



## Governor William Comstock

Roy Gamble, William Comstock

Governor

### Date

c. 1935

### Medium

oil paint

### Dimensions

91 3/4 x 54 in. (233 x 137.2 cm)

Paintings

### Object number

CA.2025.03.018

Michigan State Capitol Building (100 N. Capitol Ave), Floor 2, North Wing, NW/Dem. Caucus Room

Though this portrait of Governor William Comstock, painted by Roy Gamble, appears straightforward at first, it tells a wealth of information about the artist and the time period in which it was painted. Comstock sits at a desk, but he turns over his left shoulder to face the viewer. Though his pose is relaxed, his body remains stiff, and his

facial expression is stern as he gazes outward at his audience. Comstock's face is realistic, though idealized. The dark shadows along the folds of his clothing give the figure a graphic, cartoon-like feel; likely, this is a result of Gamble's interest in illustration and commercial art. The background of this piece is simple, featuring only a Michigan flag and a map of the state. The visible, expressive brushstrokes and blend of multiple colors throughout the background create a sense of unease that is seen in many of Gamble's artworks. This disquietude was common for artists of his time, who expressed anxiety about world events through their work. Completed in 1934, this portrait would have been painted around the height of America's Great Depression. During this period, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded many artists as part of their Federal Art Project, one of several initiatives to provide jobs and incomes to unemployed Americans. Gamble was not part of this project, though his art style is reminiscent of many WPA artists working contemporaneously.