

Miguel Conde at Sorokko Gallery

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Mexican Museum Director David de la Torre (left), Serge Sorokko, artist Miguel Conde. Photo: Drew Altizer Photography



With his silvery beard and creative flair, Mexican American artist [Miguel Conde](#) is a Hemingway-esque figure in his adopted Madrid, so famous he can walk in on a busy night and get a table at Botin, the world's oldest restaurant, without a reservation.

The figurative painter, draughtsman and printmaker, whose works hang in museums

around the globe, is less recognized in the United States, but a crowd of 200 - including [Juan Pablo Suarez](#), the great-great-grandson of Mexican President [Porfirio Diaz](#) - gathered recently for the opening of his first American show, a retrospective (through Oct. 19) at the [Serge Sorokko Gallery](#). At a private tour on Sept. 17, Mexican Museum Director [David de la Torre](#), museum trustee [Emily Pimentel](#) and Univision TV's [Fabiola Kramsky](#) and others viewed Conde's work - not quite surreal, not quite Cubist, yet expressive of the human condition - and heard [Robert Flynn Johnson](#), curator emeritus of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, describe Conde's importance. Some figures resembled medieval tarot cards, with overly long, snakelike arms and a sinister air. "I deal with situations that can be rooted in psychology - more cerebral, edgy," Conde said. "I like something more mysterious."

That resonated with Conde collector [Peter Michelson](#), a Stanford physics professor, who saw a parallel in his bid to understand the evolution of the universe: "There is truth out there - laws of nature that haven't been discovered yet. Part of that process is creative; elements of that activity inspire artists."