



Akron Civic Theatre

AKRON, OH

The Civic was built in 1929, seating 2,592, at a cost of over \$2 million. It was built for master showman Marcus Loew, and is one of only five surviving atmospheric theaters designed by the legendary theater architect John Eberson. The theme of a night in an Andalusian garden within the courtyard of a palace modeled on the Alhambra defines Eberson's "atmospheric" theaters. The ceiling is a sky at twilight, painted blue with stars. The polychromed plasterwork imitates antique stone sculpted in the Spanish Baroque style. The Moorish theme continues in the foyer, lobbies, and lounges.

Our team was first brought in to assess the conditions of the theatre in 2001. The plasterwork was in sound condition, and the statuary was intact, but the color scheme had been repainted and shifted away from the original colors over the years. Conservators and artists from EverGreene prepared a study of the historic decorative painting scheme, painted a mockup of the proposed color scheme, and completed the decorative painting restoration. EverGreene's specialists in historic finishes studied archival materials and analyzed layers of paint microscopically to determine the original color scheme. In consultation with the architects, EverGreene's decorative painters adjusted the palette slightly to achieve the right effect under enhanced modern lighting. Painted mockups in the proscenium areas and end stands of seats gave the architects and owner the opportunity for input. Unique to the Akron Civic is the arbor effect in the mezzanine crossover. At the beginning of the investigation of historic finishes, there was speculation about the purpose of the unusual daubs of plaster on the ceiling. Paint analysis revealed that they were originally painted dark green and reddish like tropical leaves, creating the effect of an arbor. Another distinctive aspect of the Akron civic interior is the reinstatement of artificial foliage, based on the study of archival photographs. Artificial cypress trees, olive trees, ivy vines, and flowers installed in the theater contribute to the atmosphere of a garden courtyard in Spain.

The decorative painting on site was done by a veteran crew of EverGreene decorative painters who have worked on theaters across the country. The biggest challenge was working with such a large number of colors: 12-15 colors in the polychromatic scheme and four or five different types of glazing, employed in a variety of painting techniques. Painting and decorative painting was completed in the auditorium and balconies, promenades, alcoves, overlooks, mezzanine balcony, salons, and vestibules. EverGreene also created compatible decorative finishes for new architectural features designed by Wilson Butler Lodge. In the second phase of work, our team completed a full restoration of the theatre's grand lobby.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/akron-civic-theatre/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Decorative Painting & Finishes
Finishes Investigation
Glazing
Investigation, Testing & Analysis
Paint Studies
Surveys & Condition Assessments

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect
Wilson Butler Lodge



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