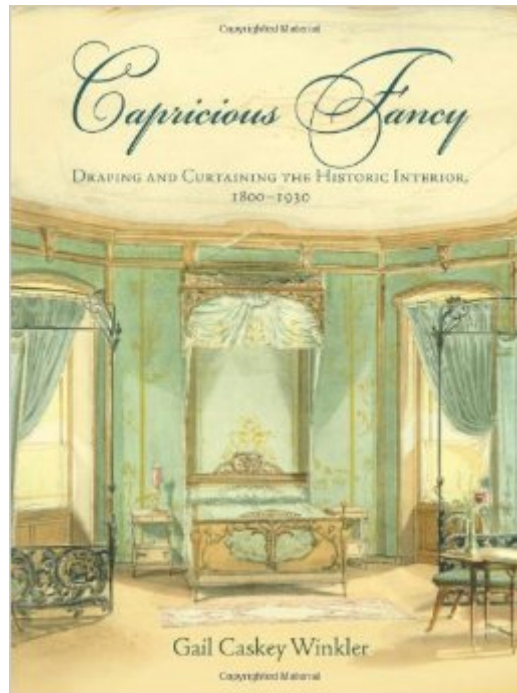


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# Capricious Fancy: Draping And Curtaining The Historic Interior, 1800-1930



## Synopsis

The materials that decorate our homes and protect us from cold, light, and prying eyes reveal as well as conceal. Drapery and curtain designs tell the story of great shifts in home and work life that accompanied innovations in textile manufacturing technology and the fashion industry over the course of the nineteenth century. *Capricious Fancy* chronicles the changes in fashionable curtain and drapery styles in the United States and Europe during the Industrial Revolution. This unique compilation contains hundreds of illustrations, most in full color, reproduced from more than one hundred rare pattern books, workroom manuals, trade catalogues, and examples of design literature selected from the collections of The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, including the Samuel J. Dornsife Collection of The Victorian Society in America. Each design is annotated with a description of its source and significance. Gail Caskey Winkler's research confirms the mastery of French upholsterers in the art of draping windows, bedsteads, and doorways. The book follows the transmission of high styles from Paris to London to North America before the middle of the nineteenth century and the development of the retail home fashion business, including the mail-order trade. Even as wealth spread, disparity continued between the upper and middle classes in adopting the newest fashions. Meanwhile, the audience for interior fashion publications switched from male building professionals and artisans to female homemakers. With 325 images and historical commentary from a leading educator and historic preservation practitioner, *Capricious Fancy* is a source of authentic inspiration for preservation professionals, interior designers, set designers, museum curators, and anyone with a passion for period décor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

To quote a prior reviewer, this book is indeed a "lavishly illustrated catalog" and a "beautifully produced volume." And it should be for the price. The historical commentary is the weakest element of the book. Note how a prior reviewer uses the word "catalog." The depth and breadth of Ms Winkler's knowledge of contemporary sources is commendable. But there is simply too much emphasis on the source(s) themselves, such as the foible's of the publisher or the graduated subscription rate of a certain publication, than an analysis of the illustration itself. As I look about my own collection to better voice my misgivings, my eyes first fall upon Mario Praz's "An Illustrated history of Interior Design" with his engaging interpretation of how the individual inhabited a respective interior and shaped it to make it his own. But then Suddenly, my eyes rest upon "Victorian Interior Decoration" and I realize that it is written part by the same author! However, in that work, she captured what I find sadly missing in this book. A succinct and organized understanding of an age drawn not only from oft sterile catalog illustrations, but also from contemporary critical reaction to the new fads and fancies the progression of which themselves are engagingly described. I don't care if Mr. W of of so-and-so produced an "extraordinary" volume with X number of illustrations prefaced by advertisement "most notably" from Z's establishment. Tell me more about the construction of Y window treatment, what attracted the contemporary consumer and why, and how the consumer shaped these items to make them their own. I also need to know the broader context of these treatments so that each illustrations breaths life to reveal a place in time as remote as the moon.

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