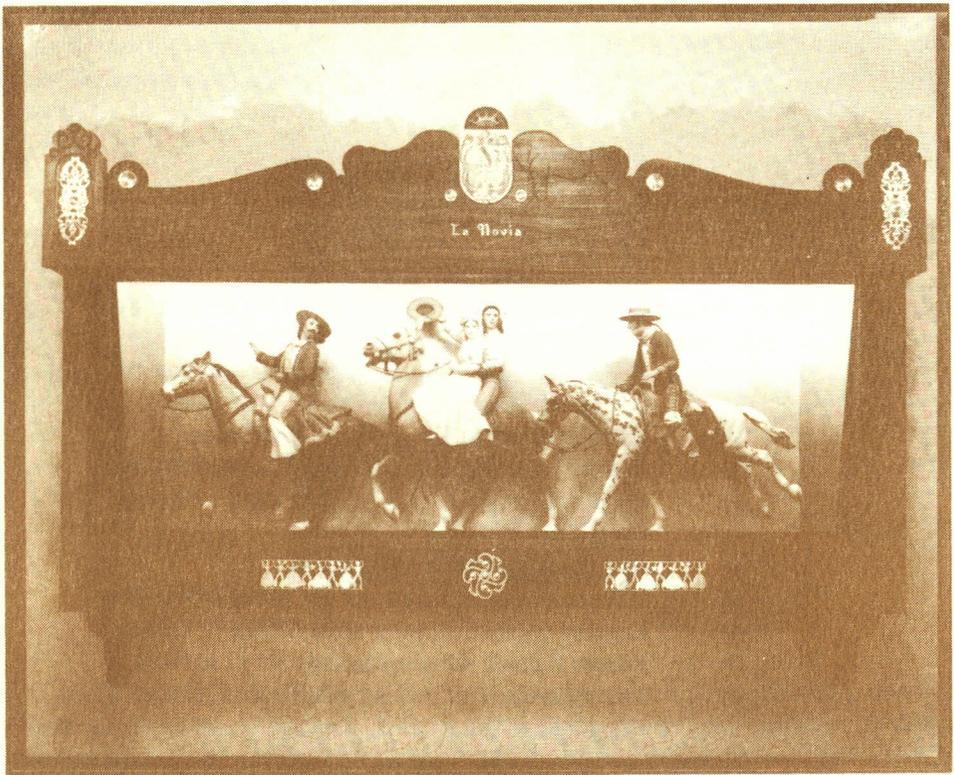


NOTICIAS
del
PUERTO de MONTEREY

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"The Bride" from the William C. Brooks Collection

Inside: JO MORA: Part One: *La Novia*

JO MORA: LA NOVIA

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INTRODUCTION

This month of September, 1995, the United States Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey has welcomed a new superintendent. Rear Admiral Marsha Evans is the first woman ever appointed to this important post. Since inaugural ceremonies took place in Herrmann Hall, it seems appropriate for Monterey History and Art Association to dedicate this issue of our journal to Admiral Evans. We would like to tell her about the charming diorama which is installed in one of the meeting rooms at Herrmann Hall, on loan from our Association. "La Novia" (Spanish for "The Bride") is a tribute to early California. Sculptor of the masterwork was Jo Mora, Monterey Peninsula's most important regional artist. The wedding party expresses the excitement and *joie de vivre* which is our heritage in "The City of Three Flags." We welcome you, Admiral!

--- the membership,
Monterey History and Art Association

NOTES

- A. For more information about Jo Mora see *Noticias* for August, 1984.
- B. All reference material is from the Betty Hoag McGlynn Archives.
- C. Special thanks to the following people whom I have interviewed:
 - 1) Ferdinand Burgdorff, artist. Two of his large landscapes hang today in "La Novia" Room.
 - 2) "Pellie" Martinez, widow of artist Xavier Martinez.
 - 3) Barbara Matthew Meyer, niece of artist Catherine Comstock.
 - 4) Jo J. Mora, son of artist, Jo Mora.
 - 5) Willard Newman, longtimer of Carmel-by-the-Sea.
 - 6) Dorothy Oliver, widow of artist Myron A. Oliver.
 - 7) Roscoe Russell, silversmith assistant to Jo Mora.
 - 8) John Sanders, Public Relations Director, Naval Postgraduate School.
- D. Gratitude to my husband, Thomas A. McGlynn, Jr., artist's son, whose help has been invaluable.
- E. Finally, Monterey History and Art Association thanks Ray A. March of Carmel for use of the magnificent cover photograph by the late Julian P. Graham .

