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DEL SIGLO XX

English Edition



# 21 PERUVIAN INTELLECTUALS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Curator's Texts

# **21 Peruvian Intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Curator's Texts - English version**

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# Foreword



## 21 Peruvian Intellectuals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Welcome! You are about to travel back in time, one hundred years into an astonishing time, the years when Peru celebrated its first Centennial as a free nation, and the following decades (1920-1930), a time when almost everything was changing.

This virtual exhibition shows a plurality of views on that period, the views of these 21 personalities, whose lives and work incarnated the transformations that were taking place in History and in their present: the dreams and hopes of a great country. If today, as Peru reaches the Bicentennial, we are better prepared to face the challenges of equality, diversity, justice and democracy — the Banners of the Bicentennial of Peru— it is largely thanks to the legacy of these transforming, revolutionary generations, that we have tried to synthesize in the lives of 11 extraordinary women and 10 extraordinary men.

## About the selection

It was not easy to choose our 21 intellectuals. To do it, we began by establishing a broad definition of “intellectual”, one that would let us find room not only for philosophers and humanists, but also for artists and creators, as well as for scientists and researchers.

The hardest part was not so much that of the names that would remain, but of those who would be left behind. Our selection has a feature that we consider mandatory in our days but did not exist a hundred years ago: gender equity, with which we have forced a reality in which there were always more men than women in the historical sources. Because of this, we think it is necessary to warn our visitors that they should not picture in their imagination an idea of gender equality that did not really exist in those times. Our selection of women intellectuals points in this direction because it was then that the first ideas of gender equity were born, and strengthened the struggles that would lead to our current awareness of this issue.

Peru was a highly centralized country then. The lives of our 21 intellectuals took place mainly in Lima, if not abroad (think of César Vallejo in Paris, Magda Portal and Haya de la Torre exiled in Mexico, César Moro in Mexico and France, Laura Meneses migrating to Puerto Rico and Cuba, or Rosa Arciniega traveling to Madrid and Buenos Aires). We have tried to represent the different regions of the country, at least in terms of the places where our 21 were born.

We do not wish to debate the importance of certain person in our past. On the contrary: we have selected our intellectuals in such a way that each one of them is a door to others, to those whom we could not include. Each biography wants to invite you to come into this journey in time: the knowledge of our history, and discover the relations among them.

# The Times

## A Changing World

By the 1920s, following Europe's leadership and rule, the world was changing fast. The slow but troubled 19<sup>th</sup> Century was now moving into a stage of vertigo. The era of empires and expansionism was beginning to lose the battle against the emerging national identities: the rising of nationalism. The celebration of the First Centennial of Latin American countries' Independence, which began in 1910 in Argentina, Chile, Mexico and other countries, played an important part in the growth of nationalism in this times. Another rising force was that of populism.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a Second Industrial Revolution was taking place. Electricity and magnetism occupied central places in it, but there also was the growing "internal combustion" economy: the era of the automobile began, and with it, the urgent demand for fossil fuels that would dominate modern times and eventually lead to climate risk.

This technical revolution drew the attention of new social subjects: the masses. Now a powerful working class was approaching socialist and communist theories and parties; the proletariat of the industrialized countries was eager to fight for better conditions. But against their force, a new conservatism also grew: urban middle classes that were demanding agricultural and industrial products because they had a surplus of money to spend — at least until the economic crisis of the early 30s —, and these middle classes allied themselves with decadent aristocracies and great industrialists and bankers.

In the huge periphery of imperialist Europe, ever bigger masses of peasants were reacting against unfair domination and exploitation systems. Peasant emergence, together with that of the workers,

was to provoke outbreaks that would change the ways of thinking throughout the world. Eventually, they will produce, as happened in Peru in the 1920s, a generation of men and women dedicated to transform both the ideas and the reality.

Mexican Revolution, carried out by peasant masses, ignited the ideas of change of young people who, throughout the continent, witnessed injustices of the same nature. On the other side of the world, immense Mother Russia made the world's bones tremble, in October 1917, when the socialist revolution became triumphant. The establishment of a different order than liberal capitalism, promised to abolish the sources of all injustice, and expanded like wild-fire around the globe.

Simultaneously, the end of World War I in 1918, closed 19th Century's style of imperialism. Germany got trapped by the Treaty of Versailles while the old Austro-Hungarian empire was dismembered in a dozen nations. 20 years later — the same 20 years that our exhibition focuses — another terrible war, WWII, was raging and setting an end for this luminous period for culture, the arts and for human knowledge.

Between 1919 (the fall of the Austro-Hungarian empire) and 1939 (the beginning of WWII), science and the arts lived a golden age. It was the era of the University Reform and the avant-garde: romanticism had fallen behind the force of modernity, and perspectives, genres and styles — the “isms” — were multiplying. Everything was questioned, everything could be transformed.

## The End of the Aristocratic Republic in Peru

Latin America entered the new modernizing stage of the 1920s under the influence and economic and technical domination of the United States and Western Europe, powers that imported Peruvian natural resources through simple extractive or agricultural

industries. The oligarchic order that Jorge Basadre named “The Aristocratic Republic”, disappears to form a different system, led by President Augusto B. Leguía, whose authoritarian style was imposed over the growing threat of working and peasant masses, fighting for justice.

An incipient proletariat began to grow slowly in Peru, made up mainly of workers in the large sugar and cotton agricultural industries of the Pacific coast. In the North, in La Libertad, the first modern political party in Peru, was founded: APRA, based on the germ of an agrarian unionism.

In Lima, San Marcos University was also growing and accommodating new students from an incipient middle class, looking forward to a society that required new professionals in different areas. But its old structure was unable to support its growth and, following the impulse of the University Reform of 1918 in Cordoba, Argentina, San Marcos students — and teachers like Julio C. Tello — started a movement to strengthen the social impact of higher education in society. In the first line of this movement, were Raúl Porras Barrenechea and Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre.

Peruvian women began at this stage the struggle for the recognition of their equality in an atavistic and patriarchal society. Although the full recognition of their Constitutional rights will only come in the 1950s and even later, that would represent the fruit of the seeds sown by the pioneers of feminism in the 20s and 30s.

But the environment in which both, political thought and political action towards equity and justice have to develop, was adverse. The economic power was still concentrated in a few hands, and politics were shaped, government after government, in a conservative position that outlawed all social thinking.

## Dora Mayer



Dora Mayer was 17 years old when the War of the Pacific ended. Among our 21 intellectuals, she is the elder and one of the longest-lived. She was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1868, and died in Lima 90 years later. She was only five years old when her parents decided to go into exile from the Prussian empire for political reasons. They settled in the port of Callao, and both participated in the vast education of their daughter, who would never stop preparing herself in a self-taught way. She published her first novel in Germany (*A Life Contrast*, 1895), and by the start of the 20th Century she wrote on political and economic issues for *El Comercio*.

In 1909, together with Pedro Zulen and Joaquín Capelo, she founded the *Asociación Pro-Indígena*, dedicated to defend the rights of Peruvian original peoples. The association was the ulti-

mate predecessor of the indigenista perspective. *Amauta's* first issue (1926) published a report written by Dora on the activities of the association, and from then on she would collaborate frequently in Mariátegui's magazine. Her work in favor of indigenous population led her in 1940 to the Inter-American Indigenist Congress held in Pátzcuaro, Mexico, which Dora attended as official Peruvian representative.

