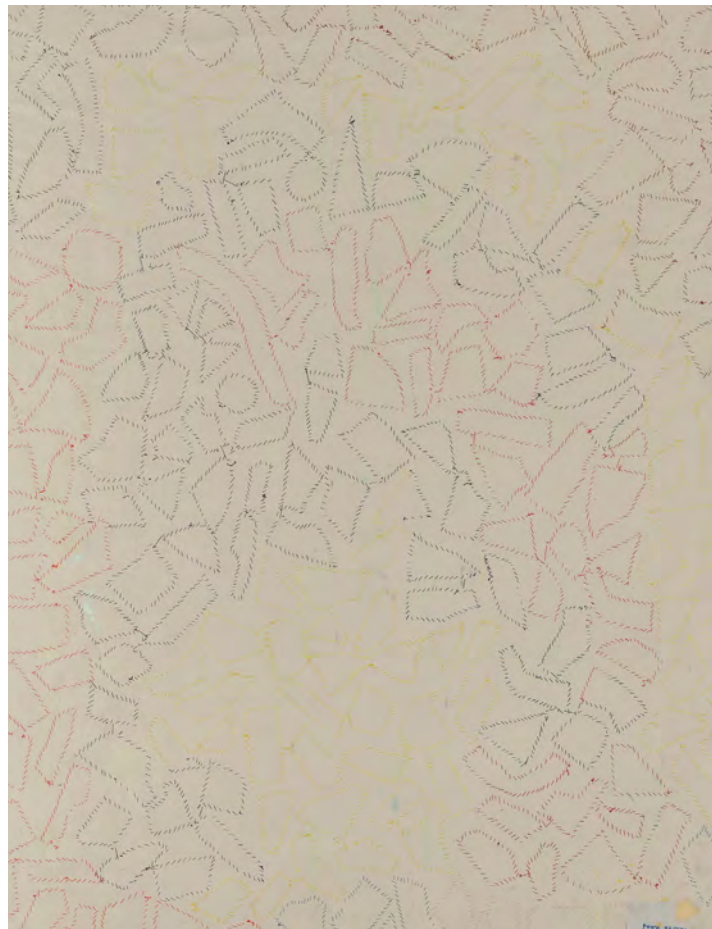
Paris in the Fall (verso)

Photo by Peter Lee.
Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



In *Paris in the Fall* from 2003, a multitude of golden yellow, burnt orange, and mint green strokes layer over one another to immerse the viewer in a vivid stretch of pigment. The autumn season is a transitory one where leaves turn and fall, however instead of focusing on this languish, Abad chose to inundate the canvas with bright tones symbolic of light and life.





Paris in the Fall, 2003

oil, painted cloth stitched on canvas
94.49h x 70.87w in • 240h x 180w cm

Photo by Peter Lee. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Art Estate.

Throughout her colourful life, Abad maintained ‘...that, as an artist, I have a social responsibility for my painting, to try to make our world a little better.’ Within her other series such as *Immigrant Experience* or *Masks and Spirits*, Abad figuratively engages with the world and society’s complex constructions. She also volunteered at refugee and immigration centres and participated in community activities like educational initiatives and workshops. But with *Endless Blues*, she confronts the ontological question of being and its inevitable adversity; here, the artist allows herself the space to mourn, but ultimately responds with radiance.



The *Endless Blues* series are overwhelmingly paintings of joy in spite of solemnity. These compositions, in their depictions of life's vicissitudes and interpersonal relationships, tell us that being is colourful and bright—one of Abad's most important wisdoms to make the world a little better.



“*Endless Blues* is also an apt description of how I, and most of the world, felt after September 11 and the ensuing battle in Afghanistan. New York and Afghanistan are two of the places that I have always loved, having lived in lower Manhattan and hitchhiked around Afghanistan.”