THE CARAVANSARY

The original Hotel Del Monte which opened in 1880, was built by the Pacific Improvement Company (controlled by the railroad tycoons "Big Four:" Stanford, Crocker, Hopkins and Huntington). By the turn-of-the-century the inn had become world famous. Californians especially, of course, were proud of their opulent spa. Many patrons were art collectors. In the catastrophic 1906 earthquake and fire, most of the San Francisco Bay artists lost their homes and studios. Certainly there were few commercial galleries left in Northern California.

The manager of the Hotel Del Monte, A. D. Shepard, had a great idea which eventually would "turn the eyes of the world toward California, justifiably establishing that State as having some of the most exciting art colonies in the nation." Mr. Shepard discussed his plan with some of the prominent Bay-area artists of the day. Led by Charles Rollo Peters, a Monterey resident, a cooperative was organized to redecorate one room in the hotel and make plans for exhibits. On April 21, 1907, the Hotel Del Monte Art Gallery was opened with great fanfare. It remained successful for many years.

Meanwhile, the hotel sent a young Oakland artist, Grace Wishaar, to Mexico City to copy an original study of Don Gaspar de Zunga y Acaredo, Count of Monterey, for whom the explorer Vizcaino had named the port of Monterey in 1602. It depicted the handsome head of that grandee in one corner and his coat-of-arms in another. Together with one of Father Serra, the picture was hung in the lobby.



Don Gaspar "The Count of Monterey" (Grace Wishaar, 1908)

In 1919, the Del Monte Properties Company purchased the hotel and grounds from the "Big Four." Samuel F. B. Morse was retained as manager of this company. In 1924, the central core of the building was lost in a three-million dollar fire. Two years later, in 1926, a restored Hotel Del Monte rose phoenix-like from the ashes.

During World War II the Navy took over the hotel. In December, 1951, all its property officially became the United States Naval Postgraduate School.

JO MORA

Early in the twentieth century no artist created a more colorful record of the vanishing frontier than Jo Mora (1876-1947). No one made more scholarly study of its Western subjects, be they human, animal or object. Few artists could match his experiences during the years spent adventuring in Mexico; of living with both Navajo and Hopi Indian tribes as an adopted son, initiated into their sacred rites; of traveling the wilderness of the Coast Range from Old Mexico into the Pacific Northwest at a time when the mission chain was still crumbling away in neglect and the gold rush placers were gradually fading into legend. Jo Mora was a "Cowboy Artist" who was self-educated in the Spanish-Mexican tradition. He was also academically well trained in the crafts of his profession. And finally, by his own Catalan blood Jo Mora was spiritually attuned to nuances of early California life. The result was a true "Renaissance man," master of a staggering assortment of careers: sculptor, painter, etcher, jeweler, cartographer, cartoonist, photographer, saddle-maker, author, muralist, illustrator, designer of everything from coins and book-plates to houses - and with it all, Jo was an impeccable gentleman and affectionate father. John Woolfenden dubbed him "Monterey Peninsula's Benvenuto Cellini."



Jo Mora, sculptor of Western days and ways, as caught by the camera of Julian Graham for the Tenth Annual Salon of Photography.

Jo Mora moved permanently to the Monterey Peninsula in 1921. Here he is best known for his magnificent bronze sarcophagus of Father Serra at the Carmel Mission.

The sculptural group at the Mission was the dram of the Mission parish priest, who was renovating rooms in the old compound. It is said that Father Ramon Mestres used his own life insurance money in addition to parishioners' funds to lure Jo Mora to Carmel. At any rate, the sculptor was paid \$28,000 for four years' work at the Mission. One year Jo had help from a fine Spanish painter, Julio Ramis. The handsome lad from Serra's birthplace, Majorca, was a colorful and popular addition to Carmel's art colony. The monumental bronze and travertine Serra sarcophagus was completed in 1924.



