

THE AMERICAN RODEO

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Author
MORA, Joseph

Publication date
c.1934.

Publisher

Publication place
California,

Physical description

Dimensions
770 by 580mm. (30.25 by 22.75 inches).

Notes
Joseph Mora (1876-1947) was an American artist and illustrator, the ‘Renaissance man of the Wild West’. Born in Uruguay into an artistic family, his father moved the family to America when Joseph and his brother Luis were still children so that they could train at American art schools. Mora started as a cartoonist and illustrator for the Boston Herald, and then went to a publishing house illustrating and editing children’s books. He then moved to Arizona and began to immerse himself in the culture of the West. Like his father, he became a sculptor, producing magnificent bronzes of horses in action and most famously sculpting the Serra cenotaph. He spent two years living with the Hopi tribe of Native Americans from 1904 to 1906, sharing a studio with E.A. Burbank and became a cowboy. Cowboy culture would be the primary focus of his work for the rest of his life.

Mora produced a series of maps and informative prints, which he called ‘cartes’. This ‘carte’ was originally created for the Salinas rodeo in California. It compresses a huge amount of information about the rodeo. At the top is a history of rodeo from the conquistadores to the cowboys, and the evolution of cowboy dress is shown in two columns at each side. Mora also represents the various styles of equipment (saddles, boots and spurs) and the events of the rodeo, surrounding a comic centre section which shows a rodeo arena in chaos. The cowgirl surrounded by flowers above the rodeo scene was used by the Byrds for the cover art of their sixth album, ‘Sweetheart of the Rodeo’. At the bottom, a cartouche topped with a longhorn skull carries a plea from Mora for the preservation of the cowboy: “Let’s perpetuate the breed”. The longhorn skull was a trademark he often used in his illustration and sculpture.

The present example is the second edition, slightly enlarged and printed on coated paper.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 11471

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