



MEADOWS MUSEUM
SMU · DALLAS

**ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST INFLUENTIAL 19TH-CENTURY PAINTERS
REVISITED IN A NEW EXHIBITION THAT MAPS THE ARTIST'S CIRCLE OF
INFLUENCE AND LEGACY**

***Fortuny: Friends and Followers* Demonstrates the Impact of Spanish Painter Mariano
Fortuny y Marsal, Whose Evolving Style and Short but Prolific Life Swept Up
Leading Painters of His Time**

DALLAS (SMU)—January 8, 2019—This February, the Meadows Museum, SMU, will examine the far-reaching influence of 19th-century Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny y Marsal (1838–1874) in the new exhibition *Fortuny: Friends and Followers*. During his lifetime and well into the early 20th century, Fortuny was extremely popular in both Europe and the United States. His proto-Impressionist style and “exotic” genre scenes influenced so many artists that the style came to be described with its very own “ism”: “Fortunismo.” *Fortuny: Friends and Followers* will explore that legacy by bringing together works from a diverse group of artists, including William Merritt Chase (1849–1916), Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), and James Tissot (1836–1902), as well as major works by Fortuny. The exhibition opens February 3, 2019, and will run through June 2.

With almost 70 works by 23 different artists, the exhibition will address a variety of themes, including intimate representations of family and home, cosmopolitan life in Europe’s major cities at the time, and the connections between and among the artists themselves. Included in the show are *Beach at Portici* (1874), the major painting Fortuny was working on at his death, acquired by the Meadows Museum in January 2018, and *The Choice of a Model* (1868–74), an important work by the artist on long-term loan from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Also on view will be a number of drawings and illustrated letters from the album compiled by William Hood Stewart (1820–1897), Fortuny’s chief American patron. Also in the Meadows Museum’s collection, *The Stewart Album* (1860–90) impressionistically records the great American collector’s acquaintance with the Parisian artistic community, and is crucial to understanding Fortuny’s social world.

“Such was the power of ‘Fortunismo’ that nearly 20 years after his death, the artist’s last painting was a celebrated work at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which was visited by more than 27 million people,” said Mark Roglán, the Linda P. and

William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum. "Part of Fortuny's success came from his willingness to combine traditional sensibilities with the experimentation taking place across much of the art world at the time. His pieces not only charmed and engaged critics and collectors, they found a willing audience among other artists, who sought to learn from his vibrant style and adapt its lessons for their own work. It is these connections between artists that the exhibition brings to light."

Fortuny: Friends and Followers is comprised of five thematic sections: "Modern Life and Family"; "The Artist and the Academy"; "A Genre of Nostalgia"; "The Allure of the 'Exotic'"; and "Cosmopolitan Places." Together they trace Fortuny's artistic evolution and the ways he influenced a diverse group of artists, whether by his precise technique or his innovative subject matter. In the first section, "Modern Life and Family," the exhibition looks at depictions of domestic scenes that highlight the comforts of contemporary European life. The section's lead work is the late masterpiece by Fortuny depicting family leisure time, *Beach at Portici*, which the artist painted beachside near a rented villa south of Naples. The painting, whose creation coincided with the rise of Impressionism, is an example of Fortuny's experimental, sun-flecked style. Other works include William Merritt Chase's *Mrs. Chase and Child (I'm Going to See Grandma)* (from about 1899) and *The Visit* (before 1869) by Alfred Stevens (1823–1906). All of the paintings in this section take as their subject the intimacy of private life, whether in the home or on a beach holiday.

Drawing on works included in *The Stewart Album*, the second section, "The Artist and the Academy," brings viewers into the European artistic community of the 1860s and 1870s through the sketches and illustrated letters of many of its participants. For example, a sketch by Martín Rico y Ortega (1833–1908) depicts Fortuny painting in a studio alongside some of the artists and collectors in Fortuny's Parisian circle in 1869. In addition to depicting his friends at work, Rico also included a group of collectors and dealers leaving the studio with their purchases.

The section "A Genre of Nostalgia" tracks the artistic trends of the mid-19th-century, as preferences shifted from large works that addressed major historical or religious themes to smaller, collectible paintings that focused on period costume and lavish interiors. One striking example of this is Fortuny's painting *The Choice of a Model* which, with its elaborately staged scene, presents an array of men in ornate costume gazing at a posing nude female. Its Neo-Rococo style, with vibrant colors and extravagant architecture, are key elements of Fortuny's style at this time. Another artist whose work reflects these changes in taste was the Frenchman Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891). His

Information (General Desaix and the Peasant) (1867), is an example of this historicizing approach, which privileges small details—like the exact re-creation of the uniforms of the Napoleonic soldiers—over the significant event.

