

Witold Gordon
(1885 – 1968)

The painter and muralist, Witold Gordon, was born in Warsaw, Poland. He moved to Paris as a young man and studied there at the Ecole de Beaux Arts before moving to the United States. He had a distinguished career including the production of two major murals at Radio City Music Hall in 1932. These were coordinated by the prominent American designer, Donald Deskey, and included Witold Gordon among the period's foremost avant-garde artists along with Stuart Davis and William Zorach, among others.

Gordon was later commissioned to conceive a 6000 square foot mural for a building at the New York World's Fair in 1939 and this amazing feat is captured in postcards from the fair as well as commemorative film footage and color photographs. His modernist aesthetic is evident in his illustrations for *The Travels of Marco Polo* and his fine poster for the 1932 Olympics in Lake Placid.

In the summers of 1939 and 1949, Gordon traveled through the Southeastern United States painting, in gouache, houses and businesses he considered samplings of true Americana. In some he found sophistication and a refined taste; in others a naive interpretation of designs and forms. This series of 35 gouaches was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in February of 1941, titled "American Scene." *Vogue* magazine, in a review at the time, said "These paintings show the true face of America - its houses, churches, and gas stations. Stripping it of the fog of habit, Mr. Gordon gives the familiar scene a fresh inventiveness, a gaunt, unexpected beauty."

In the mid-40s, Mr. Gordon was commissioned by *The New Yorker* magazine to create a series of covers illustrating the New York City of a bygone era.

Mr. Gordon was a longtime resident of Sag Harbor, Long Island and died in 1968 at the age of 83.