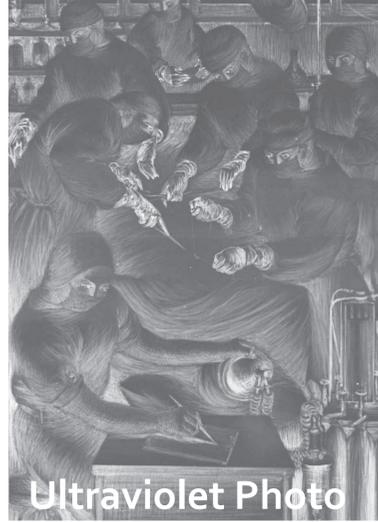




Modern Surgery and Anesthesia

Alfred Crimi | 1936

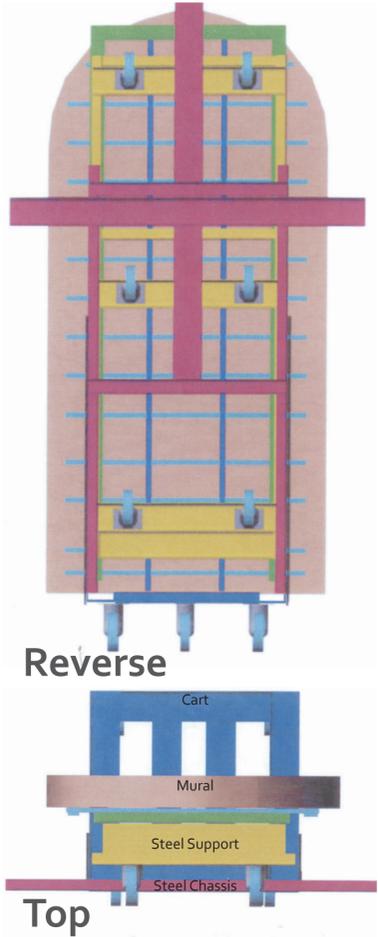
Survey



Alfred Crimi's *Modern Surgery and Anesthesia* is the only fresco in the Harlem Hospital Center. Crimi, an accomplished fresco artist trained in Italy, was the only non-African American commissioned for the project. A fresco is a challenging technique in which watercolor is applied rapidly to wet lime plaster. As it dries, the colors become fixed in the plaster. *Modern Surgery and Anesthesia* was created in an alcove in the former Physician's Dining Room.

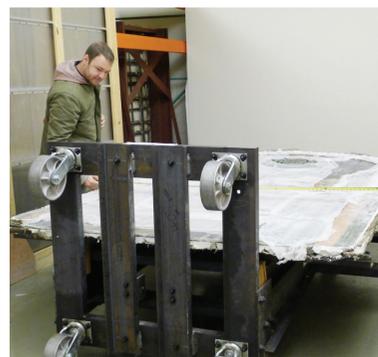
The initial conservation study revealed paint loss, cracks in the plaster, unstable substrate, and discolored areas.

Removal & Storage



Prior to relocation, conservators applied a thick coat of a wax-like substance that—once dry—evaporates directly from a solid to a gas when exposed to oxygen. The mural was then wrapped in plastic to preserve the coating during transportation and storage.

The location of the mural in the previous building posed new challenges for its removal. To remove the mural, conservators constructed a steel support system in a very narrow airshaft behind the mural. Once the steel structure was in place, and securely attached to the rear of the fresco, the mural was cut free, lowered, and rolled out of the building through an opening cut out of the wall.



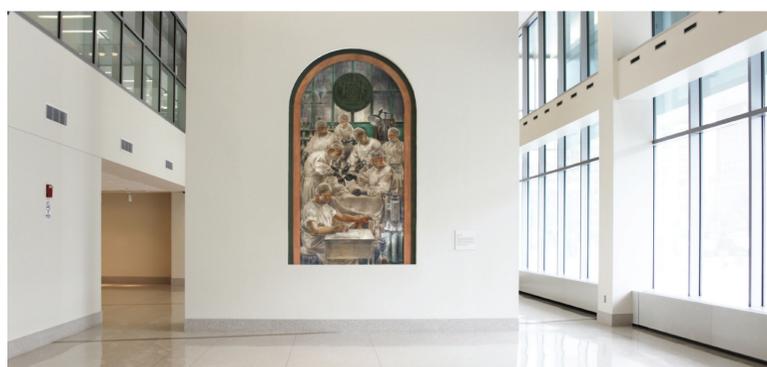
A team of art movers, using a forklift and a crane, extracted the heavy mural from the building, and the fresco was taken to a climate controlled storage facility, where it was stored horizontally for stability. By a process known as consolidation, adhesive was injected into the cracks to stabilize fragile substrate and edges.

Installation



Once in place, the plastic wrap was removed and the protective coating was able to sublimate naturally without disturbing the face of the mural.

The custom built steel support installed on the reverse of the mural was hoisted from the ground to the concealed support beams and cranked into place with locking jacks. The wall was then built flush around the fresco.



Finally, inpainting was performed in areas where the paint was abraded or completely lost.