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Wharton Esherick Museum Receives Save America's Treasures Grant to Preserve Works on Paper Collection

Malvern, PA – The Wharton Esherick Museum (WEM) is excited to announce the receipt of a \$130,000 Save America's Treasures Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences. This matching grant will fund the conservation of the museum's works on paper collection, including sketches, watercolors, and prints by the artist Wharton Esherick (1887-1970).

While Esherick is widely credited as the founder of the Studio Furniture Movement and primarily known for his wooden furniture and sculpture, the Museum's collection also includes many other examples of his artistic output, including prints, drawings, watercolors, notes and ephemera on paper. Rarely on view, these materials provide visual and material insight into Esherick's broader artistic legacy and his engagement with the social, creative, political and artistic movements that shaped and influenced his life and work. The Save America's Treasures Grant will allow for the conservation of this under-utilized collection of works on paper, stabilizing their condition and bolstering the Museum's ability to share them with the public.

The preservation is scheduled to be completed over a three year period in partnership with the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) and will involve a combination of conservation treatment and archival rehousing for ninety watercolors, eighty prints, six pastels, and numerous sketches including a 36-foot "sketch scroll."

"We are actively working on a multi-year planning process to transform the areas for collection storage, internal operations, and visitor engagement at the Wharton Esherick Museum as part of our proposed campus expansion plan," shared WEM Executive Director Julie Siglin. "The Save America's Treasures Grant will allow us to improve our collection's long-term stability and allow for greater public access of these rich archives."

"As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services, and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow," said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. "IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities."

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services: The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



About the Wharton Esherick Museum:

The Wharton Esherick Museum (WEM) is the home and studio of Wharton Esherick (1887-1970), an artistic polymath and foundational figure in twentieth-century contemporary craft and American Modern design. Wharton Esherick is widely credited as the founder of the Studio Furniture Movement and was present at many of the landmark events which shaped the field of contemporary craft on an international level. Esherick worked primarily in wood and extended his unique forms to furniture, furnishings, interiors, buildings, and more. His motto, "If it isn't fun, it isn't worth doing," is evident in the joyful expression of his work. A National Historic Landmark for Architecture, his hilltop studio/residence has been preserved much as it was when the artist lived and worked there.



Wharton Esherick's Studio. Photo courtesy of the Wharton Esherick Museum.

In addition to private commissions, Esherick's work is represented nationally in the permanent collections of more than 20 major museums and galleries, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Art, Boston, and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

[Read the National Park Service Press Release: National Park Service and partner agencies announce \\$24.25 million in Save America's Treasures Grants](#)

Please note, to enter the Museum you must make advance reservations for a tour. Details about visiting, open hours, and COVID-19 safety guidelines can be found at whartonesherickmuseum.org.

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