



*The Book Club of California  
is pleased to announce the publication of:*

**The Life and Times of**

# **JO MORA**

**Iconic Artist of the American West**

**By Peter Hiller**

Edited and with a Foreword by Gail Jones

Afterword by Gary F. Kurutz

2019

The Book Club of California

## The first definitive biography of this 'Renaissance Man of the West'



AN ESSENTIAL ADDITION to any collection of Western art and Americana, *The Life and Times of Jo Mora* provides an in-depth portrait of this gifted illustrator, painter, writer, cartographer, and sculptor (1876-1947). Author and Mora scholar Peter H. Hiller interweaves fascinating biographical material with Mora's personal letters, journal entries and other writings – many never before seen by the public – to provide an intimate study of a significant yet often overlooked artist.

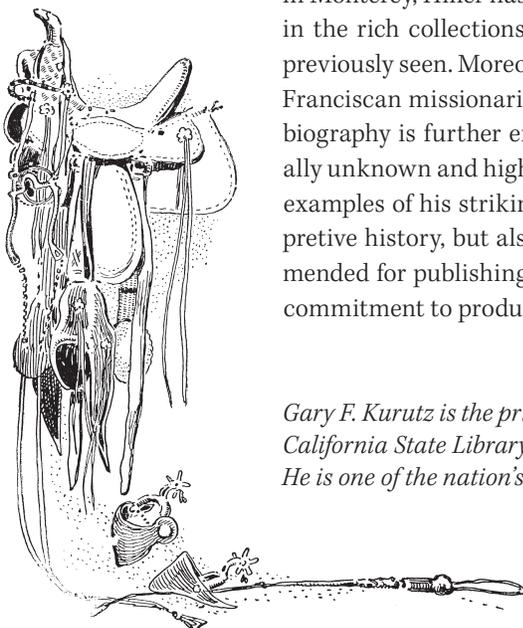
Hiller traces Mora's unconventional life as he leaves the comfort of his East Coast home to explore the West on horseback, live among the Hopi, marry and settle in the Monterey Peninsula, and become one of the most inventive, prolific, and versatile artists of his era. At every turn, Hiller's narrative reveals the interdependence of life and art that characterized Mora's experience, and manifested itself in artistic originality and humor. The inclusion of Mora's own writings adds to the reader's understanding of the deeper imaginative truths that inspired the artist's life and work.

Fully embracing the rugged individualism we associate with the American West, Mora was one of the first American artists to understand and elevate the importance of the life of the American Indian and the vaquero/cowboy, presaging broad shifts in twentieth-century thought and expression. Mora lived the life he depicted in his art, and his unorthodox experiences placed him well ahead of his time, as he intensively studied what were then relatively unknown cultural and spiritual traditions. Through his celebration of these diverse ways of life, and the great glories of nature and the human heart, he reminds us that the subject matter of all art is life itself.

Until now, no one had written a full-scale biography of this multi-faceted cowboy, artist and author. Fortunately, Peter H. Hiller has filled that void with his engaging treatment of this 'Renaissance Man of the West.' As the curator of the Jo Mora Trust in Monterey, Hiller has devoted himself to the study and understanding of Mora, and in the rich collections of the Trust, he has had access to remarkable material not previously seen. Moreover, just as Mora roamed the West following in the footsteps of Franciscan missionaries and pioneers, so has Hiller retraced his peregrinations. His biography is further enriched by presenting Mora's own words in the form of virtually unknown and highly descriptive letters and excerpts from his diaries, along with examples of his striking photographs of Northern Arizona. Not only is this an interpretive history, but also a primary source. The Book Club of California is to be commended for publishing Hiller's monumental work in a style befitting its century-old commitment to producing books of great aesthetic beauty and scholarly value.

- GARY F. KURUTZ

*Gary F. Kurutz is the principal librarian emeritus of the Special Collections Branch of the California State Library in Sacramento, having served in that position from 1980 to 2017. He is one of the nation's leading scholars on California history and Western Americana.*



### **An impressive example of the art of book making**

*The Life and Times of Jo Mora: Iconic Artist of the American West* is a stunning production, designed and letterpress printed by Norman Clayton of Classic Letterpress in Ojai, California, with the assistance of Molly Dedmond, and hand bound by Klaus Rötzscher of Pettingell Book Bindery in Berkeley, California. Generously sized at 9 x 12.25 inches, it features hundreds of beautifully reproduced offset printed illustrations of Mora's work, as well as many previously unpublished photographs.

### **The Book Club of California will publish two editions of *The Life and Times of Jo Mora: Iconic Artist of the American West***

**DELUXE EDITION:** 50 copies, hand numbered 1-50, letterpress printed, and quarter bound in leather. Enclosed in a slipcase which also includes a separate portfolio containing two finely printed cartes, Mora's iconic pictorial maps: "Evolution of the Cowboy" (1933) and "The State of California" (1945). The edition is signed by the author, editor, and book designer. 9 x 12.25 inches. 216 pages. \$1,250

**REGULAR EDITION:** 295 copies, letterpress printed, quarter bound in cloth, enclosed in a slipcase. Hand numbered 51-345, with twenty copies hors de commerce lettered A to T. The edition is signed by the author, editor, and book designer. 9 x 12.25 inches. 216 pages. \$495

The paper for both editions is Mohawk Superfine, and the type is Adobe Kepler and Balboa. Offset printing managed by Global Interprint in Santa Rosa, California.

Book Club of California members may pre-order the book until September 6, 2019. After members' pre-publication orders have been filled, member requests for second copies and non-member requests for first copies will be honored in order of date of receipt.



### **Author Peter H. Hiller**

As curator of the Jo Mora Trust and lifelong devotee of Mora's art, Peter Hiller is widely recognized as the foremost authority on Jo Mora. He has lived a career in the visual arts, teaching art and photography for almost forty years. Raised in West Los Angeles, he earned his B.A. from experimental Johnston College and his teaching credential from UCLA. Together with his wife Celeste, in 1981 Peter left the big city to enjoy the pastoral scenery of the Monterey Peninsula in Central California. The couple have two grown sons, Sam and Jake.



Clockwise from top left: This fandango scene is the seventh in a series of twelve historical illustrations run in a national ad campaign promoting travel to the Monterey Peninsula, 1934. (© Pebble Beach Company.); The 1945 "State of California" carte; One of the murals created for the Drake-Wiltshire Hotel's Fable restaurant, 1936. ("Welcome to The Fable!" Jo Mora "Fable" Murals Collection © 2017 Trotter Galleries, Inc.)