



Women's Painted Furniture, 1790-1830: American Schoolgirl Art

Betsy Krieg Salm

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In this long-awaited tribute to women's painted furniture, author and artist Betsy Krieg Salm rediscovers a style of early American decorative art still largely unknown to curators, antique dealers, art historians, and the public. She documents the socioeconomic, cultural, and aesthetic history of the form, which includes such items as sewing and work boxes, face screens, and tables. Salm carefully chronicles the process itself, describing a selection of cabinetmakers, woods, varnishes, and paints, along with the specific tools and techniques used by women artists.

Salm analyzes the styles, designs, and patterns of more than two hundred pieces. Treating these objects as documents of women's daily lives, she shows the close relationship between painted furniture motifs and those of needlework and other decorative arts of the period. Thanks to her scholarship, this art form may now receive the recognition it deserves in the broader genre of American women's art.

Women's Painted Furniture presents a comprehensive collection of images, most of which are not available elsewhere. Primary sources include recipes, patterns, genealogies of artisans, chemical analyses of antiques, instructions in methods and technique, and the original, mainly English, sources of artistic inspiration for painters and needle workers.



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