



NEWS RELEASE

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Emily Dickinson Museum Debuts Exhibition as Part of Bookmarks Sept. 15

AMHERST, Mass.— The Emily Dickinson Museum presents “My Verse is alive,” a new exhibit exploring the intriguing posthumous publication of Dickinson’s poetry, from Saturday, Sept. 15, through Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Dickinson Homestead. The exhibit is open to all visitors free of charge during the museum’s regular hours.

To mark the opening of the exhibition, Karen A. Dandurand, associate professor of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, will present a free talk, “Re-envisioning Dickinson’s 19th-Century Audience,” on Saturday, Sept. 15, at 11 a.m. at the Dickinson Homestead. Dandurand was the first to identify several Dickinson poems published anonymously in newspapers during her lifetime.

The exhibit takes its title from Emily Dickinson’s 1862 query to author and activist Thomas Wentworth Higginson: “Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?” With documents and family artifacts, the exhibit traces the creation of Emily Dickinson’s literary reputation through the competing efforts and loyalties of family members and intimates in the first 50 years after the poet’s death. “My Verse is alive” explores the tangled private and public motives of several figures closely associated with Emily Dickinson as they struggled for control of her poetic legacy. The roles of her siblings Lavinia and Austin, sister-in-law Susan and niece Martha will be examined, as well as that of Lavinia’s friend and Austin’s mistress Mabel Loomis Todd, a central figure in achieving initial publication of Dickinson’s poetry.

“My Verse is alive” has been designed by Michael A. Hanke, of Design Division, Inc., Amherst, Mass., which produces exhibitions for museums, visitor centers and galleries in both private and public institutions. Design Division’s previous work includes exhibition development for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in Ledyard, Conn. and for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, N.Y.

Curated by Cindy Dickinson, director of interpretation and programming at the Emily Dickinson Museum, the exhibition is part of “BookMarks: A Celebration of the Art of the Book,” a region-wide festival from September 2007 to January 2008 that will bring to life the Pioneer Valley’s great literary traditions through film, family events, lectures and readings. This initiative is sponsored by the Emily Dickinson Museum and Museums10, a partnership of 10 museums and friends (including Amherst College’s Frost Library, the Mead Art Museum and the Museum of Natural History) within the Pioneer Valley. More information about “BookMarks” is available on the Museums10 Website, www.museums10.org.

“My Verse is alive” has been made possible through the generous support of the Amherst College Friends of the Library and the May H. Morris and Albert M. Morris 1913 Fund.

The Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main St. in Amherst, Mass., and the official museum Website is at www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Hours for September through October are Wednesday through Sunday, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; for November through December 8, hours are Wednesday and Saturday, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The museum will hold extended hours to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 4, and will be closed the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

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