Following her relationship with her husband, Zulen, descendant of the Chinese community emigrated into Peru, Dora was also the first to highlight Chinese contribution to contemporary Peru as well as the need for respect to their culture. Thus, Dora Mayer is also a forerunner of inter-cultural thinking in Peru.

Her intellectual work included research and journalism (she collaborated in many magazines and newspapers), as well as narrative and theater. She embodied her social and political activism in writings that addressed a variety of issues. She was director of *El Deber Pro-Indígena* (1912-1916, the association's magazine) and, together with Miguelina Acosta Cárdenas, the magazine *La Crítica* (1917-1920), dedicated to the promotion of feminism, trade unionism and indigenous rights. She also directed *Concordia* (1928-1929) and *El Trabajo* (1931-1934) magazines.

As a precursor of feminist thought and of the struggle for women's rights to participate in all spheres of society and politics, she attended the International Women's Congress of the Argentine Republic, held in Buenos Aires in May 1910 (although not officially representing Peru), a meeting that reached conclusions on equal civil and legal rights, the right to divorce, labor regulations to protect workers' rights and compulsory public education.

Although the outstanding actions of Dora Mayer in all these areas began much earlier than those of the rest of our 21 Intellectuals, her work was especially active in the 1920s and 1930s, and was linked to the various networks formed then: she was a pioneer and an active participant in the debates of that era in transformation. She died in Callao in January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1959.

# Angélica Palma



Angélica Palma is an emblematic writer of the change of regime, of the passage from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century literary styles to the concerns of the new times. She is also the first philologist dedicated to study the work of Ricardo Palma, her father, and to disseminate it on behalf of Peru beyond our borders. As a sad token of this, let's recall the event of her death, which found her in Argentina in 1935 (she was only 56 years old), where she was on a lecture tour on the *Tradicionista*, of whom Angélica was the eldest daughter and his closest assistant.

She was born in Lima in 1878. She began writing as a teenager, while she was still attending the Liceum for Young Women, directed by famous teacher Teresa González de Fanning. In 1892 she traveled with her father to Spain and became acquainted with the cultural environment around the Congress of Americanists to which Don

Ricardo Palma attended. There, Angélica saw her father defend the American forms of Spanish speech, which until then were considered “incorrect” compared to those of the old Colonial power.

She published her first writings using a pseudonym in *Prisma*, a magazine directed by Clemente Palma, her brother and an important writer and journalist himself. In 1918 her first novels appeared in Spain and Peru, some of them signed with pseudonyms. She addressed romantic and traditional themes, in a modernist style. The 1920s would see the publication of more mature novels that would grant her greater recognition: the Buenos Aires International Literary Contest Award for her historical novel *Coloniaje romántico*, and, back in Lima, the award of the commemorative contest for the Centennial of the Battle of Ayacucho, with another historical novel: *Tiempos de la Patria vieja*.

In 1923 she lived with two of her sisters in Madrid, where she supervised the compilation and edition of the *Complete Peruvian Traditions* for Calpe publishing house. This was the beginning of her research on her father’s work, that would produce the biographical novel *Ricardo Palma. El Tradicionista*, in 1927. In Spain, she also worked with the literary environment of the time, offering lectures for the famous Ateneo de Madrid.

Her most famous book is *Por senda propia* (1921), with a foreword by José de la Riva Agüero that emphasized her descriptions of “patriarchal customs that the Colony bequeathed to the first two decades of Independence”. In many of her novels, women characters show awareness of their subordinate position to men and develop a vindictive attitude: a feminist thinking beginning to emerge. Although it is not possible to say that she is a precursor of feminism like Flora Tristán or Dora Mayer were, the importance of picturing a woman who, through literary and historical fiction, denounces her subordinate position in texts so widely spread, should not be overlooked. Her books were effectively read by a very wide audience in and outside Peru: works written by an author recognized institutionally as representative of the national identity 100 years ago.

## Julio C. Tello



“The most original and creative of historical researchers,” wrote Luis Alberto Sánchez to describe with few words the founder of modern Peruvian Archaeology. His legacy is one of the most invaluable in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Peru.

Julio César Tello Rojas was born in 1880 in Huarochirí, in the Central Andes of Peru. His father was a farmer, but he preferred to send Julio to Lima to continue studying after completing primary school in his hometown. In 1900, at the age of 20, he entered the Faculty of Medicine in San Marcos University, where he befriended one of Ricardo Palma’s sons and, eventually, the writer himself, who would support him through employment in the National Library and in the Raimondi Museum. His interests in historical and archaeological research would ignite there, as was reflected by the medical thesis on sexually transmitted diseases in ancient Peru with which he obtained his first degree.

A scholarship granted by the Government allowed him to continue his studies at Harvard University, in the United States, where

he learned from important archaeologists of the time. He continued Anthropology studies in Germany and returned to Peru in 1913 to develop an astonishing research trajectory. Raúl Porras Barrenechea describes him: “The first scientific archaeologist in Peru, nourished by European science and technique, Tello merges all the qualities of his predecessors in his archaeological work.”

His systematic explorations applying cutting-edge archaeological research methods, provided definitive discoveries for the task of reconstructing the Peruvian and South American pre-Hispanic past, which, until then, was an almost totally unknown territory, subject to interpretations closer to myths and legends than to scientific knowledge. The record of his discoveries lies in his invaluable written legacy: *Trepanation in the Yauyos of Peru* (1912), *Arawak, South American Linguistic Fragment* (1913), *The Ancient Cemeteries of Nazca Valley* (1917), *Introduction to Peruvian Ancient History* (1921), *Antique Peru* (1929), *Origin and Development of Prehistoric Andean Civilizations* (1942), *On the Discovery of the Chavín Culture in Peru* (1940), *Vira-Kocha* (1949), *Paracas* (1959), and many more.

One of them shows another of Tello’s main concerns; one that is also one of his greatest legacies. As early as 1918 he wrote *Present and Future of the National Museum*, where he analyzed his apprenticeship as a curator, his experience in heritage preservation, a work carried out as a Congressman for Huarochirí since 1913, and his concern for the dissemination of archaeological and historical discoveries and knowledge. In other words, he was aware of the educational importance that the knowledge of the past has for the construction of identity and for national projection into the future. His museum-related legacy is a central part of our national heritage. In 1919 he founded the University of San Marcos’ Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, and acted as its director until his death. In 1924 he organized and directed the Museum of Peruvian Archeology and the Institute of Archaeological Research, and in 1945 he formed the National Museum of Archeology and Anthropology to bring together the previously dispersed heritage.

# Julia Codesido



Julia Codesido was a plastic artist whose work played an active and central role in the Peruvian aesthetic and political avant-garde from the early 1920s, and continued her activity until the 1970s.

Julia Codesido Estenós was born in Lima in 1883. Her father, Bernardino Codesido Oyague, was a diplomat, so during her youth she lived and traveled in Europe. Those were years of learning in the Old Continent's explosive cultural and artistic atmosphere of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Back in Lima, she was part of the very first class in the recently founded National School of Fine Arts. From 1920 on, she studied in José Sabogal's workshop, where the creation of *indigenismo* was taking place.

