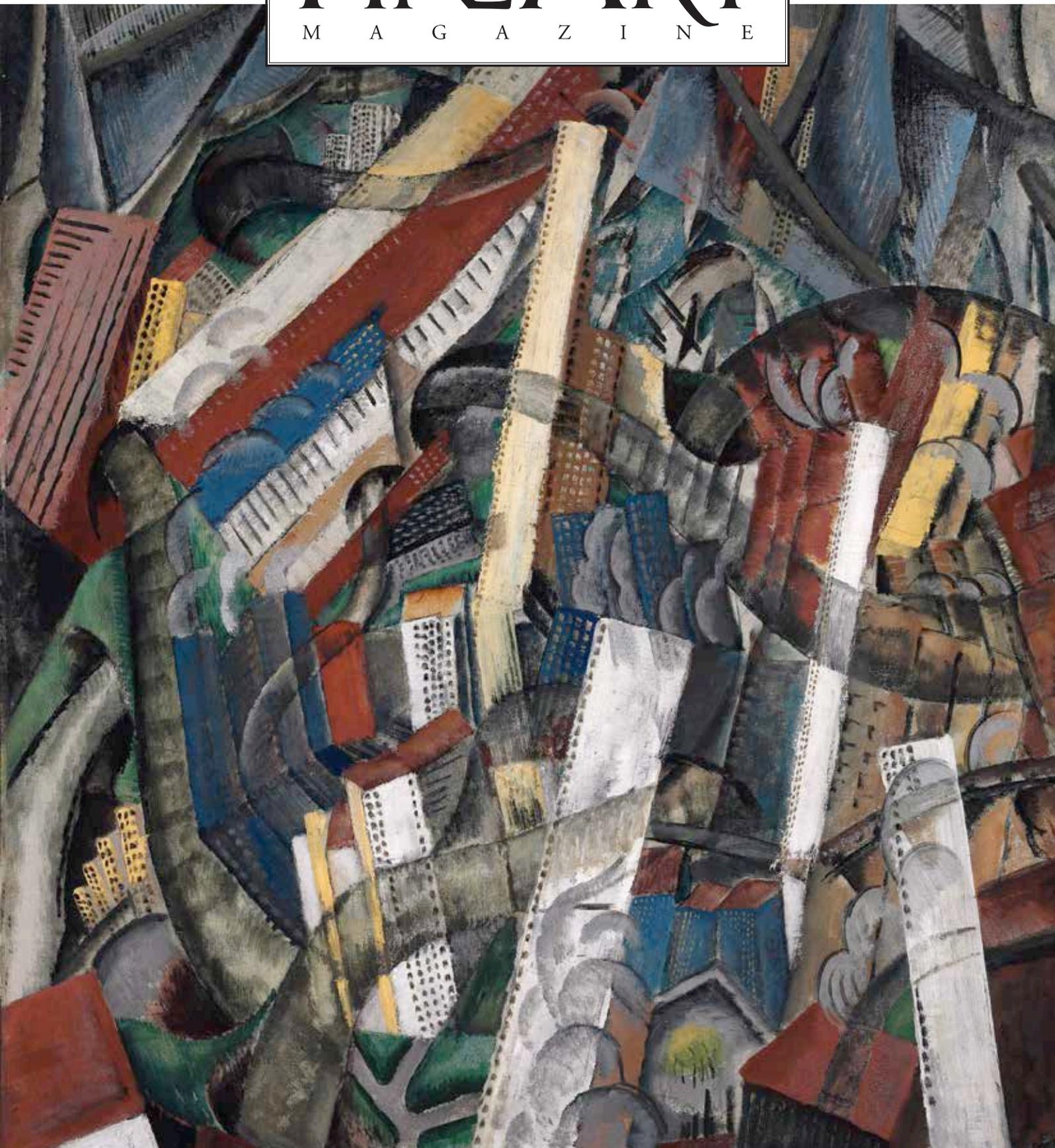


AMERICAN FINE ART

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Around the Globe

A new Francis Luis Mora exhibition examines how the artist fused styles from around the world into his American works

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At 22 years old, Uruguayan-born, American-bred Francis Luis Mora found himself standing in front of the work of Diego Velázquez at the Museo del Prado in Madrid, Spain. Although he was accompanied by William Merritt Chase during that 1896 trip—a footnote that could be its own story entirely—Mora was transfixed by the

paintings in front of him, so much so that it would alter his own work in a significant way.

Over the next 40 years, Mora would take that inspiration and mix it into his work, creating a fusion of ideas. He was embracing his Hispanic heritage, delving into some of the European traditions, and also forging American attitudes and motifs into his visions of everyday life, particularly the plight of the common working man.

