



Volume 18, Issue 1 (2026)

Vermeer in Dispute: The Authorship of *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter*

Adriaan E. Waiboer

Recommended Citation:

Adriaan E. Waiboer, "Vermeer in Dispute: The Authorship of *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter*," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 18:1 (2026) DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2026.18.1.4](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2026.18.1.4)
Available at: <https://jhna.org/articles/vermeer-in-dispute-the-authorship-of-the-glass-of-wine-and-the-love-letter/>

Published by Historians of Netherlandish Art: <https://hnanews.org/>

Republication Guidelines: <https://jhna.org/republication-guidelines/>

Notes: This PDF is provided for reference purposes only and does not contain all the functionality and features of the digital images embedded in the online publication. Instead, the illustrations follow the text. This PDF provides paragraph numbers as well as page numbers for citation purposes.

ISSN: 1949-9833

Vermeer in Dispute: The Authorship of *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter*

Adriaan E. Waiboer

This article questions the attribution of The Glass of Wine (ca. 1662–1667; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie) and The Love Letter (ca. 1671–1677; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) to Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) through close scrutiny and comparison of paint handling and stylistic features. It argues that the former is a pastiche of elements drawn primarily from Vermeer’s Woman Interrupted at Her Music (ca. 1660–1662; The Frick Collection, New York) and A Woman with a Wineglass (ca. 1661–1663; Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig), and that the latter is a variation on several of the artist’s late works. The Glass of Wine likely originated from Vermeer’s studio. The same may be true of The Love Letter, although the presence of a signature warrants greater caution.

Introduction

1. Scholars disagree on the scope of Johannes Vermeer’s oeuvre, with the authorship of a handful of paintings continuing to divide opinion.¹ Beyond these, most art historians have long concurred that a group of thirty-four works is by his hand.² In this article, however, I challenge this consensus by questioning the authenticity of *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1) at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, and *The Love Letter* (fig. 57) at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. This reassessment stems from research for my forthcoming book on Vermeer. During my efforts to establish his artistic development, I encountered a few discrepancies between these two works and the rest of his oeuvre. These initially took me by surprise but, over months of intensive analysis, grew in number and coalesced into coherent patterns..
2. To argue my case, I rely on connoisseurship: the scrutiny and comparison of paint handling and stylistic features through first-hand examination and ever-improving high-resolution imagery of works of art.³ I contend that *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* diverge so markedly from Vermeer’s exceptionally dexterous brushwork and highly individual style that their attribution to him is no longer sustainable.
3. The reader may wonder whether instrumental analysis has already arrived at a judgment on this matter, or whether it is better equipped to do so than the human eye. The wealth of recently published technical research on Vermeer includes a handful of studies on *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter*. The Gemäldegalerie in Berlin subjected the former to neutron activation autoradiography, which revealed pentimenti and perspective lines used in the construction of the interior.⁴ Following the theft of *The Love Letter* in September 1971, the Rijksmuseum issued several articles on its recovery and subsequent restoration.⁵ Using a range of technical imaging and analytical techniques developed over the past few decades, more recent publications have focused on changes introduced during the painting process and the presence of certain pigments.⁶ None of these studies has confirmed or rejected the

attribution of either painting to Vermeer. This is not surprising, as instrumental analysis—while often highly revelatory of the relationship between the visible paint layer and what lies beneath—rarely, on its own, offers conclusive evidence in questions of attribution. My hope is that the ideas and questions raised here will prove illuminating to future technical research on the Berlin and Amsterdam paintings.

4. I begin by comparing the paint handling and certain stylistic features of *The Glass of Wine* with those of undisputed works by Vermeer in order to demonstrate why the current attribution is difficult to uphold. This conclusion alone, however, does not explain how the Berlin picture relates to or derived from his work. Could Vermeer have devised the composition, only for another painter to complete it? Is *The Glass of Wine* perhaps a copy after a “lost” original? Or is the Berlin picture an independent work by a different hand comprising elements “borrowed” from compositions by Vermeer and perhaps other contemporary artists, in line with the lively exchange of ideas among genre painters at the time?⁷ I address these questions in relation to both *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* before offering some hypotheses on the authorship of both paintings and proposing dates for their execution.
5. A few disclaimers and preliminary remarks are necessary. First, this article does not present a definitive statement of fact but reflects the author’s personal scholarly assessment of the attributions of *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter*. Second, every effort has been made to avoid conflating original brushwork with that of later restorations. However, since the examination of the paintings under discussion relied on observation with the naked eye and through high-resolution imagery, the possibility of such interference cannot be entirely excluded.⁸ Third, given the small number of works by Vermeer that serve as meaningful points of reference to the Berlin and Amsterdam paintings, some variations in scale in the visual comparisons presented in this article are inevitable. Those involving major discrepancies are either excluded or explicitly noted. Fourth, to avoid confusion, details from Vermeer’s paintings consistently appear on the left in comparisons, with those from *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* on the right. Finally, as the painters of the Berlin and Amsterdam pictures may not necessarily have been men, I refer to the individual artists as “they.”