Julia was one of the main artists in this Peruvian avant-garde, while she worked in connection with Mariátegui's *Amauta* maga-

zine. In 1928 she designed *7 Essays on the Interpretation of Peruvian Reality*'s famous front cover, a symbol of the earthly force with which the first graphic indigenism accompanied Mariátegui's revolutionary theory. "Each of her paintings, even when Julia does not consciously intends so, is beyond a realist interpretation. There is always creation in her paintings," he wrote about her work, which, although it was always close to the indigenista canon, was able to broaden its scope by incorporating elements from other graphic languages alive in those brilliant years. This gave her work a particular and unique identity, finely differentiated from that of other representatives of the indigenist style.

Her first solo exhibition took place in 1929, in the hall of Alcedo National Academy of Music (which would soon become the Conservatory). Two years later she showed her work at San Marcos University. In 1935 she went to Mexico and exhibited her work in the Palace of Fine Arts' gallery; David Alfaro Siqueiros wrote her presentation text. There she absorbed the influence of the vigorous Mexican *Muralismo* movement, whose influence she would later bring to Peru. In 1936 she had a show in New York and in 1939, just before the war, in Paris. During the 1950s, after an exhibition at Lima Gallery, she returned to Paris — where she was part of a tri-personal show titled *Three American Artists*, with Marina Núñez del Prado and Irene Arnau — and Barcelona. In 1959 she was back to Mexico, showing her work at the Museum of Modern Art. The following decade saw retrospectives that recognized her powerful trajectory, and during the 70s, this recognition would be extended with the National Culture Award (1976).

Julia died in Lima in 1979; she was 96 years old. Her legacy lies not only in her engravings (for *Amauta* and *Minerva* publishing house) and paintings, but also in her teaching and in the way in which she worked her aesthetic proposal without pause, without a doubt, throughout a very long life, passing from the first indigenist figurative style, to abstract art with an expressionist language.

# Miguelina Acosta Cárdenas



The daughter of a wealthy *cauchero* (rubber merchant), Miguelina Acosta Cárdenas was born in Yurimaguas, Loreto — the heart of Peruvian Amazon — in 1887. She traveled to Europe together with her mother when she was very young, and there she absorbed the revolutionary atmosphere of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which would mark her ideas and struggle in Peru. In those days, her commitment to education and development grew strong: she founded a school for young women in Yurimaguas, as well as the first experience of first-childhood education in the country.

Miguelina was also the first Peruvian woman to graduate from Law School in San Marcos University, in 1920. She obtained a Bachelor's degree with a thesis titled *Our Institution of Marriage Lowers the Legal and Social Status of Women*. The title itself shows a truly revolutionary vision of gender equality in a time when this sound-

ed very strange. She obtained a PhD with another radical thesis: *Necessary Reforms of the Peruvian Common Civil Code Aimed at Making Effective the Civil and Legal Equality of Men and Women*.

She participated in the Asociación Pro-Indígena with Dora Mayer, and then jumped to activism pushing in favor of workers' demands. She was President of the Comité Femenino Pro-Abaratamiento de Subsistencias, a women's organization grouping workers, merchants and housewives who demanded a stop to rises in the prices of basic products. The next trade-union strategy was the strike. Miguelina supported the workers' strike declared in Lima and Callao from May 27 to June 5, 1919, an unprecedented event in a country that was still living in the atmosphere of the Aristocratic Republic. So, Miguelina faced *gamonalismo* both from her articles in *Amauta* and other media, as from litigation conducted by her law firm. This is why she is known as the first litigating female lawyer in Peru.

In 1924, Miguelina participated in the Pan-American Conference of Women, held in Lima, and she was a member of the Peruvian installment of the International League of Women for Peace and Freedom. She then dedicated herself to teaching women in workers' training schools, convinced that education was the instrument to achieve a more equitable society. In the field of education, she transcended teaching, and went on with analysis and education theory, concluding that it was necessary to advocate for secular and rationalist public instruction. She opposed the legal figure of *tutela* or guardianship of women, by which they could not legally represent themselves (a man — father or husband — had to do it), and she defended the rights of women to work and to a fair wage.

Miguelina died in Lima in 1933, at the age of 45. What she built in such a short space of time is a true marvel, if we also think that she did it with absolutely everything against her: men and traditional patriarchy family values; the Church, the State. Her faith in reason, in law and justice, and in education to achieve equality among classes and genders is a living example for us today, when we know that we still have a long way to go.

# José Sabogal



His name is an undeniable symbol in the history of modern Peruvian art. Thanks to him, to his participation in the early project of the National School of Fine Arts, Peru contributed a language to the avant-garde dialogue of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, especially during the initial stage of *Indigenismo*, the style that Sabogal created and that was first showed in the pages of *Amauta* and the covers of *Minerva*, Mariátegui's publishing house.

José Arnaldo Sabogal Diéguez was born in 1888 in Cajabamba, Cajamarca. After completing primary studies in Trujillo and working for a time at Hacienda Chicama, he traveled to Europe (Italy, France, Spain) and Northern Africa when he was 20 years old. Between 1910 and 1913 he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, and in 1920, Daniel Hernández authorized the opening of his painting workshop at the newly founded School of Fine Arts in Lima. In this workshop, a new visual perspective, focused on the Andes and its original inhabitants, and separated

from the Western canon, would be born. It would soon be called *Indigenismo* and would join the global dialogue of the aesthetic avant-garde, while lending its sense of identity to a new Peru. His role in illustration and his reflections on popular and modern art in *Amauta* would mean that during those years, indigenismo was also considered in the political dimension that Mariátegui headed.

When the School of Fine Arts was installed, in 1918, it opened the way to the *Neoperuano* style. The most representative expression of this aesthetic discourse lies in the frontispiece of the school itself, the work of Spanish sculptor Manuel Piqueras Cotoí. But this style portrayed the idealized pre-Hispanic indigenous with a decorative, modernist perspective. Sabogal would come shortly after to claim an aesthetic vision based in the present and the local. It would be a new idealization, but a nationalist and popular one, with the essential characteristic of the avant-garde: the will to transform reality.

In creative alliance with Mariátegui, before being assigned the direction of the School of Fine Arts, Sabogal served as artistic director for *Amauta*. Together with Julia Codesido, he developed, in addition to his own illustrations and typefaces, a policy of dialogue between the avant-garde of the time: Mexican *Muralismo* and *Estridentismo*, Constructivism, Futurism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism, and more, they all coexisted in a visual narrative consistent with the revolutionary legacy of the magazine. A symbolist and decadentist language will become Sabogal's avant-garde language for the 1920s.

In 1932, when his work was at its peak, Sabogal was appointed Director of the School of Fine Arts and began a radical transformation. He declared the independence of Peruvian art from the Western canon to the extent that he even removed from the courtyards and corridors of the academic cloister the traces of Greco-Roman and Renaissance sculpture reproductions, that had been the pride of the School's heritage, so that they would not "contaminate" the formative process of the students, who now had to look for their models in the Andes and its current inhabitants: the discourse would be in charge of highlighting their dignity and would be central in the formation of our identity.

# César Vallejo



Vallejo, himself, represents a whole avant-garde. Innovative by nature, pioneer of so many roads, creator of new possibilities for language, César Vallejo is one of the greatest writers in the universal history of poetry. Starting with *Trilce* (1922), his work prefigures other avant-garde poetics that were forming in his time. Without being attached to any group, he opened all the doors language can cross.

