

Valued Visionary

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Peru's new 200-sol banknote features pioneering painter Tilsa Tsuchiya



Tsuchiya was born to a Japanese immigrant father and Peruvian-Chinese mother.

PERUVIAN ARTIST TILSA TSUCHIYA rose to prominence in the mid-20th century for depicting Andean myths in a surrealist style. Now this pioneering painter and engraver is once again drawing attention to Peru's cultural diversity and women's contributions to national identity—this time from the front of the new 200-sol banknote.

"Her presence on this banknote honors her legacy and the values she embodies for our nation," Abraham de la Melena, an official at the Central Reserve Bank of Peru, told the *Gestión* newspaper, citing her representation of resilience, creativity, and cultural richness.

The 102-year-old central bank worked with British design company De La Rue to produce a visually compelling note. The front features a portrait of Tsuchiya, surrounded by the fantastical creatures and cosmological motifs that inspired her art. The reverse depicts Peru's diverse flora and fauna, including an Andean cock-of-the-rock, the brightly plumed national bird.

The industry group High Security Printing Latin America in June honored the 200-sol note, the currency's highest denomination, along with smaller bills, as the best new series of 2024. The 200 note also meets high security standards, with a unique machine-readable component, according to Crane Currency, a printer for central banks that worked on the security mea-

asures. Embedded in a vertical stripe of a micro-optic security thread, for example, is an Andean cross of Incan and pre-Incan societies, known as a "chakana," which expands and contracts when the note is tilted.

Other figures celebrated as part of the series include Afro-Peruvian singer Chabuca Granda, novelist José María Arguedas, Inca historian María Rostworowski, and diplomat and engineer Pedro Paulet.

Tsuchiya is regarded as one of Peru's greatest artists. She was born in 1928 to a Japanese immigrant father and Peruvian-Chinese mother in the coastal district of Supe, north of Lima. As a student in Paris in the 1960s, she was influenced by André Breton's surrealist movement. Tsuchiya's art reflects her dual heritage and often incorporates pre-Columbian symbols to address themes of identity, femininity, and mythology in a distinctive style.

As well as recognizing a great Peruvian artist, the 200-sol banknote is a reminder of the nation's rich heritage. It connects people with a legacy of creativity, resilience, and cultural pride. **F&D**

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Tsuchiya's
oil-on-
canvas
Bodegón
still life
is dated
1971.