The Glass of Wine: Paint Handling and Stylistic Aspects

6. First recorded at a Delft auction in 1736, *The Glass of Wine* (**fig. 1**) represents a seated young lady dressed in a satin-woven bodice and skirt, drinking from a wineglass.⁹ A gentleman visitor stands motionless beside her, stoically observing her. His hand, clasping the handle of a faience jug, suggests that he poured the wine, evidently hoping to improve his romantic chances—a common motif in Dutch genre painting of the time. Art historians generally regard the Berlin picture as the first of three portrayals of courtship by Vermeer, followed by *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (**fig. 2**) at The Frick Collection, New York, and *A Woman with a Wineglass* (**fig. 3**) at the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig.¹⁰
7. Although *The Glass of Wine* has garnered praise for its spatial illusionism and evocative lighting, it has occasionally sparked criticism, mainly pertaining to the representation of the

figures.¹¹ Lawrence Gowing, for instance, maintained that the couple has “a mummified quality” and the scene has “the character of an exquisite tomb.”¹² Edward Snow contended that “Vermeer’s unflattering depiction of the woman, who has captured the gentleman’s attention, seems willfully misogynistic.”¹³

8. Indeed, the flattish appearance of the young lady’s top half diverges from the sophisticated modeling of the female figure in *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 4). There, Vermeer employed hazy touches of light pink on a reddish-pink base to suggest the front of the woman’s satin bodice. The patchwork of light pink flicks of paint on the same garment in *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 5) appears untidy by comparison and contributes little to its convex shape. Equally inelegant is the modeling of the white decorative cords on the bodice, built up with short, slushy strokes, which result in variations in width, interruptions, and erratic contours. Moving up, a dearth of effective highlights and shadows imparts a rigid, two-dimensional quality to the woman’s white shirt.¹⁴ In *A Woman with a Wineglass*, by contrast, Vermeer created the illusion of roundness in the same garment—illuminated at the front and shaded at the back—by juxtaposing broad, smooth strokes in varying hues of light and dark bluish gray and positioning a subtle white highlight in front of the tip of her shoulder. The differences in paint handling speak volumes.¹⁵
9. Even more unsettling is the young lady’s hooded face in *The Glass of Wine*. Although it does not lend itself to a one-to-one comparison with Vermeer’s works in New York or Braunschweig, it is evident that the artist defined her features sparsely and with little finesse, causing her face to look flat and her chin and lips slightly bulbous. It is hard to fathom that an artist who had recently sculpted a woman’s face (and cap) with such lively, textured brushwork in *The Milkmaid* (figs. 6, 7)—achieving a nearly unmatched sense of plasticity—would settle for this lackluster approach (fig. 8). A similar discrepancy in modeling is evident in the woman’s right hand and fingers, when viewed alongside those of the young lady in the Braunschweig painting (figs. 9, 10). The contrasting brushwork in *The Glass of Wine* looks patchy and pasty rather than delicate and cleanly defined.¹⁶
10. The reddish-pink skirt appears to be the most skillfully modeled passage of the female figure in *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 12), yet it differs from its counterpart in *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 11). Note how the robust alternation between dark shadows and highlights on protruding folds in the former diverges from the gentle transitions between the various hues of reddish pink in the latter. In the Braunschweig painting, moreover, Vermeer sprinkled soft, unobtrusive dapples to create the illusion of diffused light raking along the crinkled textile. In the Berlin picture, the artist attempted to replicate the pictorial effect by applying coarse flicks and employing a greater contrast in color between the stippled highlights and the underlying material. Hence, the dots seem to lie on top of the fabric.
11. The same unsubtle modeling is apparent in the gentleman’s cape. The artist created its folds by sharply contrasting gloomy shadows—built up with strokes in dark green and black—with strips of light green, mimicking sunlight reflecting on protruding folds, and positioning midtones in-between. To the right, some of the outer ends of the strongest highlights appear squeezed in between the deepest shadows. Evocative as the undulation is, it jars with the more delicate, schematic handling of the green cape in *A Woman with a Wineglass* (figs. 13, 14).¹⁷

12. Furthermore, Vermeer created the rosette-shaped white sleeve in the Braunschweig picture with a seemingly infinite number of creases and crinkles by apposing strokes in different hues of blue, gray, and white (fig. 15). The same fashion detail in the Berlin painting, suggested by crudely juxtaposed patches in white and gray, registers as blobby by comparison (fig. 16).¹⁸

13. One of the areas in which the differences in painting technique between *The Glass of Wine* and Vermeer's work are most apparent is the carpet. By the early 1660s, Vermeer had gained considerable experience in painting oriental table coverings on different scales. He had honed his proficiency in rendering the way the intricate weaving patterns of a rug follow the heavy fabric's curves as it lies draped across a table. In *A Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 17), Vermeer captured the fluffy yet rugged texture of a carpet with an enthralling mesh of dots and dabs in red, blue, yellow, beige, and black (fig. 18). In *The Glass of Wine*, the table covering rests flat on the table rather than buckled, as is the case in Vermeer's earliest genre scenes (fig. 19). Despite this simplification, the fabric's recurrent floral and geometric motifs are remarkably irregular in size, shape, and position. Moreover, the brushwork of the carpet appears gloopy in comparison to that of *A Woman Reading a Letter*.

