

Lawrence Mazzanovich (1871-1959)

Morning Dew, circa 1915

signed lower left

oil on canvas

32" x 39 1/2"

Lawrence Mazzanovich, spent his early years of study at the Art Institute of Chicago, simultaneously working as an apprentice to a sign painter, and later at the Art Students League in New York. He completed his artistic education in France where he was exposed to Impressionism and met James Adams Thayer, a prominent American publisher. Thayer invited Mazzanovich and his first wife, Ann, to join him in Westport, Connecticut, where he maintained a house and where a nascent artists' community was forming. The Mazzanoviches accepted, and in 1909 they built a home along the Saugatuck river and settled in the wealthy Gold Coast town.

According to Charles Teaze Clark, "a profound change in Mazzanovich's technique occurred after his move to Connecticut. He abandoned the strict tonal style in favor of brightly-colored impressionism . . . He developed an almost pointillist application of pigment to his canvases, especially when describing ground color and leaves." (1). *Morning Dew* presents evidence of the shift in Mazzanovich's technique, while referencing his tonalist inclinations. The repetitive stylization and pointillist composition are consistent with what became the most successful phase of the artist's career. The tall, slender trees enveloped in an atmospheric haze insistently lead the viewer's eye from the bottom of the canvas to the top. This detail is counteracted by strong horizontals of light and shadow used in the foreground and middle ground. His brushstrokes are spontaneous, yet tight, and the palette offers a meditation on the naturally bright hues found in the springtime. Above all, Mazzanovich attempted to transcribe the divinity of nature through his paintings. He once said, "It is not what color is, but the impression you get from it. I have a respect for any one who tries to express rather what he feels than what he sees." (2).

The career of Mazzanovich was profitable and continually marked with success. He exhibited regularly throughout the Midwest and in New York and Boston, including a landmark debut exhibition at Vose Galleries in 1913. One art critic noted, "The distinguishing points of his art are that his drawing is solid and correct, his color sense vivid and original, and that all his pictures have an illusive charm that can only be explained in the rather simple statement that everyone who owns one loves to live with it – to have it on his wall, year after year, never finding it stale or less than satisfactory" (3).

Much of Mazzanovich's Westport success must be credited to his wife, who diligently managed his finances and promoted her husband's artwork. It came as a surprise then when he suddenly abandoned her and their young son and retreated to Tryon, North Carolina, situated in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He died in Tryon in 1959.

Provenance: From a private collection to the gallery.

Bibliography:

1. Charles Teaze Clark, *Lawrence Mazzanovich, 1871-1959: Tryon Paintings*, exhibition pamphlet issued by the Tryon Fine Arts Center, March 10—March 23, 1991, 1 .
2. Mazzanovich quoted by Chloe Arnold, "Visiting Mazzanovich" in *The Morning Telegraph*, 29 October 1916. Cited in "Southern Impressions: From the Mountains to the Sea" by Martha R. Severens in *Sixteenth Annual Antiques Show*, Greenville County Museum of Art (October 12-14, 2001), 14.
3. *The Polk County News*, October 21, 1926.