César Abraham Vallejo Mendoza was born in Santiago de Chuco, La Libertad, in 1892, where he spent his childhood. During his youth he alternated seasonally between Santiago de Chuco, Huamachuco and Trujillo, and experienced the hardness of mining workers and indigenous peasants' lives. He first published in local newspapers and magazines, and participated in the same literary and students' groups with Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre.

In 1917 he moved to Lima to follow studies at the University — studies he would not complete — and there he established contact

with the capital's intelligentsia, including Clemente Palma (who had bitterly criticized his poems) and the ideological leader of the progressive youth, the anarchist thinker Manuel González Prada. But his closest relationships were writers and poets such as Abraham Valdelomar, Luis Alberto Sánchez and José Carlos Mariátegui. In 1919, still under the influence of modernism, he published *Los heraldos negros*.

Back in Trujillo in 1920, a misunderstanding — perhaps a trap set against him in the context of sugarcane workers' trade-union struggles — led him to prison. His process was never closed, although he was paroled and returned to Lima, where he published *Trilce*, his first avant-garde collection of poems (which did not find a positive reception). Shortly after, *Escalas melografiadas* appeared, with avant-garde verse and prose that anticipates elements that will be shown in other revolutionary works of those years' authors.

Almost immediately afterwards, he decided to travel to Europe; he would never come back to Peru, but he maintained active contact, especially collaborating for *Amauta* and acting as a representative of the Parisian cell of Mariátegui's Socialist Party. The relationship with Georgette Philippart, a French young woman who would be his permanent partner, began in 1927. They traveled to the Soviet Union on several occasions; and through many places in Europe. César put poetry aside to write essays and fiction (he also wrote theater and practiced journalism). Works such as the proletarian-indigenous novel *El tungsteno* and the short story *Paco Yunque*, a masterful piece on power and class struggle, are from these days.

He also supported the Spanish Republic through his participation in intellectual groups, and traveled to Spain on several occasions during the Civil War. These experiences produced poetic work that shows a deep solidarity with human pain: *Poemas humanos* and *España, aparta de mí este cáliz*.

It is hard to evaluate such a diverse and profound work as Vallejo's. It is here where the idea of "invaluable" comes really at hand. An up-to-date, humane (more than humanist) work, filled with solidarity; a work truly universal.

# José Carlos Mariátegui



José Carlos Mariátegui was not only a writer, but also a researcher and political theorist, a great “hub” of intelligences, discourses and current affairs, and a systematic effort to transform social reality towards a new order of justice and equality. The tools with which he carried out such a titanic work in such a short time — he passed away when he was only 35 years old — were mainly *Amauta* and other magazines, Minerva publishing house and the Socialist Party of Peru founded by him and other politicians of the time. Naturally, he achieved these goals in companionship with some of the brightest and most advanced minds both inside and outside Peru.

He was born in Moquegua in 1895, into a humble family. From a very young age he struggled with a fragile health, which probably got worse because of the situation of deprivation in which he grew up. He learned in a self-taught way and worked in journalis-

tic printing workshops since he was a child, which put him in early contact with the technical tasks of printing but also with writing and journalism. In 1916, in Lima, having published a chronicle under a pseudonym, he participated in Abraham Valdelomar's Colónida group, and wrote what he would later call "the stone age", referring to his youthful poetry and literary narrative.

But it was journalism — the dissemination of knowledge and active debate — what interested him most. He founded magazines: *Nuestro Tiempo*, *La Razón*, while his ideas approached socialism. He would soon become the first great Latin American Marxist theorist, and his work will be at the headline of social analysis of our continent from the Historical-Dialectical Materialism point of view: the Marxist method.

In 1919, President Augusto B. Leguía shut *La Razón*, as the magazine's pages had been encouraging claims and demands of people's movements. He went to Italy, where he interacted with some of the main leaders of European communism, then full of life. His ideas grew in accuracy and so did the adaptation of Marxism for explaining Peruvian reality, which would become a valid lesson for the whole of Latin America. He married Anna Chiappe in Italy, and in 1923 he came back to Peru with a family, ready to undertake the project that three years later (a delay due to health issues) would be *Amauta*. Meanwhile, he collaborated with *Variedades* and *Mundial* magazines, the most widespread of the time, with characteristic color covers.

Mariátegui suffered political persecution by Leguía's rule, along with other leaders such as Haya de la Torre, with whom he has shared political goals. He would break ties with the leader of APRA in 1928.

Although his journalism and the essays he published in magazines are numerous, he only published two books as such: *La escena contemporánea* and the classic *7 Essays on the Interpretation of Peruvian Reality*, a foundational book of mandatory reading for all those who want to achieve a deep understanding of Peru, both that of yesterday as that of tomorrow.

## María Wiese



Her texts were among the most versatile presences on *Amauta's* pages, where she gave voice to women's expectations. At the same time, she made a scathing commentary of her days and was especially active as a pioneer of film criticism in Peru: if anyone embodies the impact of cinema on early 20<sup>th</sup> Century society, this was María Wiese, commentator of the moving pictures, among the first to understand cinema as one of the Fine Arts.

María Jesús Isabel Wiese Romero was born in Lima in 1894. Her father, historian Carlos Wiese, was employed by an international corporation, so the family traveled to Switzerland, where María attended first school. Upon their return to Peru, she began to collaborate in *Variedades*, *Mundial* and other magazines and newspapers. She established a solid relationship with the group around

*Amauta* and Mariátegui. She married José Sabogal, and eventually she would write beautiful biographies of both Sabogal and Mariátegui.

As a critic of contemporary culture, not only she devoted herself to the commentary and dissemination of cinema, but also of academic music, of which she was a great *connoisseur*. She wrote music criticism and disseminated the work of the great composers both in printed media and through the radio. During many years, she held a classical music program on Radio Nacional (she also published an entertaining *Journey to the Country of Music* in 1943).

She also wrote novels and, as she herself called *La huachafita* (1927), “novel essays”. The latter is a genre-style novel but in a satirical tone that uncovers the complexities and banalities of Limeñan bourgeoisie with a corrosive attention that can also be found in her many articles for *Amauta*. Texts that pushed towards the recognition of gender equality stand out: in *Amauta*’s 4th issue, she wrote: “In vain have the moralists shouted against the mutilation of female hair and against the skirt that reveals the whole leg... In this century of tennis and swimming female champions, of *chauffeuses*, female voters, office workers, journalists and lawyers, the hair and the long suit were anachronistic and uncomfortable.”

Porras Barrenechea wrote: “Wiese’s work on history and geography was thus enormous, silent and ennobling.” She also wrote short stories, some of which pioneered modern Peruvian children’s literature. She approached the genre with samples of an indigenist fiction narrative, close to what the painters led by Sabogal were doing visually, as in the short story “Veneno” (published in *Amauta*), another invaluable legacy for the reflection on our identity.

## Laura Meneses del Carpio



She was one of the best students at San Marcos University's School of Natural Sciences, where she obtained her first degree. She also was the first Latin American woman to attend Radcliffe College, women's unit of Harvard University, in Boston, USA. Life would take her on unsuspected paths and would give her the recognition of countries different from Peru. We believe that although her life did not let her shine as the scientist she promised to be, Laura Meneses should be recognized as one of the exemplary women on the path to equality in the educational and professional fields.

She was born in Arequipa in 1894 and graduated as a biologist in Lima before 1920, the year she was accepted in Harvard. The adversity a woman faced in the Peruvian academic and scientific world was not very different from that of Boston (even worse for an immigrant woman from South America). However, Laura achieved a PhD in Biochemistry from that institution.

