

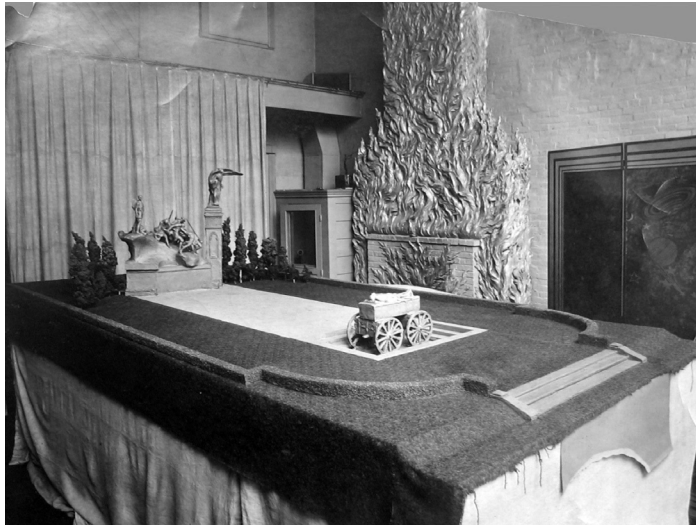
WHITNEY STUDIO CEILING

CONSERVATION PLAN

New York, New York
2010 - 2011

Funded by: World Monuments Fund

As one of the few surviving examples of the work of artist Robert Winthrop Chanler, the Whitney Studio stands today as a masterpiece of early twentieth-century decorative art. Located on historic MacDougal Alley in Greenwich Village, the site is positioned at what once was the center for the development of the early modern art movement in America.



Above: Whitney studio interior in 1928 (Smithsonian Archives)



Above: Application of paints to the replica panel (ACL)

Designed for Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney from 1918 to 1923, the space was a social and spiritual refuge for the famous American art patroness, whose personal studio, Whitney Studio Club, and Whitney Museum of American Art were connected to and evolved within the building. Once a sumptuous interior, painted with elaborate polychromatic schemes and detailed with corresponding stained glass windows and decorative screens, the room has lost some of its original features over time due to transitions in ownership, changes in use, and several applications of over-painting.

Following the collapse of a section of cornice from the ceiling in 2008, a partnership was formed between the Architectural Conservation Laboratory, World Monuments Fund, and the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture to fully investigate, document, and develop a conservation program for the bas-relief sculptural ceiling and fireplace in the room.

The conservation program for the Whitney Studio Ceiling examined the structural support of the ceiling, the sculpted plaster substrate, and the original finishes (c. 1918-1923). Technical analysis of the finishes revealed a complex polychromatic design with metallic leaf highlights. A section of the ceiling was reproduced as an interpretive mock-up, developed from 3D laser scanning, digital modeling, and fabrication, to create a treatment plan for the ceiling and room.

In collaboration with World Monuments Fund and New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. The results of all phases of the work may be accessed through the project's website at <http://www.conlab.org/acl/whitney/index.html>.

