



C D A P R O G R A M

Cleveland Decorative Arts
www.clevelanddecorativearts.org

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026

6:00am Social Time

6:30pm Program followed by Dinner

Mayfield Sand Ridge Club
1545 Sheridan Road, South Euclid, OH 44121

Amy Miller Dehan

Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, Cincinnati Museum of Art
A Women's Movement: Cincinnati's 19th-Century Art Carved Furniture

Chest of Drawers, 1876, Agnes Pitman
(American, 1850-1946), American black walnut,
pin, yellow poplar, and nickel-plated brass,
Cincinnati Art Museum: Gift of Melrose Pitman,
1970.164



Fruit Plate, circa 1886-94, Emma Bepler (American,
1864-1947), black cherry, Cincinnati Art Museum: Gift
of Mrs. Carl W. Bieser, 2000.154

Approximately 1,100 individuals, local and national, participated in the Cincinnati Art Carved Furniture movement, which lasted over fifty years, peaking in the 1870s and 1880s. Of those 1,100 people, 912 were women. Carving, at this time, was viewed as socially acceptable for women because it fit within their assigned responsibilities as homemakers. Yet this pursuit also became a means of pushing the limitations of gender-based roles. While many of these women carvers were members of the leisure class, creating objects for the enrichment of their own homes, others were intent on becoming artists, teachers, or carvers in the furniture trade. Displaying their work at large national and international exhibitions, the Cincinnati women carvers garnered worldwide attention for their unparalleled achievements. Responding to the women's carving displayed at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial, carving instructor William Fry wrote, "The work of the women has, to me, a far deeper significance than its intrinsic value. It is for women the beginning of a new era, defining for them clearly and truly the doctrine of woman's rights."

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RESERVATION FORM, DEADLINE MARCH 13, 2026

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO **CLEVELAND DECORATIVE ARTS**

I WISH TO MAKE _____ RESERVATIONS AT \$60 PER PERSON TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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**Please send reply with check to TERENCE SHERIDAN, CDA TREASURER
8774 STATE ROUTE 45, NORTH BLOOMFIELD, OH 44450
440-685-4410 tsheridan710@gmail.com**

OUR SPEAKER

Amy Miller Dehan, Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, joined the Cincinnati Art Museum in 2001. She holds a BA from the College of William and Mary and an MA from the University of South Carolina. Before arriving in Cincinnati, she held internships at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is an alum of The Winterthur Fall Institute and the Attingham Summer School.

In her current role, Dehan researches, displays, and continues to build the museum's collections of American and European decorative arts dating from 1400 to the present. She has curated over 30 exhibitions and permanent collection gallery displays on subjects including Cincinnati art, contemporary craft, folk art, American silver, musical instruments, British decorative arts, American Modernism, and contemporary design. In addition to various lectures and journal articles, her most notable publications include *Joseph Urban: Unlocking an Art Deco Bedroom* (2022), *Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance 1850-1970* (essayist, 2019), *Cincinnati Silver: 1788-1940* (2014), *Outside the Ordinary: Contemporary Art in Glass, Wood, and Ceramics from the Wolf Collection* (2009), and *Cincinnati Art Carved Furniture and Interiors* (contributor, 2003). Dehan received the Victorian Society of America's Ruth Emery Publication Award for her scholarship on Cincinnati silver, and most recently earned the Association of Art Museum Curator's Award for Excellence for the digital exhibition *Joseph Urban: Unlocking an Art Deco Bedroom*. Dehan has served on the board of the American Ceramics Circle and is President of the Decorative Arts Society, Inc., a national open-membership organization that engages museum professionals, academics, collectors, and dealers in the appreciation and study of decorative arts and design from the past to the present.



Benn Pitman with his students in the classroom. Undated photograph, c. 1880s, Courtesy Cincinnati Historical Society Library