But one day, at a Rabindranath Tagore's talk, she met Puerto Rican lawyer and politician Pedro Albizu Campos, one of the most radical leaders of the movement for the Independence of Puerto Rico from US rule during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Pedro fell hopelessly in love with Laura and, although at first she did not seem interested, two years later they married in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Laura put aside her academic career to follow her husband's political struggle. She accompanied him in such solidarity, specially during the long jail periods he suffered, forced into silence, that she has been called the true "voice of the Revolution". Albizu's life would turn into a tidal wave of persecutions, prison entries and exits, secrecy and exile, so Laura and Pedro were separated for very long periods, giving one another unconditional support from the distance, facing deprivation and poverty and even escaping from attempts on their own lives.

At a certain point, around 1948, Laura became a displaced person. During her time at Harvard she had chosen to become a naturalized American, which had caused her to lose her original Peruvian nationality because at that time two nationalities could not coexist in one person. But the political persecution undertaken by US Government against the independence Puerto Rican fighters culminated in the withdrawal of Laura's US citizenship: she became a displaced person (a person with no nationality).

She continued to represent her imprisoned husband and to denounce US imperialism. In 1950, she went to Cuba, but dictator Batista did not welcome her. Then she was granted political asylum in Mexico. Her apartment in Mexico City became one of the places where the group of adventurers led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara got together, the group that would lead the 1959 Cuban socialist Revolution. She emigrated to Cuba where she continued to be a spokesperson of Latin American struggles for liberation, and an ambassador of solidarity among its peoples. "For Hispanic Americans, Homeland is the continent, Laura thought and acted accordingly. She generated a movement at a continental level," her grand-daughter Rosa Meneses Albizu Campos said when celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth in 2019.

## Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre



The figure of this important politician and writer, born in Trujillo in 1895, continues to exert its influence in the public sphere of our country today. 100 years ago, Haya de la Torre was a leader for the university students of Peru, a task he undertook through the consciousness acquired after observing the exploitation conditions in which the majority of peasants and workers in the country lived. He studied Education and Law at San Marcos University, and absorbed the influence of Manuel González Prada, the great anarchist thinker of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He vigorously opposed President Augusto B. Leguía during the *oncenio* (his second term, authoritarian and dictatorial) and was exiled in 1923, at the age of 28.

Exile took him to Mexico, where the government emanating from the revolutionary conflict was being consolidated. He worked

with famous creator of the new Mexican public education system, José Vasconcelos, and founded in Mexico, in 1924, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). Back in Peru, in 1930, he would re-found APRA as the Peruvian Aprista Party, which would soon be banned (during the next authoritarian government, that of Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro).

The Aprista Party existed under proscription for decades, and Haya, consecutively persecuted by Presidents Leguía, Sánchez Cerro, Benavides and Odría, was a political prisoner or exiled on several occasions (between 1949 and 1955, being hunted by Odría, he remained in political asylum in the premises of the Colombian embassy in Lima, because the Government refused to grant him safe passage to effective asylum in Colombia).

Starting in the 1950s, Haya and Aprismo began to ideologically turn towards less radical positions than in the past, and finally reached a “coexistence” with successive conservative governments; the original spirit of Aprismo seemed to fade. Haya died in 1979 without winning in any presidential election in which he contended. He could not witness either the victory of APRA with Alan García in 1985.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Haya and APRA clashed with the ruling oligarchy side by side with the more radical socialism represented by Mariátegui. If the ideas of the latter were more radical and pointed to the revolutionary transformation of Peru following the postulates of his Latin American revision of Marxism, those of Haya and Aprismo were more effective in achieving the recognition and support of broad sectors of the population. Aprismo has historically been a mass party similar to the great parties of the era of populism in Europe and other countries; it is also the oldest of Peruvian parties today. Aprismo appeared driven by this extraordinary young student who saw the need to transform the country in search of justice and equality.

## Ángela Ramos



One of the most renowned professionals in the history of Peruvian journalism; a symbol of feminist struggles as well as of social movements against exploitation and a protector of those persecuted and of prisoners, to whose dignified treatment she dedicated part of her intense activity. Her commitment to social causes is a model of active responsibility before the community to which we belong, in addition to having left a pioneering legacy in professional research journalism and in genres such as the in-depth interview and the chronicle.

Ángela Ramos Relayze was born in El Callao in 1896 and grew up in that environment, where she attended basic and secondary school. An early reader — thanks to her father, who worked for a powerful British shipping company in the port — she strengthened her learning process within books and began writing as a teenager. After graduating from school, she worked as a secretary in the

same company where her father worked, and witnessed not only the despotic treatment he received, but also the injustices that working women suffered. She soon had a role in actions demanding better wages. A letter of complaint that she wrote to the heads of the company who — following their despotic style — were reluctant to make any change, was finally published in *El Comercio*. Ángela's career as a journalist began.

The articles she published in *La Crónica* formed what she called “campaigns” for example, dignified treatment of inmates in prisons, fair working conditions for factory and transport laborers (the rising working classes of Peru), or abolition of the systems of servitude that the peasants lived in. She opposed to such authoritarian norms as the “vagrancy law,” which condemned to forced labor anyone found drunk or without occupation on the streets. Regarding this law, Ángela wrote: “It is a horrible felony, because it reduces man to the condition of a slave, a human beast, since he is forced into labor, he is not paid even the smallest wage, and he is whipped in naked body.”

Her interviews are legendary. The one that she made to Mariátegui, published in *Mundial*, is an essential part of the Amauta's biography. Her journalistic stories, which appeared in most of the media of the time, would become solid teachings for generations of journalists to come.

She belonged to Mariátegui's circle and committed herself to socialist struggle, both from *Amauta's* and *Labor's* pages, and from the ranks of the Peruvian Socialist Party. She was secretary for the International Red Aid and also defended her own colleagues by participating in the founding of the Peruvian Federation of Journalists. From these positions, she strengthened her written work with anarchist-style action: she was considered an “agitator” and experienced firsthand, among the ranks of the protesting masses, the violent repression unleashed against them.

Feminist, the finest journalist, playwright, critic: her legacy is inexhaustible. She died in Lima in 1988 — she was 92 — knowing that feminist struggle had only just begun.

# Raúl Porrás Barrenechea



Raúl Porrás Barrenechea, born in Pisco in 1897, was a historian, literary critic, diplomat and public servant, a prolific writer, but above all, a teacher. His students, including personalities who would stand out in literature and politics in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, believe that if the words spoken by Porrás Barrenechea in classes and conferences had been published, a never-ending source of scholarship, of universal culture, of rigorous Peruvian history, of human knowledge, would have been compiled. So vast is his legacy that San Marcos University founded around him a Center for High Peruvian Studies and Research, the Institute that bears his name and that preserves his heritage.

He left behind a copious and extensive corpus of work on different issues and areas. Although, perhaps the most important is the attention he paid to the chronicles of the Conquest and coloni-

zation of Peru. His *Cronistas del Perú* (1962, posthumous edition) is one of the most important studies on those historical documents with which we reconstruct part of our history before the Conquest.