14. Other nearby objects in *The Glass of Wine* display similarly careless modeling. The open music book on the chair invites comparison with the same item lying on the table in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, which Vermeer depicted fastidiously, with an initial capital and notes arranged on eight staves (figs. 20, 21).¹⁹

15. By contrast, in *The Glass of Wine*—which is larger than the Frick painting—the artist reduced the notations to stringy black lines.²⁰ Furthermore, in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, Vermeer's assured brushwork suggests the smooth contours of the cittern's lustrous back side (fig. 22). In the Berlin picture, short, jerky strokes at the rear of what appears to be the same musical instrument result in a jagged border between the wood and the music books behind it (fig. 23). Such a technique plausibly points to an artist carefully copying a painted object rather than confidently rendering a line freehand.

16. The lion's-head finials on the chair lend themselves to a one-to-one comparison with those in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (figs. 24, 25). In that painting, Vermeer created the diffused highlights sparkling across the ornament by drizzling, wet-into-wet, dots of yellow, beige, and orange-brown paint on softly modeled planes of midtone colors. These pointillés, in turn, rest on top of hazy dabs and strokes ranging in tone from light beige to black, which make up the underlying structure. The artist of *The Glass of Wine* sought to replicate this technique without making much effort to prepare the wood carvings underneath. Moreover, they did not drop their highlights onto underlying midtones but rendered them in isolation. This reduces the "out-of-focus" effect and makes the surface of the finials look muddled.

17. The open window in *The Glass of Wine* reveals similar discrepancies between the hesitant handling and pasty application in the Berlin painting and Vermeer's deft, blended technique in *A Woman with a Wineglass* (figs. 26, 27). Take, for instance, the inside of the wooden frames. In the Braunschweig picture, Vermeer created the illusion of sunlight illuminating the grained wood, except in the small, tapered shadows cast by the lead came. In *The Glass of Wine*, the artist spread irregular splotches of paint on the inside of the frame to mimic the

same light reflections, without endeavoring or being able to imply the underlying material. In the Braunschweig painting, moreover, Vermeer's steady hand brushed the lead came as smooth, solid lines and the glass as relatively even, transparent-looking surfaces, neatly placed alongside each other. In the Berlin painting, however, blotchy strokes forge restless forms in the glass. Compare, for instance, the stop-and-start technique in the yellow band framing the colored area with the impeccable handling of the same feature, rendered in orange, in the window of *A Woman with a Wineglass*. Equally troubling, strokes suggesting the glass frequently overlap those indicating the lead came in *The Glass of Wine*.²¹

18. ***The Glass of Wine* features several visually pleasing light reflections and contrasts between illumination and shadow that, upon close scrutiny, appear slightly excessive. The pool of daylight below the window, for instance, is inexplicably bright and focused. The spotlight triangle rapidly morphs into a dark gray shadow on the left, hovering in the corner like a tenebrous cloud.²² This juxtaposition of contrasting light levels is at odds with the subtle transitions from dark to light beneath windows in Vermeer's earlier *Officer and a Smiling Woman* (ca. 1657–1658; The Frick Collection, New York) and *A Woman Reading a Letter* (figs. 28, 29).²³
19. An equally peculiar passage is the white triangle on the back wall, suggesting how sunlight seeps past the light blue curtain, which seems unduly sharp-edged on the right side, considering the transparency of the fabric (fig. 30).²⁴ Moreover, the direction of the reflections and shadows conveys the odd impression that an external light source positioned beneath the window illuminates the plaster.²⁵
20. Some surfaces situated in areas of shade, however, are surprisingly dark. This is most evident in objects that are (nearly) identical to those in the New York and Braunschweig paintings, such as the sides of the lion's-head finials and those of the back posts of the chairs (figs. 31, 32).
21. They are dark brown in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* but pitch black in *The Glass of Wine*. Similarly, the window frame in *A Woman with a Wineglass* is dark brown and turns lighter in tone toward the bottom right corner (fig. 33). Its counterpart in the Berlin painting varies from deep bistre brown to black (fig. 34).²⁶
22. Conversely, some areas of *The Glass of Wine* are brighter in tone than one would expect, given their position in relation to the open window. Take, for instance, the front of the woman's skirt, to the right of the metallic braiding (fig. 35). As the table blocks the sunlight, it casts a shadow on her knees. Below that, however, the reddish fabric turns lighter in tone again, despite appearing further from any (in)direct light source. Similarly, one would expect the bottom left corner of the gilded frame to be darker in color, since a large, gloomy shadow envelops it (fig. 36).²⁷ The artist evidently had difficulties capturing the appropriate tonal values in these areas.
23. In summary, discrepancies in paint handling and style between *The Glass of Wine* and Vermeer's works of the late 1650s and early 1660s are visible throughout the painted surface but are most evident in passages suited to one-to-one comparison, such as the carpet, music

book, lion's-head finials, and window. These differences are so numerous and substantial as to render the current attribution of the Berlin picture unconvincing.

