The Challenge: Protecting the irrereplaceable artistic artifacts found in the Wharton Esherick Studio in Paoli, Pennsylvania from possible fire and smoke damage.

Wharton Esherick (1878-1970) was an artist who produced paintings, decorative frames, woodcuts, sculpture, and furniture. While Esherick’s work is displayed in major American museums and private collections, a large compilation of his work is found in his studio. His studio has been preserved and maintained since his death, enabling visitors to learn more about the artist’s life as well as view his work. The displays in the studio meant that a superior fire protection system was a necessity. In a fire, smoke could permeate the interior of the studio or flames could char Esherick’s masterpieces before a fire department had time to respond or a conventional sprinkler system would activate.
The Solution: DuPont™ FE-25™ to the rescue.

After investigating fire suppression system alternatives, the Wharton Esherick Board specified a Fike® ECARO-25™ fire suppression system with DuPont™ FE-25™ for the studio. The system is activated by an ionization-based smoke detector that sounds an alarm and reports the first indicators of smoke. Small, pressurized tanks of FE-25™ installed in closets throughout the studio eliminated the need for an extensive piping system, greatly reducing the cost of installation.

Board member Peter Esherick explains the benefit of using FE-25™, saying, “We considered a common sprinkler system, and determined a way to run the vast array of piping, so that it would be mostly invisible. But the system would require a large, separate water line, and would only activate if flames heated the ceiling and the building filled with smoke. Water could damage much of the artwork and interior materials. FE-25™ provided us with a viable alternative that met our protection needs and preserved our museum space by avoiding an unsightly installation.”

The Benefit: The treasures in the Wharton Esherick Studio are safe for future generations to enjoy.

FE-25™ is an excellent choice for total flood suppression systems, where release of water, dry chemicals or carbon dioxide can cause collateral damage to irreplaceable museum assets. Ease of installation makes FE-25™ an attractive choice for museums. FE-25™ is safe for use in occupied spaces, leaves no residue and is an environmentally acceptable alternative to Halon.