

Katherine "Kay" Pancoast



Born in North Tonawanda, New York, Katherine (Kay) Pancoast graduated from Cornell University's School of Architecture in 1922. In 1924 she relocated to Miami Beach with husband, Russell Pancoast, who was also an architect. While raising their two children, Pancoast was very involved in community work and used

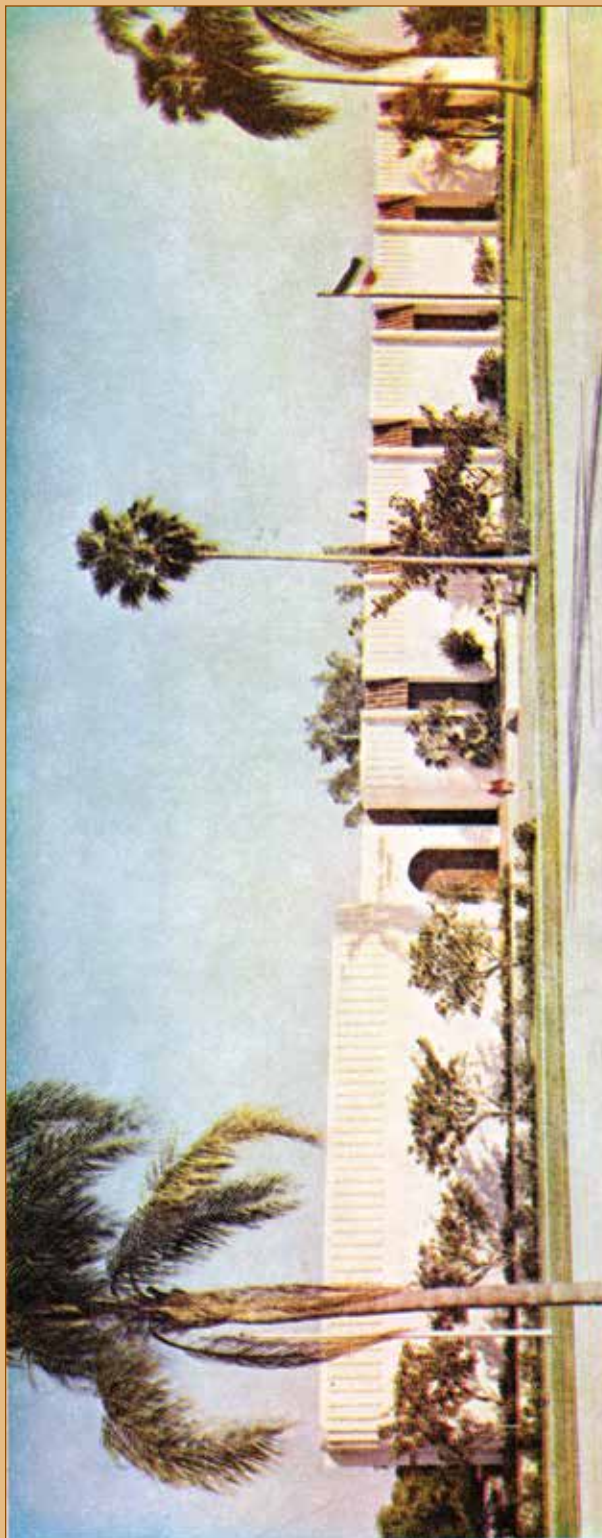
her talents to create elaborate stage set designs. She applied some of her many talents to painting portraits and nursery furniture. She also created wallpaper designs, which were sold to manufacturers.

In 1950, quite by accident, she discovered ceramics - her favorite medium - which gave her deep satisfaction. From then on, Pancoast turned her attention to tiles - carving, impressing, glazing, and fashioning them in varied ways fueled by her imagination and research. Pancoast's ceramic works have been sold in New York at American House, Georg Jensen, Bonniers, and Edwin Jackson. Her designs were also sold at The University of Pennsylvania Museum Shop, The Cosmopolitan Club in Philadelphia, and in Miami, the Pageant Gallery and Arango.

Pancoast was not only a Miami pioneer in the world of ceramic art but a ceramic artist of international stature and a force in the art world at large. Architects, interior designers, and those who found their way to her studio, used her tiles and slab constructions as paintings, to decorate fireplaces, screens, and murals. Some of her major mural works are located in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Florida (Orlando, Boca Raton, and Miami). They hang proudly in banks, hotels, a hospital, a prison, and since 1970 in the Coral Gables Branch Library.

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THE CORAL GABLES MURAL



Coral Gables Branch Library

Miami-Dade Public Library System

Margaret M. Beaton Room

3443 Segovia Street • Coral Gables, Florida

THE CORAL GABLES MURAL



KEY

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Biltmore Hotel | 10. Cartagena Plaza |
| 2. Douglas Entrance | 11. Coral Gables Branch Library |
| 3. Chinese Village | 12. Granada Golf Course |
| 4. Miracle Mile | 13. Biltmore Golf Course |
| 5. City Hall | 14. Riviera Golf Course |
| 6. Tahiti Beach (former) | 15. University of Miami Campus |
| 7. Computer Center,
University of Miami | 16. U.S. Highway One |
| 8. Fairchild Garden Museum | 17. Red Road |
| 9. The Coral Gables Merrick House | 18. Blue Road |

Created by artist Kay Pancoast, the Coral Gables mural hangs in the Margaret M. Beaton Room inside the Coral Gables Branch Library. The mural depicts the very essence of the City of Coral Gables, showing off major landmarks and hubs of activity in the city. The mural does not include every place of historic interest or every species of tree, but those selected reflect the variety of happenings and the garden-like qualities that pervade the streets of the City.

Some nostalgic relics of early Coral Gables depicted in Pancoast's mural are the Biltmore Hotel (1), the Douglas Entrance (2), and the Chinese Village (3). The Coral Gables Merrick House (9) sits near a top corner of the map, as does City Hall (5). The sphere-topped building representing the University of Miami (15), Fairchild Tropical Gardens (8), Miracle Mile (4), and Cartagena Plaza (10) reflect more modern times.

The University of Miami campus and the City's parks and golf courses are indicated by yellow areas on the map. US Highway One (16), the highway that links Key West with Canada, cuts across the city. Named by the ink colors used on old working maps, are Red Road (17) and Blue Road (18).

Every tree in the design was sketched in Coral Gables. Caribbean pines, large ficus trees; *altissima*, *exotica*, *nitida*, and *religiosa*, a live oak, and the subtropical eucalyptus dominate the green areas and streets. Also present are the mahogany with its black trunk and branches, the tropical almond growing in characteristic horizontal layers, a melaleuca with its white branches, the Queensland umbrella and its topknots of bloom, the bauhinia, a writhing gumbo limbo, and the dark casuarinas of the former Tahiti Beach (6). Also present are the coconut palm, the royal palm, and the exotic palms and cycads of Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden. Not to be overlooked is the red blaze of royal poincianas.

The bottom of the mural links land and water. A monstera vine clings to a bit of rock wall and a pelican flies over the mangroves. The blue waters of Biscayne Bay and the sweet waters from inland Florida meet in the canals, inlets, and lakes. The Bay itself, alive with all kinds of boating, laps the shores of Matheson Hammock, and waterfront residences, bringing full circle the saga of Coral Gables.