The Glass of Wine: A Skillful Pastiche

24. As mentioned above, scholars tend to group *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1a) together with *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2a) and *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3a)—and for good reason. All three paintings depict a caped gentleman standing to the right of a woman who sits more or less parallel to the picture plane. The couples appear right of center, near a table with objects on it, including a white faience jug. The scenes take place in an interior ordered by linear perspective, with a window on the left and a light gray wall in the background, decorated with a single painting.
25. Moreover, *The Glass of Wine* features pieces of furniture, items of clothing, and architectural elements that are also present in the New York and Braunschweig pictures in marginally or moderately altered form. Scholars have interpreted these similarities as Vermeer having first explored ideas in the Berlin painting that he later developed in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*.²⁸ I argue instead that the sequence of creation occurred in reverse order and that *The Glass of Wine* is an independent work by another artist, composed of elements derived from Vermeer's pictures in New York and Braunschweig.
26. The anonymous painter began with a canvas nearly the same size as *A Woman with a Wineglass*. However, they turned it on its side, adopting the unusual landscape format—at least for a genre scene in the early 1660s—of *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*.²⁹ In response to the latter painting, the artist of the Berlin picture replicated the chair with lion's-head finials and blue upholstery on the back in the foreground (figs. 37, 38). They even mirrored the puffy velvet pillow with gold trimmings, which squishes out of the opening on the back. However, the artist depicted the piece of furniture full length and added pointillés to the fabric on the back—rendering it even more “Vermeer-like” than the original. They also seized on the increased distance between the seat and the window to add disproportionally glaring reflections to the velvet surface of the pillow. The idea to include the small window in the corner presumably also derived from *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (figs. 39, 40). Recent technical imaging of the New York painting has demonstrated that it originally featured a window, covered by a translucent curtain, in the same location.³⁰
27. In depicting the figures and furniture full-length, the artist of *The Glass of Wine* appears to have followed *A Woman with a Wineglass*. They also loosely based the lady's clothing on that in the Braunschweig picture (figs. 41, 42). One may be tempted to hone in on the differences between the two outfits, including the angle at which we view them or the way the folds of the skirt cascade.³¹ More important, however, is that the combination of a satin bodice and skirt in vibrant pink and red is virtually unique in Dutch genre painting of the early 1660s.³² In fact, it is safe to say that without the Braunschweig picture, the artist of *The Glass of Wine* would have never dressed a woman in such flamboyant colors. Then again, neither would Vermeer have done so without Frans van Mieris's (1635–1681) *Duet* (fig. 43) of 1658.³³

28. *A Woman with a Wineglass* also encouraged the artist of the Berlin picture to replicate the black-and-orange tiled floor, tilting forward like a raked theatre stage and receding awkwardly into the far-right corner (figs. 44, 45).
29. The same is true of the stained-glass window, although in *The Glass of Wine* the sidewall, rather than the edge of the picture, cuts it off on the left (figs. 46, 47). The artist opened the window at a smaller angle, causing the sidewall behind the window frame to extend beyond it.
30. Other elements in the Berlin painting, such as the gentleman's cape, derive from both *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 48). Its voluminous shape, with V-contoured folds across the width of the man's body, and his right arm stretching out, mimics the New York painting. The cape's green color, the sleeve ending in a rosette, and the white collar flopping out originated from the Braunschweig picture.
31. Both or either *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* or *A Woman with a Wineglass* prompted the artist of *The Glass of Wine* to hang a painting on the back wall (fig. 49). However, they aligned it with the table, creating a "vertical stack" of large forms that conflicts with Vermeer's compositional arrangements. Vermeer never positioned tables, chairs, and keyboard instruments in line with maps or paintings on the wall behind them. Doing so encourages the viewer's eye to linger on a point of visual alignment rather than wander through the composition. The placement of the table and the landscape picture therefore provides a telling hint that Vermeer did not devise this composition.³⁴
32. The frame in *The Glass of Wine*, moreover, is gilded. Although Vermeer included frames with parcel gilt in *A Woman with a Wineglass* and *A Woman with a Balance* (ca. 1664–1665; National Gallery of Art, Washington), fully gilded ones do not emerge in his work until the end of his career, in the first half of the 1670s, when his compositions evoke a greater sense of luxury. But the Berlin picture does not echo elements from other, late works by Vermeer and therefore should not be dated to this period. More likely, the artist gave the frame a gilded surface for stylistic reasons, considering their penchant for intense light effects.
33. Indeed, the painter of *The Glass of Wine* did not merely mimic the light reflections found in Vermeer's work—as they probably would have if they had copied an original. Rather, spurred by a determination to ensure that viewers recognized and marveled at these hallmarks of Vermeer's style, they amplified them or added them to areas where the latter did not. This phenomenon is known as the "peak-shift effect" in cognitive research and explains why paintings with exaggerated features by students and followers sometimes appeal as much, if not more, to modern art lovers than those by the master they aimed to emulate.³⁵
34. The cittern in *The Glass of Wine* may be the same instrument that appears in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, but it differs in its placement on the chair, where it leans against the backrest, and the angle from which we view it (figs. 22a, 38a). In these respects, it bears a closer resemblance to a cittern Vermeer initially planned to include on the foreground chair in *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* but omitted from the final version (fig. 50, 51).³⁶ A neutron autoradiograph of this painting demonstrates that the instrument had a similarly

striped back and a decorative line along the outer edge of its body. However, it did not rest on a pillow, nor did it have the harsh black shadow visible on the cittern's back in the Berlin picture. Still, the similarities are so strong that the artist of *The Glass of Wine* must have known Vermeer's painting at an early stage of execution, or perhaps a related preparatory drawing.

