

His work



Johannes Vermeer, The Girl with a Pearl Earring (1665)

“Great art, for those who insist upon this rather philistine concept, makes us stand back and admire. It rushes upon us pell-mell like the work of Rubens or Tintoretto or Delacroix, or towers above us. There is of course another aesthetic: the art of a Vermeer or a Braque seeks not to amaze and appal but to invite the observer to come closer, to close with the painting, peer into it, become intimate with it. Such art reinforces human dignity.”

Germaine Greer

Girl with a Pearl Earring was originally titled Girl with a Turban and it wasn't until the second half of the twentieth century that the name was changed. Regarded as Vermeer's masterpiece, this canvas is often referred to as the Mona Lisa of the North or the Dutch Mona Lisa.

The girl in this painting is believed to be Vermeer's eldest daughter, Maria, who was about twelve or thirteen-years-old at the time it was created. Her facial features appear in several of Vermeer's works but his various techniques on his subject make it difficult to compare the female faces in his paintings, as the woman are portrayed in different lighting conditions and poses.

Unfortunately, there is very little information about Vermeer and his paintings.

Girl with a Pearl Earring is one of over forty images of women created by Vermeer and thus it is obvious that he had a keen interest in women's socio-cultural roles. It could be argued that he valued their role in maintaining his idealist way of life by ensuring order within the household and raising children within Christian values. Therefore, women played a pivotal role in safeguarding tradition and moral values through the generations.

Vermeer depicted his women in thought-provoking stillness and also as encouraging images that inspired homogeny.

With this painting in particular, the viewer is captured by the subject and believes they have caught her attention and caused her to turn her head. This is quite a sensual painting with the girl gazing at the viewer with wide eyes and a parted mouth and there is an air of mystery surrounding her identity.

VERMEER JOHANNES



Johannes Vermeer, Woman Holding a Balance (1664)

April 3-21, 2018
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His life

Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) is a Dutch artist who created paintings that are among the most beloved and revered images in the history of art with his works contributing to the Dutch Golden Age. Born in the Netherlands, he started his career in the early 1650s by painting large-scale biblical and mythological scenes. His later paintings, for which he is most famous, depict scenes of daily life in interior settings. These works are spectacular for their purity of light and form, qualities that convey a serene, timeless sense of dignity. No other contemporary Dutch artist created scenes with such luminosity or purity of colour, and no other painter's work was infused with a comparable sense of timelessness and human dignity. Vermeer also painted a few cityscapes and allegorical scenes in his time.

Little is known about Vermeer's decision to become a painter. He registered as a master painter in the Delft Guild of Sainte Luke in 1653, but the identity of his masters, the nature of his training, and the period of his apprenticeship remain a mystery.

The same year he registered as a master painter, Vermeer married Catherina Bolnes, a young Catholic woman from the so-called Papenhoek, or Papist's Corner, of Delft. This union led him to convert from the Protestant faith to Catholicism.

As Vermeer reached the height of his abilities, he became renowned within his native city of Delft and was named the head of the painters' guild in 1662. During the height of his career, in paintings depicting women reading or writing letters, playing musical instruments, or adorning themselves with jewelry, Vermeer sought ways to express a sense of inner harmony within everyday life, primarily in the confines of a private chamber.



Johannes Vermeer, The Astronomer (1668)

“In the work of Vermeer the subject of the picture becomes - for the first time in the history of art - the object that is contemplated.”

Andre Malraux

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Johannes Vermeer, The Art of Painting (1665-1668)

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