

“ROCKWELL KENT” BY FREDERICK LEWIS

During the 1930s and ‘40s, Rockwell Kent (1882—1971) was one of America’s most famous personalities. The foremost illustrator of his day, he created definitive drawings for literary classics such as “Moby Dick,” “Candide,” and “The Canterbury Tales.”

Kent was also a prolific oil painter whose work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago. His haunting landscapes were inspired by his adventurous sojourns to Alaska, Tierra del Fuego and Greenland. He was also a best-selling author and a social activist who won a landmark passport case against the federal government that allowed all U.S, citizens to travel, regardless of their political affiliations. The New Yorker once quipped, “That day will mark a precedent, which brings no news of Rockwell Kent.” Why was Kent’ s fame so fleeting?

For more than ten years, producer/writer Frederick Lewis, a professor at Ohio University, retraced the peripatetic artist/adventurer’s many travels, shooting footage in Greenland,

Newfoundland, Alaska, Russia, and Ireland. He also hired a 56-ft sailboat with crew and recreated Kent's capricious attempt to sail to Cape Horn.

The result is a definitive documentary that puts Kent's myriad achievements in perspective. The Washington Post called this documentary:

" …a sweeping, detailed, visually rich portrait of a man who emerges as a complex, compelling and finally contradictory force of nature, a charismatic reflection of the eras in which he lived."