35. The gentleman's passive demeanor toward his lover in the Berlin picture does not mirror the suitors' assertive behavior in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*. Instead, it calls to mind the sparse dynamics between a couple in a "lost" painting by Gerard ter Borch (1617–1681), known through copies (fig. 52).³⁷ Dating to about 1656, *A Couple in an Interior, Served by a Page* represents a young lady sitting in a chair, about to place a glass of lemonade to her lips. Her lover, wearing a voluminous cape and black hat, stands quietly to her right, clutching a silver tray, held by the page, with his left hand. The artist of *The Glass of Wine* adopted the idea of a man towering over his seated lover while silently observing her drinking from a glass. Additionally, they drew inspiration from Ter Borch's *Gentleman Pressing a Woman to Drink* (fig. 53) of about 1658–1659, featuring a couple in a similar situation, though positioned next to a table and engaging with each other more intently.³⁸ The man's gesture of claspings the neck of a bottle prompted the artist of the Berlin picture to depict their figure gripping a white jug. Moreover, the man's anchored gaze, his eyes shaded by the brim of his black hat, found resonance in *The Glass of Wine*.
36. Earlier, Ter Borch's *Couple in an Interior, Served by a Page* and *Gentleman Pressing a Woman to Drink* had played a pivotal role in Van Mieris's conception of *A Man and Woman with Two Dogs* ("Teasing the Pet") and *The Oyster Meal*, dated 1660 and 1661 respectively (figs. 54, 55).³⁹ These companion pieces depict caped suitors standing to the right of a seated young woman, one grabbing a dog's ear and the other proffering a silver tray with oysters. In turn, Van Mieris's paintings—in addition to both of Ter Borch's paintings—served as the key sources of inspiration for the figure groups in Vermeer's *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*.⁴⁰ The artist of *The Glass of Wine* probably did not respond directly to Van Mieris's pendants, as scholars—including the present one—previously believed.⁴¹ More likely, they drew inspiration from Vermeer's paintings in New York and Braunschweig and their "grandparents" by Ter Borch.
37. Pieter de Hooch's (1629–1679) *Young Woman Drinking with Two Soldiers* (fig. 56), which Vermeer had studied in preparation for *A Woman with a Wineglass*, also contributed to the conception of *The Glass of Wine*.⁴² This composition of 1658 encouraged the artist of the Berlin painting to increase the distance between the figures and the picture plane and between the viewer's standpoint and the wall on the left.⁴³ The man's position in relation to the table in *The Glass of Wine* echoes the same element in De Hooch's painting. The artist also adopted the wooden bench, positioned below the window, from *A Young Woman Drinking with Two Soldiers*, yet they omitted the smoker and increased the bench in height and width. Moreover, the artist shortened the gradual transition between the shadow and the strip of full illumination on top of the bench, resulting in a starker contrast between the two areas.
38. In conclusion, *The Glass of Wine* appears to have the hallmarks of a skillful pastiche of elements originating from Vermeer's *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a*

Wineglass, further comprising ideas originating from *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* and works by Ter Borch and De Hooch.⁴⁴ No area in the visible painted surface can be safely attributed to Vermeer, so chances are slim that he started the Berlin painting and that another artist finished it. Even the underlying composition is unlikely to be Vermeer's. True, the clever repurposing of elements from six different compositions recalls his ingenious amalgamation of borrowings from paintings by other artists.⁴⁵ But, as some critics have observed, the resulting figure group is unsatisfactory, lacking the emotive dynamics of those in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*. The alignment of the table and painting on the back wall, moreover, deviates from Vermeer's standard practice. Finally, if the artist of the Berlin work had faithfully copied an original by Vermeer, it is doubtful they would have rendered the light effects on the walls and pillow so intensely, or the contrasts between light and shadow on the bench and cittern so starkly.