Sarcophagus Chapel, Carmel Mission

Courtesy, Carmel Mission

Another well known Serra made by Mora (a wooden monument standing in a shrine) greets visitors who enter Carmel-by-the-Sea via Serra Avenue. Ferdinand Burgdorff, Bohemian Club member and Mora's neighbor and friend, helped select a pine tree in Del Monte Forest for the 1915 project. Together they chose a beauty, cleaned off its branches, and Jo carved the Father Serra figure. It was trucked to "Carmel Woods" where Powers and Devendorf were about to open their new subdivision. When unveiled the shrine became the property of the county. More than half a century later (1973) the county issued an encroachment permit to bequeath the miniature park, tax free, to Carmel-by-the-Sea. The only stipulation was a promise to keep the serene Father well maintained.

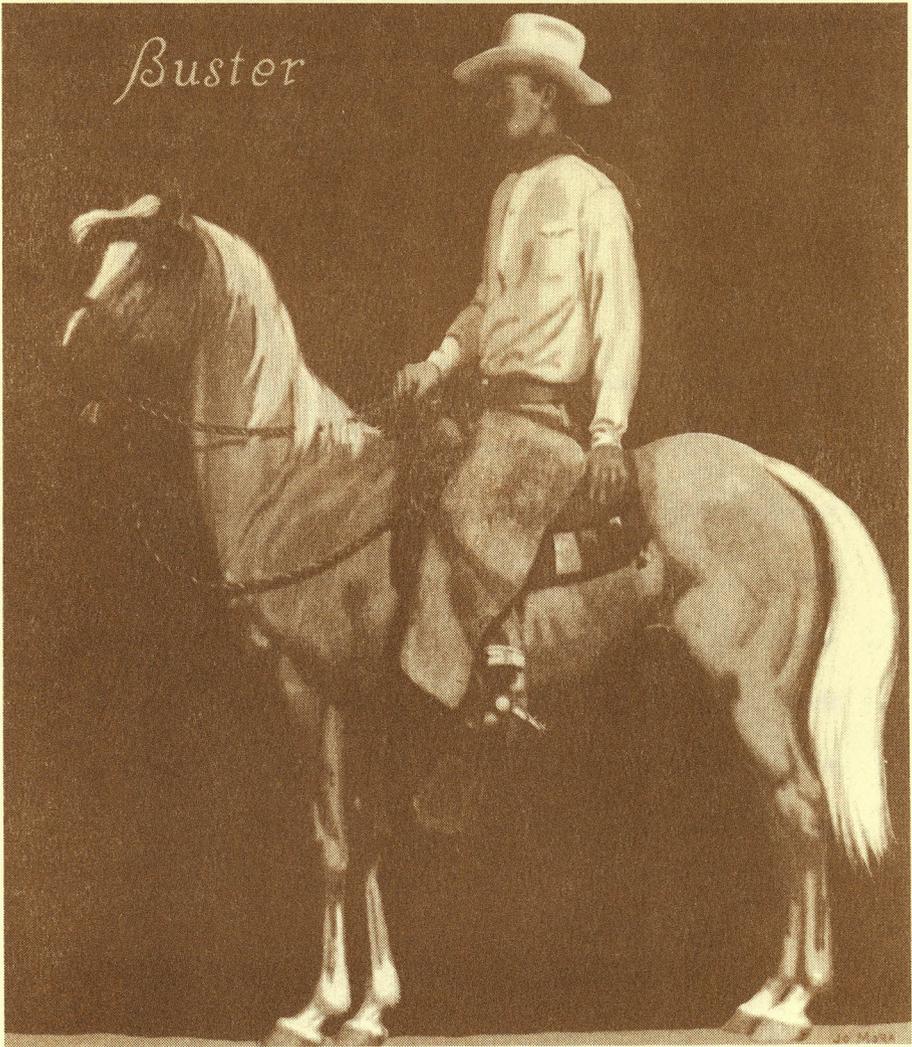


"Father Serra, Carmel Woods" (showing original tile roof - later replaced with wood shingles).

