



A Careful Hand

Photos courtesy of Atelier de Ricou - Text by Alice White Walker



There are thousands upon thousands of historic, time-worn sites across France, patiently waiting for talented, passionate hands to revive them. And where do the most illustrious places turn to when in need? Atelier de Ricou.

Created in 1989 by Cyril and Stéphanie de Ricou, Atelier de Ricou is a union of two creative minds and two distinct savoir-faire: decorative painting and the restoration of historical monuments.

Today, Atelier de Ricou works with architects and designers to help restore or create decorations in some of the world's most prestigious

buildings, from the Presidential Élysée Palace to a New York City penthouse.

Located in the Hôtel de Guines — an 18th-century *hôtel particulier* in Courbevoie, northwest of Paris — Atelier de Ricou is divided into two branches: restoration and creation.

The studio is the nerve center, where the team pools together its ideas.

It is here that research comes to life, calling upon references from the atelier's bursting archives and library of materials. The team consists of 40 artisans — top specialists in their fields; making the company uniquely polyvalent in a niche industry.

First, in conjunction with heritage architects, a dedicated unit diagnoses each project. Next, restorers adept at working on numerous materials (wall paintings, paintings on canvas, mineral washing, gilding, polychrome and gilt woodwork, plasterwork, *carton-pierre*...) intervene on the structure. Finally, the artists use their magic on frescos, moldings, patinas; conjuring numerous special effects, such as *trompe l'oeil*, gilding, French lacquer and marble stucco.

This high level of technical knowledge and aesthetic sensitivity means that Atelier de Ricou is the first port of call on the country's most important restorations.

In recent years, the team has helped restore numerous French sites: the "Salon de la Paix" and the "Salle des Gardes de la Reine" at the Château

de Versailles, as well as the Hôtel de la Marine, Hôtel Lutétia and Hôtel de Crillon in Paris. International projects have ranged from the Venetian Room, in the former Payne Whitney Mansion on Park Avenue, to the French Embassy in Copenhagen.

Atelier de Ricou also turns its talents to made-to-measure décor,

be it a painted sky in a Parisian apartment or gilded doors in *l'ambassade française* in New York City.

With 500 successful projects under its belt, Atelier de Ricou and its valued savoir-faire are fast on their way to securing as venerated and precious a status as the buildings they bring back to life. *



1&2. Hôtel Lutétia in Paris, where the original 1910 décor by Adrien Karbowsky was revealed and restored.

3. The Atelier uncovered the 18th-century paintings and gildings in each of the 18 rooms that make up the one of the apartments in Paris' Hôtel de la Marine.

4. Restoration of the painted and gilded woodworks in the "Salle des Gardes de la Reine" at Versailles.

5. The gilded lead and stucco were brought back to life in the "Salon de la Paix," also in Versailles Palace.







1. The finished result of the renovation of the "Salon du Duc de Crillon" at the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris.

2&3. A careful and steady hand is needed for the painted and gilded woodworks.

4&5. Work in progress at the Hôtel de la Marine in Paris, a historic site on Place de la Concorde that opened in 2021 after a three-year restoration.