As a student in San Marcos, he was one of the most committed promoters of the University Reform, a movement in search of better conditions and wider access to higher education. The movement, which started in Cordoba, Argentina, spread throughout the continent. It was necessary to replace the stagnant elitist structure that positivism had left, and open the institution to a plural humanism and an inclusive practice that could give rise to the demands for higher education of a growing population. He obtained his Law degree in 1922 and a PhD in History in 1928.

In his youth he devoted many pages to commenting on the literature of his time, with an elegant and precise style of literary criticism, the most recognized characteristic of his prose. But later on, in his capacity as a San Marcos professor, he turned most of his efforts to historical research, applying a rigorous scientific method, but without ever losing the correct, elegant and lucid prose that characterized his writing.

With an amazing work capacity, his research was not interrupted as he developed as a public servant and diplomat. While being in charge of the Boundaries Archive of Foreign Affairs Ministry, he wrote a history of the movements of the country's borders. As a diplomat, he represented Peru before the League of Nations and was ambassador to Spain, among other positions that included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Almost at the end of his life, interrupted in 1960 by a heart condition, at the age of 63, in the Organization of American States, he opposed the blockade that the United States established against the triumphant Cuban Revolution.

His disciple Jorge Puccinelli wrote: "Raúl Porras reveals himself to us in all his work as a true humanist, as a mind open to all fields of knowledge, and particularly to literature, history, linguistics and art."

# Magda Portal



“Female emblem of social poetry in contemporary Peru,” César Toro begins with these words Magda Portal’s entry in his *General Dictionary of Peruvian Literature*. Author of avant-garde poetry, she was also a tireless social fighter who brought her ideas and her commitment to social demands to essay as well as to the platform of political struggle and debate.

María Magdalena Julia del Portal Moreno was born in Barranco, Lima, in 1900, almost besides the sea, a character that would persistently inhabit her poetry. The early death of his father left the family in a precarious economic situation that even led to eviction from the house where they lived, a fact that contributed to her vision of the use of power in the society in which she lived. The family moved to El Callao, where Magda went to school. But, as a writer, she was self-taught. A commercial job in her youth brought her close

to San Marcos University, where she used to hang out, although she was not a formal student: “As soon as I came out from my job I went to the Casona de San Marcos. The boys accepted me as if I were a student.”

At that time, 1923, her collection of poems *Nocturnos* won San Marcos’ Floral Games. Magda refused to receive the award when she learned that it would be President Augusto B. Leguía himself, recently reelected, who would deliver it. Magda was part of the group working around *Hangar-Timonel-Rascacielos-Trampolín* magazine, in which the renovation of Peruvian poetry was forged through the language of the avant-gardes. In the mid-1920s she related to Mariátegui’s circle; Minerva published the poetry book *Una esperanza y el mar*, praised by Mariátegui and mentioned by him in his *7 Essays of Interpretation of the Peruvian Reality*. She would be a constant contributor to the pages of *Amauta*.

In 1926, Leguía’s rule unleashed persecution against Magda and her husband, Serafín Delmar, who was accused of conspiring against the President. They went into exile, first in Cuba and later in Mexico. There they met other Peruvian exiles such as Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre. Magda participated in the ranks of APRA and faced persecution, detention, imprisonment and exile. Her political activity led her to feminism; she pioneered the struggle for women’s vote at a time when even some progressive intellectuals seemed unsure of its need.

She broke with APRA in the late 1940s, convinced that the party had betrayed the hopes of the people. The essays *El Partido Aprista frente al momento actual* and *Quiénes traicionaron al pueblo* (1950), and the novel *La Trampa* (1967) give account of that experience. She died in 1989, at the age of 89, leaving behind a literary and political struggle thread that shines to this day as an example of social commitment of the artist and of art itself.

## César Moro



César Moro's work stands against the trends of his time: in the face of specialization, Moro was a painter, a writer, a poet; against academicism, Moro is an antiacademic surrealist — who then moves towards decadentism, symbolism, cubism and even geometric abstraction, — in Lima's cultural imposed canon, Moro emigrated to Mexico and France and wrote in French.

Alfredo Quípez Asín was born in Lima in 1903. His brother Carlos Quípez Asín would be a notable painter trained in Spain and an important teacher in the School of Fine Arts, but Alfredo, who would soon begin to sign his works, both visual and poetic, as César Moro, preferred to develop on the sidelines of the academies. In 1925 he moved to Paris and there he created for eight years together with the main representatives of surrealism, of which he himself is an important part. Moro applies the surrealist techniques of reflection from dreams and the unconscious, the reality beyond

the real, both to his painting and to his poetry, and intensively dialogues with artists such as Breton, Picabia, Aragon, Duchamp, Eluard and De Chirico. He even translates some of them into Spanish (while writing his own work in French), to become, after his return to Peru in 1935, the most important disseminator of surrealism in Latin America (a task that would take him to Mexico, where he lived another long period). In Mexico he will also perform, as before in Lima, some of the first exhibitions with which surrealism was made known in those lands.

His poetry reaches the peaks of the avant-garde poets in the 20s and 30s: it lies next to Vallejo's, Eguren's and Oquendo's; it approaches the Andean avant-gardes and establishes a conflictive dialogue with those from Chile and Argentina. Moro's tone is unique, lyrical and human, fantastic, surreal and explosive. His *La tortuga ecuestre*, a collection of poems written in Spanish, contains some of the most daring passages of avant-garde poetry and can take the reader into a dream state. From that powerful poetic evidence, he criticized the work of other avant-garde artists of the time that he considered "minor", including the Chilean Vicente Huidobro and the French surrealist Paul Eluard. Moro did not stop when he knew that he should criticize old practices and dusty respectabilities.

On the occasion of one of the exhibitions he organized in Mexico, Moro said that "surrealism is the magic word of the Century", and he insisted on living his life as he thought art should be: not separated from its creator, but fused with him: life itself as a work of art. He also ventured into dance and left photographs that announced what would later become *performance*, and his influence extends to artists such as Fernando de Szyszlo and Jorge Eduardo Eielson. For Ricardo Silva-Santisteban, "Moro is a Peruvian poet, but an exiled poet, not only from his mother tongue... but, above all, because he felt isolated and dissatisfied in his own land... A rebellious and segregated poet", and concludes: "Now we prefer to see in him, perhaps as he would have liked, rather than a writer or a poet, an explosion, a cataclysm, a planet of fire burning in the endless night of the universe."

## Jorge Basadre



Historian *par excellence* of modern Peru, and at the same time a model of a public servant dedicated to his duty, Jorge Basadre's heritage is one of the most important for the building up of our contemporary identity. His historical research, exemplary rigorous, clearly drew the environment and context, the set of relationships that produced what we are today, especially throughout the troubled 19<sup>th</sup> Century. His *History of the Republic of Peru [1821-1933]* is still the basic document to understand our recent past and to be able to design our future humanely and with justice.

Jorge Alfredo Basadre Grohmann was born in Tacna in 1903, when this territory was still under Chilean rule (the wait for the plebiscite through which it would return to Peruvian sovereign-

ty, marked the historian's childhood). After his father's death, the family moved to Lima, where Jorge completed his primary and secondary education. Before entering San Marcos University, his first approach to historical writing was a speech on the Battle of Arica. In 1919 he entered San Marcos and became acquainted with Raúl Porras Barrenechea and Luis Alberto Sánchez, who encouraged his vocation as a historian. During the 1920s he carried out various archival and documentary research projects on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so that his interest developed in compiling a complete historiography of the first stage of independent Peru. As of 1928 he is appointed professor at the university, and his research continued: the *History of the Republic of Peru* was taking shape. It's first two volumes were published in 1939; soon there were six; the historian will constantly review the work until he reached the 16 volumes reissue of 1968 (the portentous work has continued to see posthumous editions). Basadre himself was surprised that, upon reaching the second edition, the work, originally intended for the academy, found a great demand among the general public, both in Peru and abroad.

