Lady's writing cabinet

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	5822
Artist/Maker:	Sheraton, Thomas (1751 - 1806) / in the manner of
Place of production:	Great-Britain
Materials:	mahogany veneer; satinwood veneer
Techniques:	carved; inlaid; turned
Dimensions:	height: 109 cm width: 59 cm depth: 43 cm

The urban building work that gathered momentum in England in the late 18th century offered spaces for smaller-sized, multifunctional furniture satisfying middle-class needs. The light, variously fashioned, smaller-sized, richly decorated, neoclassical furniture of the period 1790–1800 is named after the cabinetmaker Thomas Sheraton, who wrote himself into the history of European furniture art primarily through his work as a designer, sketcher and writer on furniture. In his books of designs, he summed up the taste of the age. A book of designs by the artist-cabinetmaker and upholsterer appeared between 1791 and 1794 entitled The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterers Drawing Book, in which he discussed questions of perspective, geometry, architecture, and drawing. This work ran to three editions. Written in an outstandingly good style, Sheraton's books had a formative effect on those around him and circulated widely. Sheraton intended his books for producers on the one hand and for customers on the other. In England, six hundred craftsmen and dealers subscribed to his design collections. In these design books, small pieces of furniture were presented that were of sophisticated construction, varying in form, light, practical, and user-friendly. A fine example of those built is the lady's writing desk shown here. Practical because it could be easily moved on casters towards the light and comfortable because the concave recess formed by its two lower doors made sitting at it easier when its surface is pulled out, the inner part of its superstructure part is uncovered. This can be closed with a single movement, by pulling down the roller-blind.

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