During this period, intellectual and artistic communities across Western Europe and in America found themselves increasingly fascinated by cultures that appeared foreign in their eyes. In the section “The Allure of the ‘Exotic,’” the exhibition addresses this interest in “otherness,” and the growing demand for art that emulated or depicted these styles and settings. Included are works by Fortuny, such as a series of etchings that capture scenes and people from his travels to Morocco, and an oil study, *Crouching Arab* (Meadows Museum), that he executed in preparation for the figure in a larger painting. American painter John Singer Sargent’s watercolor *Study for “The Spanish Dancer”* (1882), demonstrates United States audiences’ tastes for the flamenco music of Spain. Also presented in this section is the work of Jean-Léon Gérôme, whose works *Turkish “Bashi-bazouk” Mercenary Soldiers Playing Chess* (about 1870–73) and *Tiger on the Watch* (about 1888), demonstrate his skill at presenting these so-named Oriental scenes.

The exhibition concludes with the section “Cosmopolitan Places,” which illustrates many of the sites and people that Fortuny and his artistic followers recorded in their art throughout their travels in Europe. Wherever these itinerant artists lived or worked, whether in grand apartments on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, along the canals of Venice, or near the seashore in Portici, they sought to document and interpret the world around them through their art. For example, *A Lady at the Paris Exposition* (1889), painted by Luis Jiménez Aranda (1845–1928), is emblematic of the French capital’s importance to the art world, while Martín Rico’s *Rio San Trovaso, Venice* (1903) captures another city beloved of artists and collectors.

Meadows Museum Curator Amanda W. Dotseth added, “Today Fortuny is not a household name, but his popularity and influence in the 1860s and early 1870s cannot be overstated. He was one of the best-selling artists of his time and lived a cosmopolitan lifestyle that seamlessly blended work with leisure. He traveled frequently between southern Spain, Paris, Rome, Naples, and Venice with an impressive entourage of friends and followers in tow. And, although he died at only thirty-six years old, his legacy long survived him through his works, which would inspire later generations of artists, from Vincent van Gogh to Dalí and Picasso.”

Fortuny: Friends and Followers has been organized by the Meadows Museum and is funded by a generous gift from the Meadows Foundation. The exhibition is made

possible thanks to loans from a number of museums in the United States, including: Dallas Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; New Orleans Museum of Art; San Antonio Museum of Art; as well as the Leva-Laves Collection and several private collections. The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue, co-edited by Roglán and Dotseth, that recreates the exhibition's five sections with full-color reproductions of the exhibited works and thematic introductions by Dotseth. These support an art historical essay by Meadows Curatorial Fellow Daniel Ralston, who locates Fortuny's life and work within the artist's milieu and explores his lasting impact on both his contemporaries and later generations of artists. The publication concludes with short biographies of each artist featured within the exhibition.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Meadows will host monthly gallery talks by local experts throughout the spring, as well as a Family Day on April 13. Additionally, three special lectures will be presented, each addressing different artists and aspects of the works represented in the exhibition:

February 7

The Spanish Look: Fortuny, Frenchmen, and the Sombrero Calañés

Daniel Ralston, Meadows Curatorial Fellow

This lecture explores how Fortuny, his artistic circle, and his principal American collectors sought to define, construct, and propagate their own unique image of Spain.

March 7

Eakins, Sargent, and Chase: Fortuny's Divergent American Admirers

Brian Allen, independent art historian

This talk examines the Spanish master's appeal to a range of young American painters working in differing styles, from Thomas Eakin's realism, to John Singer Sargent's painterly naturalism, and William Merritt Chase's adaptation of brushwork akin to Impressionism.

April 11

Dressing the Model

Gloria Groom, chair of European painting and sculpture, Art Institute of Chicago

This lecture will explore why and how the artists of Mariano Fortuny's circle—Tissot, Gérôme, Alfred Stevens, and other so-called academic painters—used fashion in their portraits and genre scenes, as well as how these artists intersected with the Impressionists, including Renoir, Monet, Degas, and Manet.

About the Meadows Museum

The Meadows Museum is the leading U.S. institution focused on the study and presentation of the art of Spain. In 1962, Dallas businessman and philanthropist Algur H. Meadows donated his private collection of Spanish paintings, as well as funds to start a museum, to Southern Methodist University. The museum opened to the public in 1965, marking the first step in fulfilling Meadows's vision to create "a small Prado for Texas." Today, the Meadows is home to one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. The collection spans from the 10th to the 21st centuries and includes medieval objects, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures, and major paintings by Golden Age and modern masters.

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