The Love Letter: Paint Handling and Stylistic Aspects

39. First documented at an Amsterdam auction in 1892, *The Love Letter*, now at the Rijksmuseum, represents a maid who has interrupted her mistress's musical pursuits by handing her a letter (fig. 57a).⁴⁶ While the lady's upward gaze and parted lips suggest her apprehension about the letter, her servant offers a reassuring smile.⁴⁷ A painting of a seascape with a ship with the wind in its sails serves as a visual metaphor for the amorous feelings the lady shares with her lover.⁴⁸
40. The subject of *The Love Letter* echoes that of Vermeer's *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58). There, a young woman's slack jaw and left hand, reaching for her chin, hint at her unease about a letter she is about to receive from her servant. Her maid's facial expression is harder to read. Moreover, the picture lacks an explanatory marine painting or any other objects providing visual commentary on the lady's inner feelings.⁴⁹ The subjects of both paintings are similar yet do not speak to us in the same language.
41. Most scholars regard *The Love Letter* as a late work by Vermeer, completed at the same time or not long after *The Astronomer* and *The Geographer*, dated 1668 and 1669, respectively (figs. 59, 60).⁵⁰ Despite being a visually compelling picture, the Amsterdam painting has elicited negative responses. Abraham Bredius, for instance, advised against its purchase by the Vereniging Rembrandt (Rembrandt Association) in 1892: "I only hope we are not committing a folly; if we later acquire the two Vermeers from Six, this lesser work will surely be completely redundant."⁵¹ Lawrence Gowing characterized *The Love Letter* as "a sidelong advance along a forbidden road," in which Vermeer employed "contrasts of tone and color of a sharpness which is never approached elsewhere in his work."⁵² John Nash labeled the painting "an oddity," which is "saturated with imagery: it might be a parody of the letter theme."⁵³
42. Indeed, the cluttered composition of *The Love Letter* is unsettling but does not by itself invalidate the authenticity of the painting. Of greater concern is its paint handling, marked by short, untidy brushstrokes and inelegant modeling of forms, materials, and surfaces. Take, for instance, the figures' facial features. The artist built up the lady's chin, philtrum, nose, and cheek by mottling ungainly light pink highlights on a peachy pink base, alongside

starkly contrasting crude shadows in different hues of brown and black (fig. 61).⁵⁴ They shaped her right eye, eyebrows, upper lip, and the top part of the bridge of her nose equally infelicitously. In an attempt to mimic Vermeer's planar highlights in faces—such as those in *The Astronomer* and *The Geographer*—the artist suggested the lady's forehead with a clumsily defined patch of pink, causing it to appear short and receding. They tried to achieve a similar effect in the servant's nose but struggled to move beyond coarse strokes that do not coalesce into a neat form (fig. 62). Similar brushwork can be found in the area below. Note, for instance, that dabs of beige paint, indicating her chin, overlap those of her bottom lip for no apparent reason; her upper lip is missing; and her mouth opening appears serrated as a result of short, vertical strokes, brushed parallel to each other, starting and ending.⁵⁵

43. To understand how differently the artist handled these passages from Vermeer's, the facial features of the lady and the maid are best compared with those of the young woman in *The Lacemaker* (figs. 63 and 64), brushed equally loosely yet more elegantly and effectively; and with those of the musician in *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* (figs. 65 and 66), rendered with greater tenderness and more gradual modulation. Note that both *The Lacemaker* and *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* are larger in scale than *The Love Letter*.
44. Strings of light brown paint, splotted on top of a dark brown underlayer, faintly suggest ringlets cascading down the side of the lady's face, with the rest of her hair tied back beneath a white cap (see fig. 61).⁵⁶ The unrefined description of her hairstyle is inconsistent with that of the neatly painted coiffures of the women in Vermeer's late works (see, for example, figs. 64 and 66), although the two incomplete circles to the left of the lady's earring mirror some of the curls hovering over the musician's head in *A Woman Seated at a Virginal*.⁵⁷ The modeling of the lady's white cap, furthermore, is coarse and gives scant attention to perspectival recession. What the black blob (with touches of brown) behind the cap represents is puzzling.⁵⁸
45. Discrepancies between *The Love Letter* and Vermeer's work are also visible in the figures' attire. For instance, the artist of the Amsterdam painting created the velvet of the fur-trimmed jacket with a blend of rugged strokes in yellow and brown, imparting a crude sense of the fabric's texture. By contrast, in *The Guitar Player* (fig. 67)—whose scale is larger—Vermeer brushed bright yellow highlights on top of patches in darker yellow and beige, which border areas of warm brown, suggesting shadows (figs. 68, 69). The result is a voluminous garment that appears remarkably cushioned. A myriad of dabs ranging from pure white to bluish gray mimic the fluffy texture of the white fur, with dark brown, evenly distributed speckles indicating that the fur is ermine—or an imitation of it.⁵⁹ In *The Love Letter*, by contrast, the artist painted the flecks in dark gray, scattering them irregularly across the white trims. The shorthand, haphazard rendering of the fur makes it look flat and patchy.⁶⁰
46. The brushwork of the lady's white shirt popping out above her jacket in *The Love Letter* recalls Vermeer's depiction of the same garment emerging from a young lady's bodice in *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (figs. 70, 71, 72), now in Dublin, which is slightly larger in scale. In the latter, he applied relatively broad strokes in white and different hues of gray to suggest the irregular, angular crinkling of the fabric. The artist of the Amsterdam

picture painted a coarse, summary version of this on the left. On the right, they swiped strokes in white with a half-loaded brush to create the illusion of folds catching daylight. Although the jacket's trim should overlap the shirt, the artist started some of these strokes on top of the fur.