Mora's fusion of themes is the dominating subject of a new exhibition on his work, *Francis Luis Mora: Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, now open at ACA Galleries in New York City. The exhibition will feature 60 works including paintings and a comprehensive set of drawings, some of which show his preparatory process and are matched with finished paintings. "It will provide insight into his working process, as well as his variety of subjects he painted, from children to intimate moments between a mother and child to workers pulling up nets to these psychological penetrating portraits," says Mikaela Sardo Lamarche, curator at ACA Galleries. "You get to see the diversity of his artistic arc. You really get a sense for where he started and where he finished."

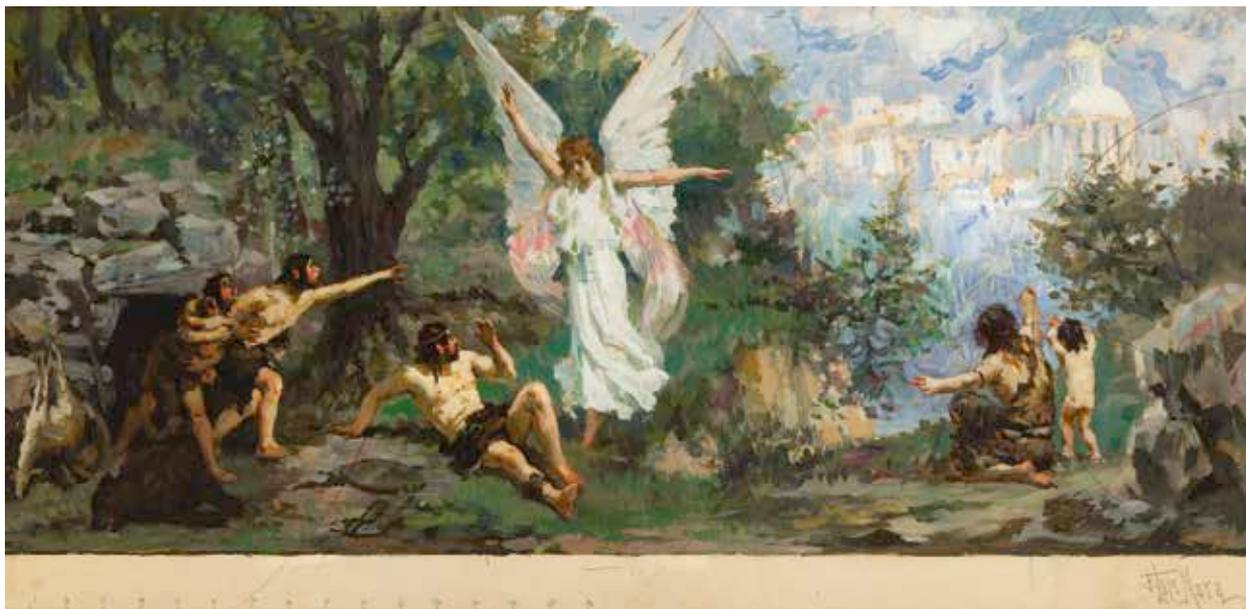
Lamarche says that Mora has only had two major exhibitions since his passing in 1940, one in 2005 and this one, both presented by ACA Galleries, which Lamarche refers to as the "people's gallery" because it shows work with a message, including

Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940),
Boudoir. Oil on canvas, 16 x 12 in.





Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940), *Seining of the Weir Net*. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940), *The Awakening of Ignorance*. Gouache on board, 8½ x 19 in.



Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940), *Passing of a Landmark*, ca. 1905. Watercolor on paper, 29½ x 21 in.



Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940), *Dancing Nymph*, ca. 1922. Watercolor and graphite on paper, 13½ x 9 in.

artwork by Mora. “He was trying to document the different types of people, men and women, immigrants and Americans, how they all lived together. He painted these great urban scenes like *Passing of a Landmark*, which was very symbolic of what he was about,” she says. “He was looking back to the past, but also looking forward. He painted real people doing real things.”

Works in the show include *Seining of the Weir Net*, featuring a group of fishermen hunched over nets, a mosaic-like arrangement of seagulls fluttering above them; the Velázquez-influenced piece *Lace Mantilla*, “whose delicate yet

visually sonorous imagery of a maid adjusting her mistress’ lace spans times, class and culture”; and *The Traveler from Gaylordsville*, an unknown figure whose piercing face eyes and calm face suggest warmth and compassion.

As Mora found recognition in the early 20th century, his work matured even further, even as he began teaching at various schools, including at Chase’s New York art school. Lamarche says that teaching gave him a sense of freedom to explore his subject matter at his own pace. He was also working near many influential voices, and he was absorbing them into his

work. Although he was highly regarded, his work slowly faded into obscurity as styles and tastes developed into the mid-20th century. With ACA Galleries’ newest Mora exhibition, the artist will once again be appreciated for delicate yet powerful work for which he was known.

“Those who know him love him. He’s very highly regarded, but one of the challenges we face is that people just haven’t heard of him, particularly the hiatus between his last major show and our first show,” Lamarche says. “Art was in his blood. We’re trying to show people that through his works.” ■

Francis Luis Mora (1874-1940), *The Traveler from Gaylordsville*. Oil on canvas, 41 x 42 in.