Pacita Abad

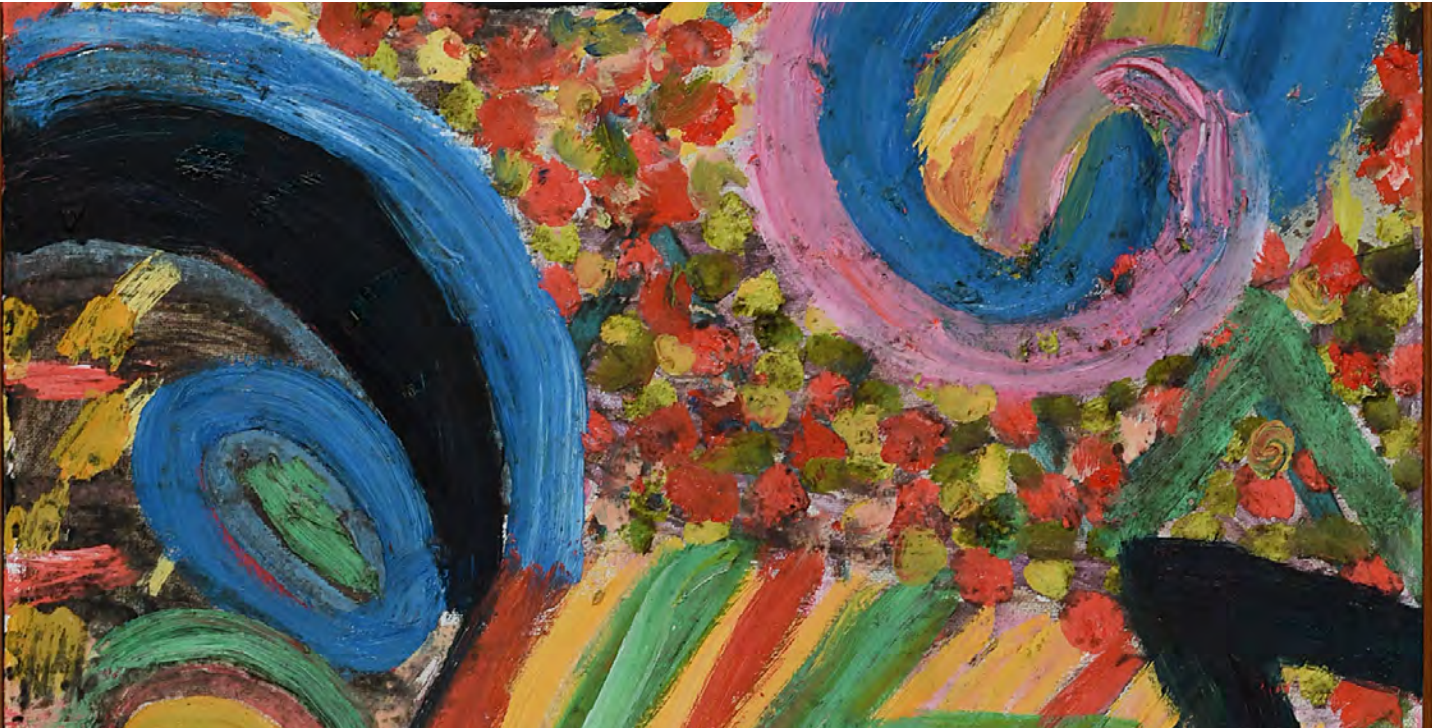
from Endless Blues. Courtesy of the Pacita Abad Estate.



Photo by STPI. Courtesy of the Pacha Abad Estate.

SILVERLENS Online Viewing Room

Three contemporary artists are featured alongside the late artist through the Art Basel 2021 OVR. Artists who are connected to the artist, either in form or in history. **Pio Abad** (b. 1983, Manila, lives and works in London), **Patricia Perez Eustaquio** (b. 1977 Cebu, lives and works in Baguio City) and **Nicole Coson** (b. 1992, Manila, lives and works in London) are showing curatorially relevant pieces, including new works.





EXHIBITION HISTORY

Pacita Abad: Through the Looking Glass

Curated by Michelle Tan

The Esplanade, Singapore

18 January – 5 April 2020

I know you are angry these days, 2002

oil, silver paper on canvas • 59.06h x 19.69w in • 150h x 50w cm

inquire



Pio Abad

(b. 1983, Manila, lives and based in London) began his art studies at the University of the Philippines before receiving a BA from Glasgow School of Art and an MA from the Royal Academy Schools, London.