47. Similarly, the maid's shirt and jacket call for a comparison with the same garments worn by the servant in *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (figs. 73, 74). There, Vermeer brushed broad but neat strokes in white and different hues of gray to suggest the shirt's slightly crinkled surface lit by direct sunlight. Using a light gray tone, he rendered the sheen on the front of the maid's otherwise brownish-gray jacket. Both the shirt as well as the jacket in *The Love Letter*, however, appear duller and flatter. Compare, for instance, the maid's right sleeve with that in the Dublin painting, where Vermeer conjured volume by apposing and stacking broad strokes in different shades of gray. In the Amsterdam picture, the artist vertically dragged strings of dark brown paint across a mid-brown sleeve to create the impression of creases. This technique does little to convey three-dimensionality, instead imparting a muddy character to the fabric.
48. The modeling of the lady's cittern exemplifies how the painter of *The Love Letter* was less preoccupied with, or less adept at, rendering smooth contours than Vermeer (fig. 76)—compare the sleekly delineated curves of the stringed instruments in *The Guitar Player* (see fig. 67) or *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* (figs. 75).
49. They created the top of the body of *The Love Letter's* cittern by stopping and starting some strokes every few millimeters and brushing others vertically—that is, perpendicularly to the edge—giving it a serrated appearance. Only toward the neck of the cittern did the artist render the boundary between the wood and the fur of the lady's jacket behind it in a fluent line. Similarly jagged edges and saw-toothed contours can be found throughout the Amsterdam painting. Likewise, the cittern illustrates the artist's lack of precision and consistency: note how they suggested the frets on the neck of the instrument with unevenly spaced strokes of dark brown paint of different thicknesses (fig. 78). Compare them to those in Vermeer's *Guitar Player*, which stand out for their impeccable execution (fig. 77).⁶¹
50. The discrepancies in paint handing extend to the interior and the objects within it, starting with the floor (fig. 80). Similar black-and-white tiles appear in nine of Vermeer's extant works, ranging from the early 1660s until the mid-1670s (see, for example, fig. 79). Unsurprisingly, he varied the density and opacity of the gray veins on the white marble slabs in each painting. However, Vermeer's technique for suggesting naturally occurring swirls did not change significantly over time: he brushed long, sweeping lines that divaricate into shorter branches, each of which curves differently. cursory as they may seem, he painted them methodically, in accordance with the recession of the tiles in perspective. By contrast, the artist of *The Love Letter* created many of the veins with short, quickly brushed, cup-like, interlocking strokes that resemble one another—reflecting a repetitive manner of application. Moreover, because the curves do not adequately follow the recession of the tiles, they appear to lie on top of the stone rather than being integrated into it.⁶²
51. The artist of *The Love Letter* painted the objects on the floor with varying degrees of proficiency.⁶³ Take, for instance, the wicker sewing basket. The artist painted its straw rim

and handle sketchily but skillfully, embellishing them with light brown pointillés. However, the vertical brown lines below, which suggest individual straws, exhibit marked variation in opacity, coverage, thickness of application, and the tidiness of their contours, resulting in a streaky appearance. This may be due to the artist not fully loading their brush with each straw or applying the paint inconsistently. Streaky brushwork is occasionally visible in Vermeer's mature work, though he generally employed it with a clear artistic purpose—for instance, to evoke the flimsy pages of books in the background of *The Geographer* (fig. 81). Throughout *The Love Letter*, one encounters streaky passages that rarely serve a clear pictorial objective (fig. 82).

52. The fireplace surround is arguably the most carelessly painted area in the Amsterdam painting.⁶⁴ In the black stone base, incised with cannelures, decorative lines run crooked, brushstrokes stick out, and mottles of gray paint appear where they were likely not intended (fig. 83). Above it, a piece of light green fabric, bearing a markedly unbalanced pattern of red and dark green shapes, jars in color and pattern with the gold leather to the left (fig. 84).⁶⁵ In the capital that tops the pilaster flanking the left side of the fireplace, the blotchy Ionic scrolls are not only different in size but also crooked in relation to each other (fig. 85).⁶⁶ The purpose of the blue-grayish brushstrokes below is not entirely clear: some seem to represent diffused highlights, while others outline an unidentified triangular element.
53. The rendering of the teal curtain, finally, appears to mimic Vermeer's abstracted yet vivacious modeling of fabrics in his work of the late 1660s and early 1670s, such as that of the scientist's sleeves in *The Astronomer* (figs. 86, 87). Yet the contrast between the illuminated and shaded parts of the fabric looks clunky and unconvincing by comparison.⁶⁷
54. To the left of the fireplace, two paintings embellish the back wall. While this article does not address the execution of the land- and seascape proper, the light reflections on the frames and the shadows they cast lend themselves to a comparison with Vermeer's work. For instance, by inserting the light bluish-gray strip on the right inside of the frame of the seascape, the artist mimicked an effect appearing in Vermeer's work, including *A Woman Standing at the Virginal* (fig. 88).⁶⁸ However, the artist of *The Love Letter* did not position the reflection flush with the painted surface, leaving a thin black line (partially covered with dark gray) visible between them.⁶⁹
55. The angle of the shadows cast by the frames signifies that the window through which the light enters the room is situated considerably higher than both works of art (fig. 90). Yet the landscape on the top already hangs at a significant height in comparison to other paintings in Vermeer's interiors. Still, Vermeer typically represented the angle of his shadows smaller than in *The Love Letter*, suggesting that the windows through which daylight illuminates his paintings are only marginally higher than his frames.⁷⁰ Either the artist of the Amsterdam picture intended to imply windows placed at an unusually great height, or, more likely, they did not reflect properly on the angle of the shadows.
56. Moreover, the shadows register as stylistically peculiar. Vermeer's frames (and maps) cast either soft or double shadows. In *A Woman Standing at a Virginal* and *The Guitar Player* (compare figs. 89 and 91), his double shadows appear a fraction harsher in accordance with the more schematic rendering of surfaces in his late work. Yet they remain nuanced because

