



HERZOG & DE MEURON RENOVATES THE ARMORY'S VETERANS ROOM TO ITS ORIGINAL 19TH CENTURY APLOMB

GLOW GETTER

On March 7, the Veterans Room at the Park Avenue Armory reopened after an extensive renovation by Herzog & de Meuron. The reopening was the latest in the firm's multi-

year restoration of the building, which began in 2007 and has no set completion date. The Veterans Room was originally commissioned in 1879 to Associated Artists—Louis

Comfort Tiffany, Stanford White, and Candace Wheeler—who later went on to design Mark Twain's house, five rooms in the White House, and Cornelius Vanderbilt's house. The Veterans Room's Gilded-Era style is a rich, riotous mash up of Islamic, Chinese, Greek, and Celtic influences: scrolling ironwork hangs from the ceiling while twisting columns frame Tiffany's dramatic blue-glass mosaic behind the fireplace, and



JAMES EWING

The Park Avenue Armory's Veterans Room is one of the few remaining designs by Associated Artists.

ornate paneling with wooden bas reliefs and colorful embedded glass evokes an intricately carved jewel box.

The \$8 million renovation of the Veterans Room took approximately one year. Herzog & de Meuron focused on two core features in particular: the wallpaper, which had been removed in the mid-20th century, and the lighting.

Fortuitously, a piece of the original wallpaper was found behind a painting and, while the new version is not an exact replica, great pains were taken to honor the original color balance and effect of the design. "How can you recreate an artistic process?" Ascan

Mergenthaler, a Herzog & de Meuron senior partner, told the *New York Times*. "You can't read their minds, so you can't just try to do what they did. You have to think beyond that."

The firm created LED lighting with illuminated glass lenses to replace the original gas fixtures. The resulting refracted light achieves a warm, glowing atmosphere for which the Veterans Room was once so famous.

To further transform the room into a modern venue, it was sound-proofed and engineered to concert-level acoustic standards. The now in-demand space is expected to host musical performances, exhibitions, educational workshops, and lectures. **OLIVIA MARTIN**

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