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## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Barbara Briggs (603) 448-1533, ext. 233  
barbara.briggs@dartmouth.edu



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

Betsy Krieg Salm

Publication date:  
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248 pp., 8.5 x 11"  
221 color illustrations,  
47 halftones

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## **The lost art of painting on wood is uncovered by Betsy Krieg Salm**

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*Women's Painted Furniture* rediscovers a style of early American decorative art still largely unknown to curators, antique dealers, art historians, and the public. Beautifully illustrated, Betsy Krieg Salm's book presents for the first time this important form of American schoolgirl art in its entirety including its origination, materials, techniques, academy founders, teachers, and personal history of the girls and women who created this touching work. Salm documents the socioeconomic, cultural, and aesthetic history of women's painted furniture, which includes items such as face screens, sewing boxes, and work tables. In addition, Salm carefully chronicles the process itself, including a selection of cabinetmakers and woods, varnishes and paints, and specific tools and techniques.

Emily Dickinson's paternal aunt, Lucretia, Harriet and Catherine Beecher, and the daughters of some of New England's most famous families are artisans of women's painted furniture. Many attended special boarding schools in which they learned the art. Male artists like John Ritto Penniman and Charles Codman participated in the spread of this neoclassical art movement as teachers in these schools, and used this platform to advance the cause

of women's education in the early republic.

*Women's Painted Furniture* presents a comprehensive collection of images of women's painted furniture not previously seen elsewhere. Primary sources include genealogies of artisans and chemical analysis of antiques, recipes, pattern instructions in methods and technique, and the original English sources of artistic inspiration to painters and needle workers. Salm analyzes the style, designs, and patterns in over two hundred images of women's painted furniture. Treating the furniture as documents of women's life in the new republic, she shows the close relationship of painted furniture motifs to those of needlework and other decorative arts of the period.

BETSY KRIEG SALM is a scholar, artisan, and teacher of the long-lost art of women's painted furniture. She has exhibited her own work at more than sixty prestigious shows. She also lectures at museums and workshops, and teaches women's painted furniture ornamentation for the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, needle worker guilds, colleges, and art institutions. She lives in the beautiful Finger Lakes of New York.