Pio Abad's practice is concerned with the social and political signification of things. His work, in a range of media including textiles, drawing, installation and photography, uses strategies of appropriation to mine alternative or repressed historical events, unravel official accounts and draw out threads of complicity between incidents, ideologies and people. Often taking on the form of domestic accessories, Abad's artworks glide seamlessly between these histories, enacting quasi-fictional combinations with their leftovers.

He has recently exhibited at KADIST, San Francisco, USA (2019); Honolulu Biennial, Hawaii (2019); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2018); Art Basel Encounters, Hong Kong (2017); Para Site, Hong Kong (2017); Kadist, Paris (2017); Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (2016); 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2016); EVA International Biennial, Limerick (2016); e-flux, New York City (2015); Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2015); Museum of Contemporary Art and Design Manila (2015); Gasworks, London (2014) and Jorge B. Vargas Museum, Manila (2014).





Notes on Decomposition (Lot No. 322)

ink and gouache on paper 23.50h x 16.54w in

59.70h x 42w cm (unframed)

26.38h x 19.49w x 1.57d in 67h x 49.50w x 4d cm (framed)

inquire





Notes on Decomposition (Lot No. 323)

ink and gouache on paper 23.50h x 16.54w in

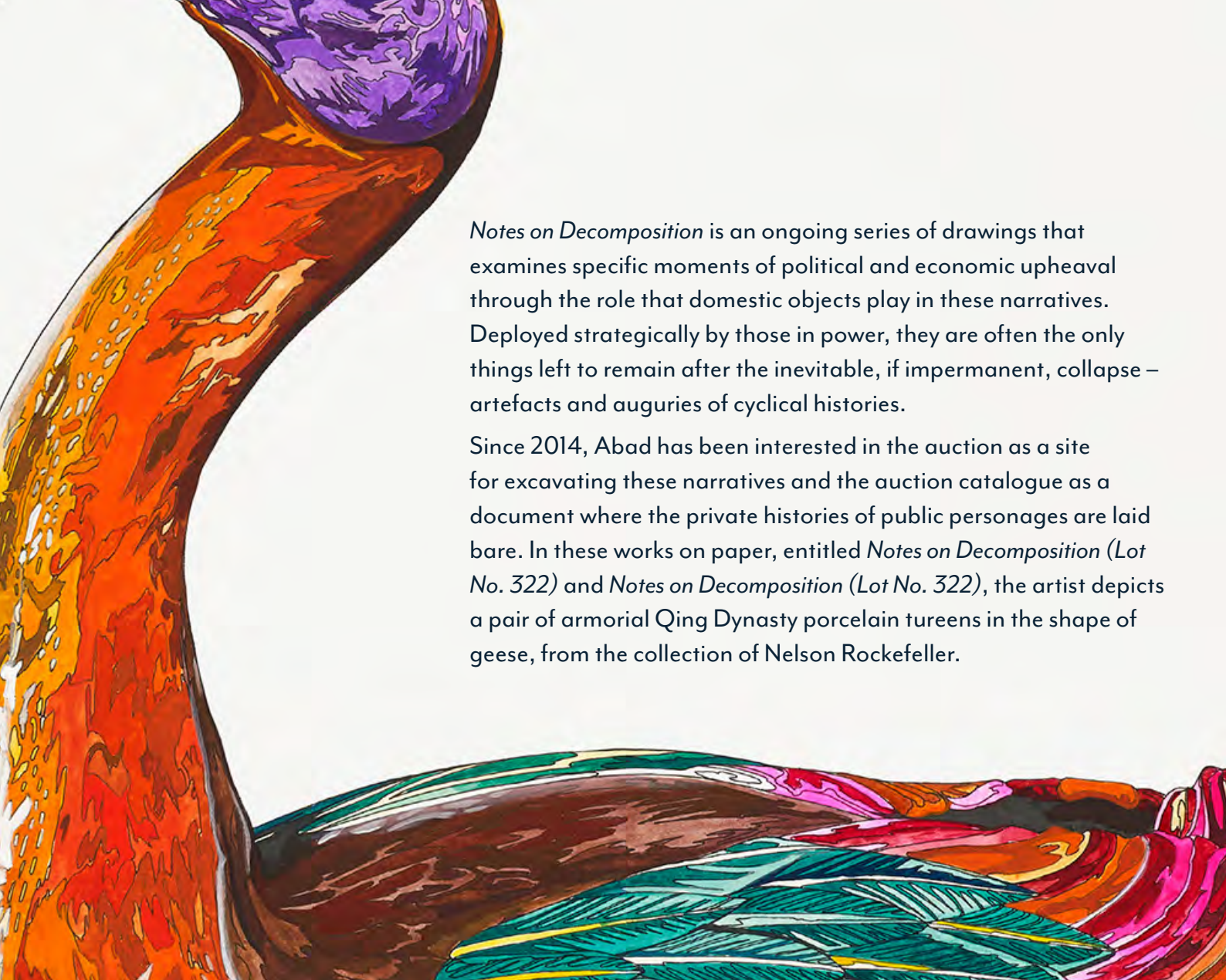
59.70h x 42w cm (unframed)