During the initial years he worked at the National Library, alternating with teaching. He was in charge of the reconstruction of the National Library after it was severely damaged by a fire in 1943, but before that he would be Minister of Education during José Luis Bustamante y Rivero's Government, a portfolio that he reoccupied in the 1950s. These heavy tasks made him interrupt his research, postponing new studies and revised editions of older ones.

In addition to his extensive research on the Republican period, Basadre wrote literary criticism, history of Inca literature, biographies, monographs on various topics, Law history, essays of humanist and philosophical reflection, autobiographical sketches, political comments; a vast work of central importance to us, to our self-knowledge, as we begin our third Century of independent life.

## Rebeca Carrión Cachot



One of the first Peruvian women scientists, Rebeca Carrión Cachot extended the archaeological investigations of her teacher, Julio C. Tello, to a series of new discoveries, and also continued Tello's founding work of dissemination of pre-Columbian historical knowledge, through conservation and research within the framework of museums.

Rebeca Carrión Cachot, “the first Peruvian woman archaeologist”, was born in Lima in 1907, daughter of Colonel Pedro José Carrión, hero of the War of the Pacific, and of Isabel Cachot, soloist and composer. Rebeca recognized her teacher Elvira García y García as responsible for having guided her intellectually. She studied in San Marcos University and graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in 1924. Shortly after, her interest in Archaeology led her to collaborate with Julio C. Tello, of whom she became a regular disciple and assistant, until the teacher's death in 1947. Since 1928 she held the position of curator of the Museum of San Marcos University, and accompanied Tello in training and management activities for the Museum

of Peruvian Archeology. She graduated with a PhD in History and Literature with the thesis *Clothing in Ancient Paracas*.

In addition to archaeological research carried out by this notable scientist, she served in the university museum field between 1947 and 1955, and was an adviser in the area of Archaeology for the Senate of the Republic.

Her field studies in Ancón and Paracas produced journalistic articles and popular books. She was a regular contributor to Tello's magazine *Wira Kocho*, with articles which informed of her archaeological research. Among her most important works are *The Cult of Water in Ancient Peru*, *Religion in Ancient Peru*, *Paracas*, *The Chavín Culture: Two New Colonies*, *Kuntur Wasi and Ancón*. She left unpublished works such as *Chavín Civilization*, *Navigation on the Coast of Ancient Peru*, *Agriculture in the Chavín Period and Generalities about the Forest Environment*.

Rebeca Carrión was one of the first women to hold a university chair in Peru, as well as management positions in institutional museums. In these positions, traditionally held by men, she faced discrimination and discredit promoted by the stiff machismo. Rebeca's effectiveness and strength, her dedication and her knowledge, always carried her forward. She taught courses in pre-Columbian art and Archaeology in San Marcos, and participated in the Summer School from 1942 to 1945. At the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, she taught the course of History of Peruvian Art. She was incorporated into many national and international scientific societies, and received awards and recognitions for her work both in Peru and abroad.

Her contributions and discoveries of our pre-Columbian history, added to those of Julio C. Tello, have made a great contribution to identifying and understanding the roots of our history and our multiple identities.

# Cota Carvallo



If in this generation of plural, versatile, universal intellectuals, there is one who embodies the encompassing spirit of the Renaissance, this is Cota Carvallo: writer (pioneer of modern Peruvian children's literature), journalist, painter, musician, playwright. What field of the arts did she not visit? And she did it, in addition, with the avant-garde spirit of the time.

Carlota Clara Carvallo Wallstein was born in Lima in 1909, but the family soon moved to Huacho, where she spent her childhood between nature and the port. Initially educated at home, from a young age she turned to reading and soon began to write: she would keep a diary from the age of 13 throughout her life. Also as a child

she became interested in painting, and when a piano arrived at her house, she showed exceptional abilities for music. Being young she played and composed, drew and painted, and wrote, in addition to her diary, small theater pieces that she presented to the family with her sisters, with costumes made up by their mother, from where she would also learn to create through sewing.

She ran adventures with her father, traveling the surrounding landscapes, horseback riding, fishing and hunting, and getting to know deeply both nature and the peasant and working communities with whom she lived. This knowledge will later lead to her painting and her written work. When she was 16, she decided to study Painting in the School of Fine Arts. Her father chose to move to Lima to support Cota's decision. In Bellas Artes she studied with Daniel Hernández and José Sabogal. She was encouraged by the Indigenist movement together with Julia Codesido, and other disciples of the founder of this avant-garde.

She graduated from the School of Fine Arts in 1933 and married the literary critic Estuardo Núñez. She recovered interest in literature and learnt about the discoveries of the literary avant-gardes. Traveling the Southern Andes, Cota painted the sierra in oil and watercolors, and her painting began to separate from the indigenist canon, becoming closer to symbolism and surrealism. Later she traveled to the Amazon, where she was filled with new knowledge and creative motives that will eventually build one of her most important works, the children's novel *Rutsí, el pequeño alucinado*. The novel represents the coming of age of Peruvian children's literature; a work that manages to establish local and national issues for children — the indigenista influence — in an era dominated by fairy tales and Western fantasy, aliens to the local culture. The Ministry of Education published *Rutsí* for distribution in every school of the country.

Cota also wrote theater. Among her pieces, *La tacita de plata* stands out (she produced it with her children in a puppet theater). Other unforgettable story is *Oshta y el duende*, and there are so many more, forming a classic and pioneering work in Peruvian children's literature.

# Rosa Arciniega



Rosa Arciniega's literary and historical work is surprising, and has very particular characteristics, quite her own, such as the personality of this exceptional creator was. She wrote novels that predicted many forms of later science fiction, but were generated from left-wing, progressive, revolutionary thinking.

Rosa Arciniega was born in Lima in 1903, and received basic education there, but traveled tirelessly from a young age. She settled in Spain between 1928 and 1936, and she published there her first works of fiction while participating in the literary circles of *Revista de Occidente* and José Ortega y Gasset.

Her first two novels, *Engranajes* and *Jaque mate* (both from 1931), published in Spain, were well received. They were followed by numerous stories, a radio drama and articles on various topics in media such as *Nuevo Mundo*, *Negro y Blanco*, *La Gaceta Literaria*, *Ahora*, and others.

Her third novel, *Mosko-Strom. El torbellino de las grandes metrópolis* (1933), takes its title from the legendary whirlpool also known as *Maelstrom* (“current that shreds”), an oceanic phenomenon that occurs on the coasts of the islands and fjords of northern Norway. Andrea Cabel describes the language of this novel as “highly poetic, figurative and visual.” The whirlpool that crushes is in the novel a metaphor of modern life, especially of economic greed that seems to be drowning the world and mechanizing it without remedy. It must be remembered that Rosa Arciniega’s ideological spirit is socialist. To a large extent, her vision from a perspective that was not yet recognized as “science fiction” foreshadows reflections that will come after World War II in the work of thinkers like Herbert Marcuse.

