

STERLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY*Back to the future***CLIENT**

Yale University

TYPE

Renovation and Refurbishment

SIZE

1,400 sq ft

COMPLETION

2010

When Sterling Memorial Library opened its doors to Yale students in 1930 it was deemed by architect James Gamble Rogers to be a cathedral to learning and the intellectual heart of a great university. To this day, it remains so and is considered a masterpiece of collegiate gothic style.

By 2010 though, The Memorabilia Room, later dubbed The Art of The Book Room, which had previously served as a stately showcase and reading room within the building had become underutilized and neglected. The hand crafted ornate and decorative bookcases that lined the walls were in disrepair and had long ago lost their luster; the once original Samuel Yellin chandeliers that hung from the ornate plaster ceiling had been replaced with acrylic covered suspended fluorescent lighting - various electrical, security and fire alarm devices were insensitively added to the walls and the ceiling and further contributed to its degradation.

CWA was brought on to transform the space into its next incarnation, The International Room – the goal being to not only provide a modern portal to all international aspects of the University but to also restore the space to it's former elegance and splendor. Through thoughtful, sensitive and artful design, the room has at once been brought back to its original grandeur while providing the latest in technology and media resources to curious students and researchers alike; it also doubles also as a lecture hall for presentations.

Had a flux capacitor been available to them, we'd like to think both Mr. Rogers and Mr. Yellin would be quite pleased with the results.

[Sterling Memorial Library - web page link](#)



BACK STORY

Sterling Memorial Library is one of the most elaborate buildings on Yale's campus and is its largest library. Much of the 441,000 sq ft interior space also contains original works by the famed artisan metal worker Samuel Yellin, who contributed railings, gates, grilles and lighting fixtures.

CONTEXT

This 1400 sq ft double height space is located on the main level in the southwest quadrant of the building, close to the cross campus entry.

NUTS & BOLTS

Most of the original bookcases were retained, repaired, restored and converted into glass enclosed illuminated display cases. All the various electrical, security and fire alarm devices that were insensitively added were removed and/or replaced with modern unobtrusive systems including an integrated audio-visual and automated window treatment system.



WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

Historical research. Samuel Yellin's studio, currently managed by his granddaughter Claire Yellin, was engaged to produce new chandeliers based on similar ones to the original, which, at the time of the restoration, only existed in archival photographs. Full size mock-ups were made and suspended in the space to ensure that the size, configuration, scale and suspended elevation were correct. Yellin's original pencil drawings were examined, and new, multi-circuited fixtures employing fluorescent lamps were fabricated. Furnishings included restored tables and chairs salvaged by the library, as well as new leather upholstered armchairs replicating the original 1928 arm chairs designed by Mies van der Rohe.

BEST USE

Stepping back in time to get a modern perspective on all things international.