26.38h x 19.49w x 1.57d in 67h x

49.50w x 4d cm (framed)

inquire





Notes on Decomposition is an ongoing series of drawings that examines specific moments of political and economic upheaval through the role that domestic objects play in these narratives. Deployed strategically by those in power, they are often the only things left to remain after the inevitable, if impermanent, collapse – artefacts and auguries of cyclical histories.

Since 2014, Abad has been interested in the auction as a site for excavating these narratives and the auction catalogue as a document where the private histories of public personages are laid bare. In these works on paper, entitled *Notes on Decomposition (Lot No. 322)* and *Notes on Decomposition (Lot No. 322)*, the artist depicts a pair of armorial Qing Dynasty porcelain tureens in the shape of geese, from the collection of Nelson Rockefeller.

The provenance of these particular items, weave together different threads of colonial and neo-colonial histories. Armorial porcelain, produced specifically during the Qing dynasty for the European market are decorative pieces made to order with European coats-of-arms, commissioned especially by royalty and the directors of the Dutch and East India Company. Nelson Rockefeller served both as the president of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and subsequently as vice-president of Gerald Ford, after the resignation of Richard Nixon. It was under Rockefeller's tenure as president of MoMA's board of trustees that Abstract Expressionism was deployed as a cultural weapon during the Cold War.



“Even when Pacita was geographically unmoored from the Philippines, she constantly drew connections between her home, and the communities and individuals she encountered throughout her travels. Their lives and their histories were an important prism through which she understood her place in the world. ”

Pio Abad

Patricia Perez Eustaquio

(b. 1977) is known for works that span different mediums and disciplines — from paintings, drawings, and sculptures, to the fields of fashion, décor, and craft. She reconciles these intermediary forms through her constant exploration of notions that surround the integrity of appearances and the vanity of objects. Images of detritus, carcasses, and decay are embedded into the handiwork of design, craft, and fashion, while merging the disparate qualities of the maligned and marginalised with the celebrated and desired. From her ornately shaped canvases to sculptures shrouded by fabric, their arrival as fragments, shadows, or memories, according to Eustaquio, underline their aspirations, their vanity, this ‘desire to be desired.’ Her wrought objects — ranging from furniture, textile, brass, and glasswork in manufactured environments — likewise demonstrate these contrasting sensibilities and provide commentary on the mutability of perception, as well as on the constructs of desirability and how it influences life and culture.

A recipient of The Cultural Center of the Philippines’ Thirteen Artists Awards, Patricia Perez Eustaquio has also gained recognition through several residencies abroad, including Art Omi in New York and Stichting Id11 of the Netherlands. She has also been part of several notable exhibitions, such as *The Vexed Contemporary* in the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila; *That Mountain is Coming* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, France; and *An Atlas of Mirrors* in the 2016 Singapore Biennale.

Patricia Perez Eustaquio is currently based in Manila, Philippines.