Back in Peru, she traveled the country, and then, frequently moved between Buenos Aires and Lima, trips in which she collected the documentation and the setting with which she would forge her biographies of *Conquistadores*. He had already published *Pizarro* in Spain. Later the works on other protagonists of the *Conquista* will show the outstanding psychological perspective with which she explains the characters.

More narrative books would come (the novels *Vidas de celuloide* and *La novela de Hollywood*; the short stories collection *Playa de vidas*, which was published in Colombia). Rosa alternated writing with adventure: she was an aviator in Peru and Spain, even participating in the Aviation School in Valencia.

Her journalistic work continued to be intense, with articles appearing in *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), *La Crónica* (Buenos Aires), *El Universal* (Caracas), *El Telégrafo* (Guayaquil), *El Diario* (New York), *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Texas ) and *La Opinión* (California), as well as media in the cities where she lived (Lima, Santiago de Chile and Buenos Aires). She actively participated in the Congress for the Freedom of Culture (1950-1967); signed the *Manifesto in defense of Hungary* by American intellectuals in 1957; and was the first woman accredited as a diplomat to a foreign Government, as Cultural Aggregate of Peru in Argentina. In 1986, Peru recognized her by granting a “grace pension.” She died in Buenos Aires in 1999.

## José María Arguedas



While separating our 21 intellectuals into groups by “discipline” or “area”, we very much doubted whether to include Magda Portal in the group of political activists, and Arguedas in that of humanists and researchers, because both creators stood out first and foremost in literature. Our decision was more for the acknowledgment of their secondary facet because we do not doubt that we all recognize them first of all for their aesthetic work. If Arguedas’ legacy is central in the recognition of the cultural plurality that Peru is today, this is not only due to his role as an anthropological researcher, but to the meaning of his fabulous fictional narrative, novels and short stories that have provided the foundation for understanding contemporary Peru.

He was born in Andahuaylas, Apurímac, in 1911, and attended high school between Huancayo, Ica and Lima. He studied at San Marcos’ Faculty of Literature in the early 1930s, although he obtained a Bachelor’s degree until 1957 and a PhD on Ethnology and Archaeology in 1963. During his initial stage in San Marcos, when

participating in an anti-fascist student protest, he was arrested and imprisoned. From that experience came his novel *El Sexto*, which crudely narrates the ignominious treatment received by inmates in prisons, which Ángela Ramos had already denounced in previous years.

In the early 1940s, Arguedas worked in the Ministry of Education, and in 1942 he attended the Inter-American Indigenista Congress held in Pátzcuaro, Mexico, where the headquarters of the Inter-American Indigenista Institute had been installed. These activities represent in Arguedas and his work, the moment in which *indigenismo* ceases to describe only a plastic style of the visual arts and opens an entire field of research on indigenous cultures in the continent. Arguedas' role here will be central, although academics often question his unorthodox approach, mediated by a sensitive and aesthetic humanism. Between 1947 and 1952 he carried out a titanic task of registering indigenous traditional cultural expressions (which were still recognized as “folklore” at that time), and he was in charge of the section of the Ministry of Education dedicated to this subject. He would then direct the Ethnological Studies section of the Museum of Peruvian Culture, and later he would be director of the House of Culture of Peru.

In addition to the dozens of books and articles on Peruvian Ethnology, traditional arts and folklore, Arguedas left behind a literary work that provided a new identity to a country in transformation. Based on the stories collected in *Agua* (1935), he began to build a novel of the indigenous in Peru that finally gave real life to the communities, and left behind the “stony” vision of the mountains drew by previous writers such as López Albújar and Ventura García Calderón, who saw the mountains from the coast. Arguedas contributed the vision of the mountains by themselves and finally filled its presence with dignity. His main novels are the testament to this legacy: *Yawar Fiesta* (1941), *Los ríos profundos* (1958), *El Sexto* (1961), *Todas las sangres* (1964) and the posthumous and unfinished *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo*.

## José Portugal Catacora



Under the transforming influence of the Puno avant-garde of *Boletín Titikaka*, and with the tools of pedagogic training promoted by educator José Antonio Encinas, José Portugal Catacora, a rural teacher, undertook one of the most successful experiences in the history of education in Peru; an experimental trial of linking training and production, and of joining the universal and the local inspired by dignity, respect and preservation of local traditions, and trust in education for the solution of society's problems.

He was born in Ácora, Puno, on the shores of Titicaca Lake, and studied basic education in Puno. He was trained as a teacher in the Pedagogic School annexed to the Glorious San Carlos de Puno School, founded by a Bolívar's decree in 1825. By 1945 his studies had reached the appointment of First Category Teacher. Carlos Escalante reports that Portugal "attended the conference on

Rural Education of Peru and Bolivia, in Huarizata, Bolivia... where an agreement was signed for the organization of 'Núcleos Escolares Campesinos,' that were implemented in great measure thanks to him". In 1947 he was appointed director of the new Experimental Institute of Education of Puno, where he remained until 1958 and where he undertook his surprisingly advanced education project. It used the "School Organization System by Levels of Learning Maturity" theory, developed by Encinas, which sought the comprehensive training of students. In 1957, almost at the end of his term at the Institute, he presented the experience in Lima, at the La Cantuta Higher Pedagogic School, today National University of Education.

After the experience at the Institute, Portugal Catacora continued his career in other areas of the educational system, dedicated to planning and representation tasks. He traveled to different countries carrying the Peruvian experience, and bringing back a dialogue with foreign peers that fed the national educational project. He was an ambassador of dialogue, a builder of relationships, a hub between worlds. He reached his retirement in 1967 but remained close to his schools and his students for many more years, until his death 30 years later in 1998.

But he not only devoted his energy to teaching and management: he published pedagogic dissemination magazines such as *El educador andino*, *Puno pedagógico* and *Repertorio pedagógico*, and wrote a vast series of specialized publications on education and pedagogy, as well as a literary work consisting of short stories, legends and popular traditions in which he embodied for his students a vision of Andean man and woman. He collaborated with Arguedas and learned from him the task of recording and preserving traditional and popular cultural manifestations. In the prologue to his *Niños del Kollao* (1937), Emilio Vásquez reviews: "What José Portugal intends is precisely this: to educate the child of today in such conditions that tomorrow he will be the true architect of his work, the pilot of his destiny, the Pygmalion of its rocks and the Proteus of his multiplying soul."



# 21 INTELECTUALES PERUANOS DEL SIGLO XX

This virtual exhibition shows a plurality of views on the decades of 1920 and 1930, the views of 21 personalities whose lives and works incarnated the transformations that were taking place in History and in their present: the dreams and hopes of a great country. If today, as Peru reaches the Bicentennial, we are better prepared to face the challenges of equality, diversity, justice and democracy — the Banners of the Bicentennial — it is largely thanks to the legacy of these transforming, revolutionary generations, that we have tried to synthesize in the lives of 11 extraordinary women and 10 extraordinary men.



BICENTENARIO  
PERÚ  
2024

21 INTELLECTUALES  
PERUANOS  
DEL SIGLO XX

English Version

# 21 PERUVIAN INTELLECTUALS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

## Curator's Texts

An opening of our 21 Intellectuals' legacy,  
and an invitation to find out more in:  
[bicentenario.gob.pe/exposiciones/21-intelectuales/](http://bicentenario.gob.pe/exposiciones/21-intelectuales/)