

COMING WINTERTHUR EXHIBITION TO SHED NEW LIGHT ON PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FRAKTUR, FOLK ART

A Colorful Folk: Pennsylvania Germans and the Art of Everyday Life Opens March 1, 2015

WINTERTHUR, DELAWARE—Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library announces the March 1, 2015, opening of the major new exhibition *A Colorful Folk: Pennsylvania Germans and the Art of Everyday Life*, a groundbreaking exploration of Pennsylvania German fraktur and folk art that will shed new light on an exquisite artistic tradition and peer inside the daily life of this distinctive culture. It will be open through January 3, 2016.

Explore tales of romance, birth, death, and life in early Pennsylvania poignantly captured in more than 125 objects, many never before exhibited or published. Decorated manuscripts (“fraktur”), textiles, furniture, metalwork, and pottery embellished with hearts, flowers, birds, and other traditional motifs reveal the Pennsylvania Germans’ love of color, design, and whimsy. Most objects are functional, but others were made “just for nice” and attest to a penchant for decorating virtually everything—from a tiny pincushion to the side of a barn. The tools and techniques used by fraktur artists also will be explored in addition to issues of authenticity, forgery, and revivals.

“Winterthur is delighted to present this extraordinary exhibition celebrating the creative artistry of Pennsylvania Germans, whose elaborate handiwork so uniquely captured the ideals and events of the day,” said J. Thomas Savage, Director of Museum Affairs for Winterthur. “Most objects in the exhibition are drawn from Winterthur’s permanent collection, which now includes the fraktur and textile collection of the late Pastor Frederick S. Weiser, a legendary scholar and collector of Pennsylvania German folk art. Winterthur’s landmark acquisition from the estate of Pastor Weiser last year enables us to serve as one of the leading institutions in the country for the study of Pennsylvania German decorative arts.”

Savage also noted that more than a dozen private collectors and institutions loaned important works of art for the exhibition.

Highlights of the exhibition include rare and important fraktur, such as elaborate birth and baptismal certificates made primarily by members of the German Lutheran and Reformed faiths and an extraordinary religious text made by Mennonite schoolmaster Andreas Kolb, widely regarded by scholars and collectors as one of the greatest Pennsylvania German fraktur ever made. A painted chest decorated in 1783 by fraktur artist Henrich Otto with floral motifs and a pair of camels will provide a treat for children and adults. Dazzling examples of needlework, quilted objects, and clothing, including an embroidered wedding handkerchief and apron from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, are among the rarer items that will be on display.

“The objects included in the exhibition open a window to the past through which we can all observe clues about not only the day-to-day life of one of the region’s largest and most influential settler groups, but also one of its most artistically prolific,” said the exhibition’s curator, Lisa Minardi, Winterthur Assistant Curator. Minardi is a specialist in Pennsylvania German art and culture.

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Religious text by Andreas Kolb, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, ca. 1785. Museum purchase with funds provided by the Henry Francis du Pont Collectors Circle.

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Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic garden, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house, as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$20 adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11.

Museum hours

10 am–5 pm, Tuesday–Sunday

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.



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Additional examples of the most rare and important objects highlighted in the exhibition include:

- More than four dozen examples of *fraktur* by noted Pennsylvania German artists including Johannes Bard, Johann Adam Eyer, Conrad Gilbert, Daniel Otto, Andreas Kolb, Friedrich Krebs, Daniel Schumacher, the Sussel-Washington Artist, Conrad Trebits, and Henrich Weiss.
- A dynamic comparison of the religious text made by Mennonite schoolmaster Andreas Kolb, one of the most celebrated *fraktur* in America due to its stunning synthesis of design and text, shown side-by-side with a certificate made by Johann Adam Eyer, Kolb's protégé, with motifs copied from the religious text and additional patriotic imagery.
- A large carved and painted statue of an eagle by itinerant artist Wilhelm Schimmel of Cumberland County, PA.
- One of the largest *fraktur* known to exist, a double-sheet spiritual clockworks by Friedrich Krebs measuring nearly 16 by 25 inches.
- *Fraktur*, furniture, and redware plates embellished with American eagles and other patriotic motifs.
- The only known *fraktur* made for a Delawarean, Samuel McNulty, who married into a Pennsylvania German family.
- Garden-related objects including a John Boyer seed chest, a labeled Joseph Lehn saffron cup, a redware flowerpot made for Sarah Bixler, and numerous colorful cloth bags used for saving garden seeds from year to year.
- A privy bag, used to store scrap paper in an outhouse, from York County, PA.
- An extraordinary pair of flintlock pistols with silver mounts made about 1810 to 1820 by celebrated gunsmith Jacob Kuntz of Philadelphia.
- A newly discovered portrait of a young woman from Philadelphia painted by John Lewis Krimmel, one of America's first genre scene painters.
- A pair of wrought-iron weathervanes, made in 1743 and decorated with tulips, loaned by Augustus Lutheran Church in Trappe, Montgomery County, PA.
- A Dauphin County, PA, tall-case clock inlaid with motifs from the Pennsylvania coat of arms and made in 1815 by John Paul Jr., who later designed the famous Horseshoe Curve on the Pennsylvania Railroad.
- A rare, intact five-plate stove cast in 1766 at Mary Ann Furnace, York County, PA, together with a carved stone support from Schaefferstown, PA.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition, presenting new scholarship and many never-before-published objects. It will be available in March for \$14.95 and may be ordered from Winterthur, winterthurstore.com or 1-800-597-2760.

Major support for *A Colorful Folk* is provided by John and Marjorie McGraw, with additional support from the American Folk Art Society and Dolores and Stephen Smith.

Related Events & Activities

Members' Preview Day

February 28, 10:00 am–5:00 pm

All Winterthur Members are invited to view *A Colorful Folk* prior to the public opening. Guided gallery walks will be offered at intervals throughout the day. Enjoy special craft demonstrations in the Galleries Atrium, and the Visitor Center Café will be transformed into a beer garden serving traditional German fare. *Members free. Member guests admitted with a guest pass.*

March 1, 10:00 am–5:00 pm

Exhibition opens to the public. *Members free. Included with admission.*

Conference

Fraktur and the Everyday Lives of Germans in Pennsylvania and the Atlantic World, 1683–1850

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March 5–8, 2015

An international group of scholars will discuss fraktur and other topics ranging from immigration, education, and religious practices to music, farming, medicine, and the occult. This conference is collaboratively organized by the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, with the participation of the German Society of Pennsylvania and Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. Major support provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Pre-registration is required; please visit the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, <http://www.mceas.org/>, for more information or to register.

Related exhibitions of Pennsylvania German fraktur and decorative arts will be on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from February 1–April 26, 2015, and the Free Library of Philadelphia <http://www.freelibrary.org/> from March 2–July 16, 2015.

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