Unfortunately many people do not know about the third large Mora sculpture at the Navy School. All horse lovers should visit Herrmann Hall to enjoy 'La Novia.' Equestrian enthusiasts in our State are already aware of the famous 1933 poster which Jo Mora designed and dedicated "to the California Rodeo of Salinas, my friends." The "Carte of Evolution" includes his shrewd capsule history of the Western horseman:

**"How come?" Oyez. Red brothers own land; Comes Conquistadore
- old steel - brings cows and ponies. Good grass; enter Spanish
vaquero: couple of centuries, restless Gringo drifts west; buffalo
gone; The Longhorns make great trails North; American Cowboy
born. We live fast; nester plow free range under; subdivisions change
the horizon; Cowboy reign swift and reckless. He's blending today
with the Dude and the Derby. Let's perpetuate the breed: it's an
American Animal and American only.**

Jo Mora



"Bronco Buster" (Western jargon for a rodeo rider.) From *Arizona Highways*, date unknown.

THE BRIDAL PARTY

In August of 1939, Sam Morse commissioned Jo for a diorama to be installed in the "Copper Cup," a barroom of the Hotel Del Monte (which Sam's company still owned). It is truly a tribute to the Western horseman. "La Novia" ("The Bride") is a half-life-sized realistic portrayal of three horses cantering along, riders in the saddles. The figures have been painted in bright colors. The peoples' clothing and animals' accoutrements have been further polychromed by the addition of natural materials which glitter (laces, threads of silver and gold, spangles, tassels, etc.). The center horse, a Palomino, carries a bride and groom. Leading the way on a Dapple Gray is the "best man," while the bride's father brings up the rear on his Appaloosa. The party has come from the Mission Church where the wedding took place, and is on its way to the bride's family home where a great fiesta will occur for gathered relatives and friends. The tenor of the celebration will be established the minute these riders reach their destination: the groom will be held forcibly on his steed by vaquero guests and not allowed to dismount until he forfeits a bottle of brandy. Music and dancing; barbecued banquets; gambling and flirting; good-natured brawling and drinking - a great deal of drinking! - will sometimes be prolonged for days.

The figures in the case were created "on location," right in the Copper Cup room. After being cast in hydrostone the models were painted. Fragile details had to be added separately, spurs for example (those of the bride's father are exact replicas of the type Jo Mora himself preferred to use, of ancient Spanish pattern with decorative design). After being "dressed" the three horses and the people were positioned as a tableau in a gigantic wooden box about six feet high by twenty feet long. The glass front is rather like a store window, except that the top of the pane was tilted forward to lessen the glare. Amazingly the case was sealed so completely fifty-five years ago that not a speck of dust can be seen inside.

For its installation Jo Mora and his assistants cleverly anchored the huge case, balanced between a structural wall and a re-enforcing wall of the building. It appears to be cantilevered into the room and protrudes forward at a comfortable height, about eye level (an ordinary refectory table can easily fit under it). A concealed light switch controls the top-lighting within the display.

The facade of the frame around the window is a separate work of art. The wood is black walnut which Jo Mora intricately carved. At either side stand stylized Franciscan fathers who seem to be casting a silent benediction on the new marriage. Scattered about on the dark wood are inlaid delicate silver designs (almost like jewelry). Some have symbolic significance, such as the conch shells repeating those on the bolas and belts of the cowboys and the horses' headstalls within the display. One is reminded of Southwest Indians' dramatic squash blossom designs. Jo Mora, however, chose a five-petaled wild rose which was the Spanish prototype. There are abstract emblems resembling rubrics of an ancient manuscript. In two panels the silvered lace inlay has immortalized tiny fandango dancers. The top border of the frame is contoured like the scallops of two great waves. Centered at the very peak (between two fat ponies) nestles the colorful escutcheon of the Count of Monterey for whom the entire Peninsula as well as the port and hotel were named.

"La Novia" was dedicated in February, 1940. Two years later Jo Mora completed

designs for a mural meant to circle the Copper Cup walls. A lively procession of dancers traces terpsichorean California history from days of the earliest Native Americans. The work never was installed. The Great Depression and World War II were probably the culprits. Eventually Kitty Mora, wife of Jo Jr., had the colored drawings framed and used them to decorate her kitchen.

"The Bride" remained in place after the Navy took over. In 1967 the diorama was formally presented to the Monterey History and Art Association as a gift from Del Monte Properties Company. *The Monterey Peninsula Herald*, April 9, 1967, has a picture of the Association's President, E. Boyd Mewborn, accepting title to the work from the Company's President, A. G. Michaud. Rear Admiral E. J. O'Donnell, Superintendent of the Postgraduate School looks on. The text incorrectly dates the sculpture as 1926 instead of 1939/40.