Patricia Perez Eustaquio



Pulo, 2008

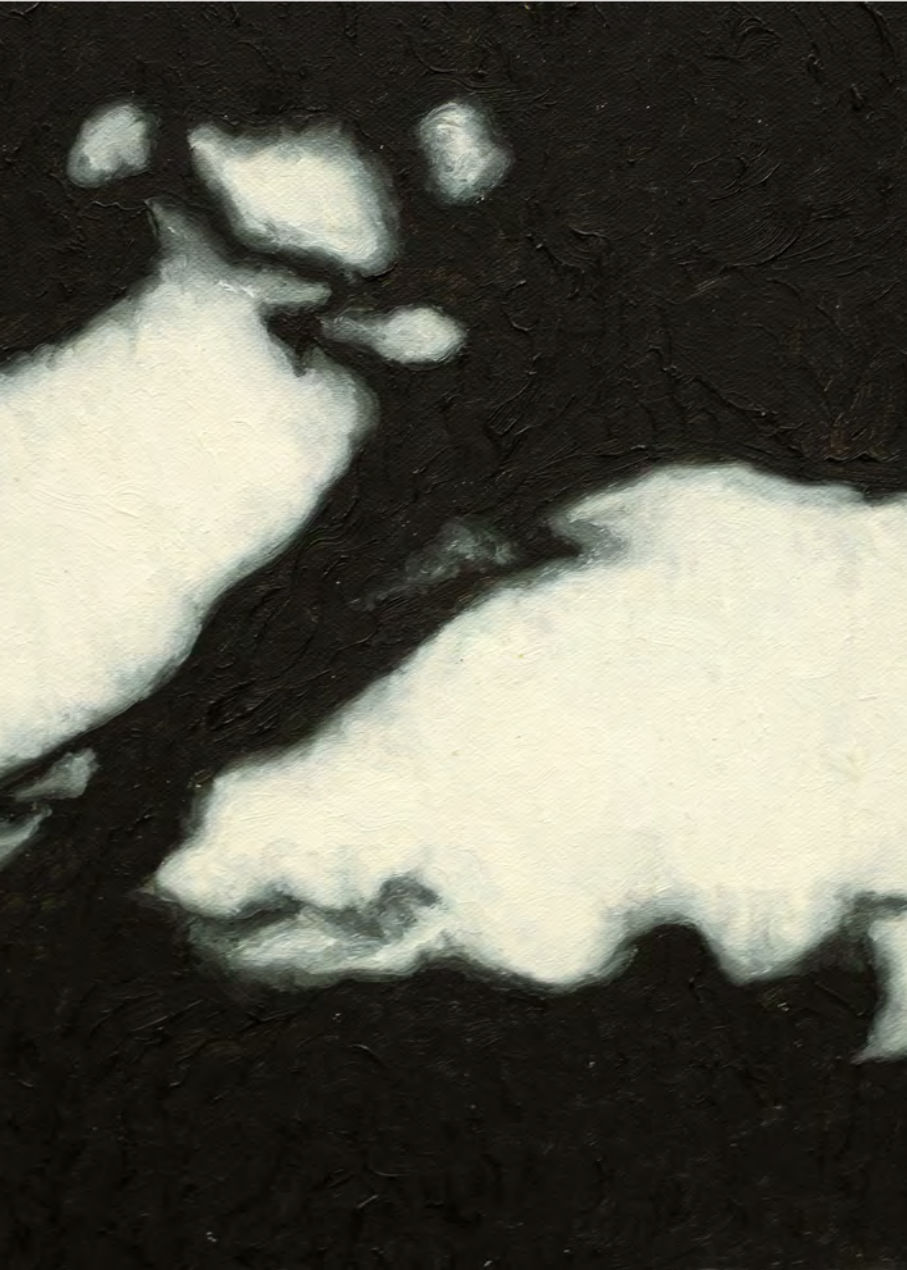
acrylic, oil on canvas

60h x 72w in

152.40h x 182.88w cm

inquire





“I have always sought a roundness to my work, to approach work sculpturally and answer to a compulsion to include oft-overlooked crafts, materials and resources that was perhaps inspired by that encounter with Pacita.”