One is reminded of a ceremony back in 1919, when the San Francisco Bohemian Club unveiled a bronze bas-relief tablet which Jo Mora had designed in tribute to George Sterling. On August 15, Sterling read aloud his own tribute to Mora. Today the sentiments of the poem can be applied just as appropriately to Monterey's "La Novia."

ART AND LIFE

The children of the flesh of man,
They pass from night to night;
They weep and laugh and labor, then
Are lost to human sight.

Musing on such a fate, the mind
Stirs with a tragic sense --
So brave they watch the stage assigned,
So soon they hurry thence.

The children of the artist's brain
Elude mortality,
O're them Time swings his scythe in vain
"Till time no more shall be.

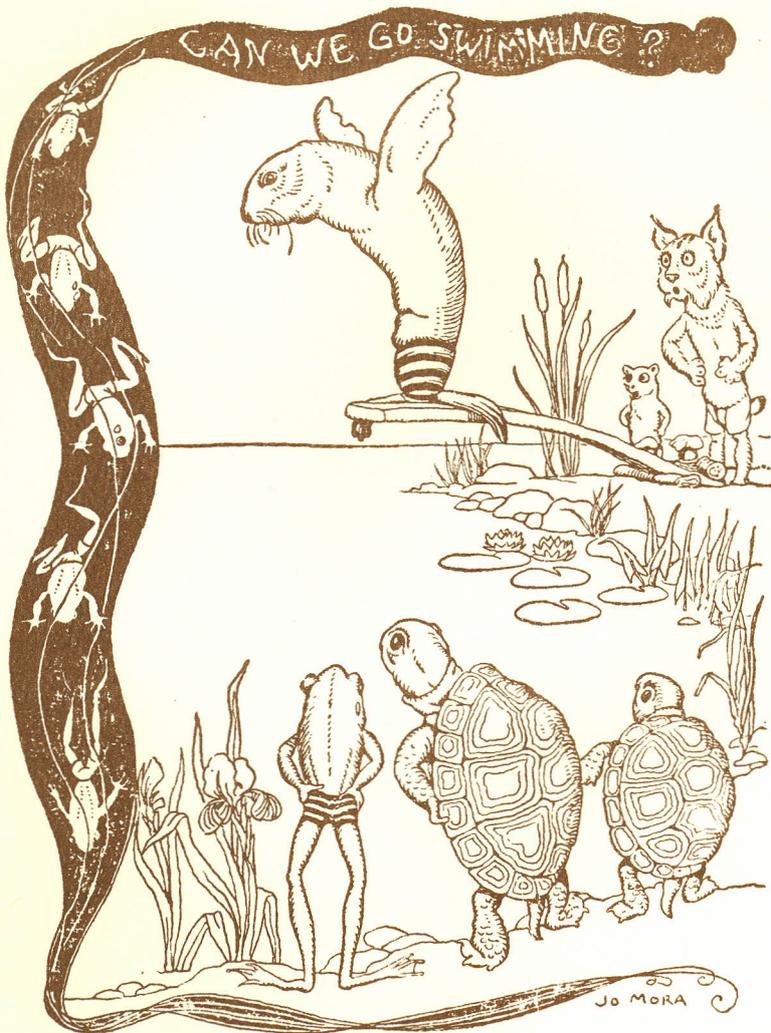
In many hearts, in many lands,
They live again their tale,
As young and old, the Future's hands
Arise to give them hail.

As here the crafts of man assure
Their presence to the years,
So too shall memory's bronze endure,
With all their smiles and tears.

Such lives within our lives can be;
Such comrades Art can give,
Are men but shadows? Is it we
Or they that truly live?

"La Novia" is an irreplaceable work of art made by a revered local artist, Jo Mora. The Naval Postgraduate School has been a fine parent, maintaining the work in a spotless, beautiful environment. The public is always welcome to enjoy it. A free, self-guided map locates the room and can be picked up at the Visitor's Center.

Members of the Association, have you visited you Spanish Bride lately?



Typical Jo Mora illustration for a children's book

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