Patricia Eustaquio was one of the early artists whose work crossed national borders within southeast Asia. Collected widely in the region since then, this piece was part of her first exhibition outside of the Philippines in 2008.



***An Unraveling (Conversation
Among Ruins, After Amorsolo),
2019***

digitally woven tapestry in cotton
and wool

114.17h x 91.34w in

290h x 232w cm

Edition 1 of 3

inquire



Patricia Perez Eustaquio



***Death of Magellan
(After Amorsolo), 2019***

digitally woven tapestry in cotton
and wool

161.42h x 114.96w in

410h x 292w cm

artist proof

inquire



The tapestries Patricia Perez Eustaquio have been working on in the last four years seek to reposition such world views by taking another look at the narratives that have been passed down to us as truths. Two of these tapestries appropriate the work of Fernando Amorsolo, who was, perhaps, the most prolific of the post-colonial Philippine masters. Amorsolo was known for painting idyllic scenes of women lolling in the tropical countryside as well as depicting historic scenes from our local history.





The *Death of Magellan* and the untitled portrait, both by Amorsolo, provide us two views of the Philippines' postcolonial perspective: a lively battle scene between the inhabitants of Mactan, led by their chieftain, Silapulapu, and Magellan and his crew, while the other is a portrait of a woman in her terno sitting in a garden, celebrating male action and female leisure. To view them now, their flatness is astounding, and their digital, woven retelling hopefully compels us to step back to view the entire picture as well as scrutinize the details.

“Pacita showed us her boxes of old photographs, textile swatches and buttons, her memories that found lives as objects, and I was completely struck by her process. It opened up to me the possibility of being an artist not molded after the so-called masters found in art history books, but molded after my own identity and tactility of fibers.”

Patricia Perez Eustaquio

Nicole Coson

(b. 1992, Manila, lives and based in the London) aims to examine the concept of invisibility, not only as a passive position as a result of erasure, the problematic dichotomisation of culture but also its potential as an effective artistic strategy. Can invisibility be seen not just as a disability but as an advantage or ability? Like the optical survival strategies utilised by both prey and predator in the natural world? Who can benefit from this tactic of concealment and dissimulation and how can one apply these strategies?

In her work, Coson explores the economies of visibility and disappearance in the case of overlooked bodies, invisibility in warfare as tactical counter measures, and cultural visibility in art. Coson's work searches for a productive position within invisibility that lends us an opportunity in which we are able to negotiate the terms of our visibility. To vanish and reappear as we please and as necessary to our own personal and artistic objectives, to effectively disappear amongst the grass blades until the very moment we must break that illusion, the very moment when it is time to strike.



Nicole Cason



Untitled, 2020

oil on canvas
59.06h x 51.18w in
150h x 130w cm

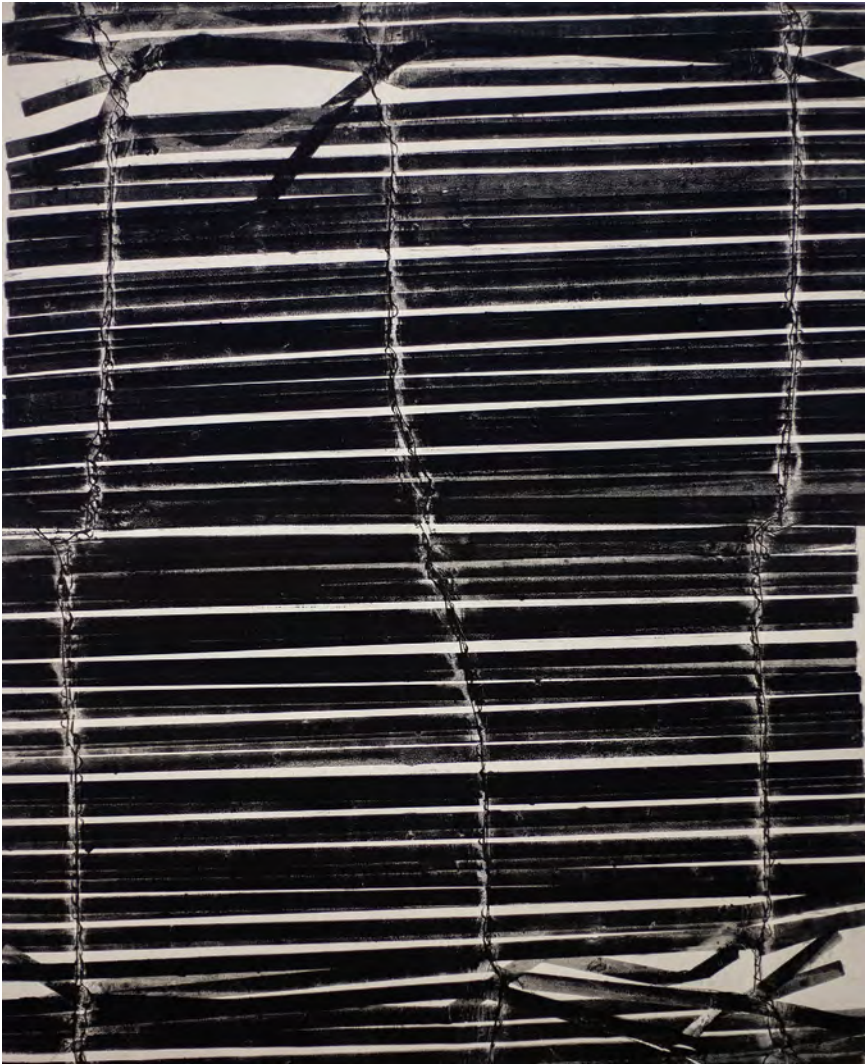
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A large scale work accomplished through monotype printmaking, this belongs to the artist's Camouflage series that captures and reterritorializes within the ambit of the optical, interrogating its capacity to imitate, blend into, and ultimately subsume reality. Drained of its militarized context and its tactical functionality, the "camouflage" in Coson's works holds a mirror to what is essentially another mirroring device in order to expose and cancel out its insidious agency.

While Coson's works are ultimately self-referential and inflected with their own gravity, they gesture at the aesthetics of subterfuge employed by expansionist power. It was in the country when American soldiers, wanting to quell the growing Philippine revolt, opted for khaki—in lieu of blue—uniforms. They would eventually strategize this color to become the skin of disguise and evasion, as ubiquitous as tanks and bombs during wartime. To disappear into the landscape is to disempower the enemy. To camouflage is to colonize.



Untitled, 2021

oil on canvas

62.75h x 50.50w in

159.39h x 128.27w cm

[inquire](#)





Untitled, 2021

oil on canvas

78.50h x 50.75w in

199.39h x 128.91w cm

inquire



This piece is part Nicole Coson's Exoskeleton series.

Composed of large-scale monotype prints that diachronically plots the gradual breakdown of blinds, Coson ruminates on this prosaic architectural solution that negotiates the disclosure/exposure of private life as well as the extent to which the outside may be framed and observed, either through a small gap between the slats or their full retreat into the rail mechanism. Invisibility may be calibrated and made tactical; opacity relents to transparency, and vice versa; the angle of sight is what orders the world.



“Each work a meditation on intimacy and defiance, Pacita Abad intricately depicted the life and experience of a Filipina woman thousands of miles from her country but whose heart was firmly tethered to home.”

Nicole Coson



Pacita Abad



Pio Abad



Patricia Perez Eustaquio



Nicole Coson

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For press inquiries, contact

media@silverlensgalleries.com

media-assistant@silverlensgalleries.com

For all other inquiries, contact

info@silverlensgalleries.com

www.silverlensgalleries.com

PACITA ABAD ESTATE

PIO ABAD

PATRICIA PEREZ EUSTAQUIO

NICOLE COSON

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SILVERLENS

2263 Don Chino Roces Avenue Extension

Makati City, Philippines 1231

T +632.88160044

F +632.88160044

M +63917.5874011

www.silverlensgalleries.com

info@silverlensgalleries.com