of their gentle coloring, hazy edges, and round corners. By contrast, the singular shadows on the back wall in *The Love Letter* leap out as dark, flat, and sharply edged and cornered, marking a notable deviation from Vermeer's style (see fig. 90).⁷¹ Moreover, the close juxtaposition of the two frames, their shadows, and the wooden cornice of the fireplace surround creates an uncomfortable convergence of several spiky corners—a feature absent from Vermeer's work.

57. Another clash, this time in colors and patterns, occurs in the center of the composition as a result of the horizontal strip of red-gold leather on the back wall.⁷² The same gold leather appears in the background of *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (fig. 92), where it brightens an otherwise dark corner and highlights a black crucifix (fig. 93). Because of the differences in scale between the two paintings, it is risky to compare their execution of the gold leather. However, we can establish that the decorative pattern in the Amsterdam picture is a simplified version of that in the monumental allegory (fig. 94). Moreover, in *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith*, the meticulous rendering of the ornamental scrolls and their shimmering reflections along the edges of the curls—evoking embossed leather—suggests that Vermeer worked from direct observation. The shorthand execution of the gold leather in *The Love Letter* does not convey the same impression.
58. Finally, the Amsterdam painting bears a signature on the back wall, above the basket (fig. 95). Interrupted by the craquelure but preserved in good condition, it reads *IVMeer*, with the first three letters in ligature and the last ending in a fancy curl. This type of signature can be found on nine paintings by Vermeer, dating between the early 1660s and the mid-1670s.⁷³ Close examination of the inscription suggests that the letters are rendered with conspicuously short, jerky strokes—possibly pointing toward an artist copying an example rather than confidently brushing continuous lines visualized in their mind's eye. They diverge from each other (in the bottom of the “I”), stray outside the intended area (at the top of the “M”), create bulges and serrations on what should otherwise be straight or curved lines (in the second “e”), and result in crooked serifs (on the “I,” “V,” and “M”). This by no means implies that all lines, curves, and serifs in Vermeer's inscriptions in his late works are straight and even, but they are more so than what is found in *The Love Letter* (compare figs. 96 and 97). Furthermore, the extended serif at the bottom of the “r” in the Amsterdam painting reveals a sense of bravado. By comparison, the signatures in Vermeer's works, including the swirls on the final “r”s, consist of more steady, carefully applied strokes. It is impossible to establish with certainty whether the artist of the Amsterdam painting added the inscription, but the unsteady paint handling offers a hint in this direction.⁷⁴ As far as a comparison with signatures of the same type in Vermeer's late works permits, it is less likely to belong to him, but this remains debatable.⁷⁵ The possibility that a third party placed the signature on the canvas should not be excluded either.
59. In summary, the attribution of *The Love Letter* to Vermeer is difficult to sustain because of its marked departure in brushwork and style from his undisputed works of the late 1660s and early 1670s. These discrepancies are evident throughout the visible surface of the Amsterdam painting but are especially apparent in areas that lend themselves to one-to-one comparison, such as the facial planar highlights, the yellow jacket, the maid's sleeve, the marble floor, and the shadows cast by the frames.

The Love Letter: An Ambitious Variation

60. The relationship between *The Love Letter* (fig. 57b) and Vermeer's works of the late 1660s and the first half of the 1670s is more complex than that between *The Glass of Wine* and his paintings of a decade earlier. The Amsterdam picture does not align as closely with any of Vermeer's paintings as its counterpart in Berlin. In fact, the cramped composition, anecdotal storytelling, peculiar shadows, and clashing colors, patterns, and shapes distinguish it from Vermeer's work. This makes it unlikely that Vermeer devised the composition and another artist completed it, or that the Amsterdam painting is a copy after a lost original.
61. Still, *The Love Letter* comprises many elements that are also present in Vermeer's work, notably the combination of a yellow "ermine"-trimmed jacket and a pearl earring and necklace, which appear in four of his compositions of the 1660s.⁷⁶ Other aspects found in several of his works include the marble floor, the map of Holland and West-Friesland on the left, the curtain in the top right corner, the contrast between yellow and blue, items scattered on the floor, paintings on the back wall relating to the foreground scene, and the bars of a picture frame "stabilizing" a figure's head and shoulders in front of it. Other elements in *The Love Letter* relate to one or two works by Vermeer in particular, such as the circular hair curls to *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* (see fig. 66) and the gold leather to *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (see fig. 93). Likewise, the reddish chair in the right foreground resembles the ones in *The Art of Painting* (ca. 1666–1668; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) and *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, while the green scarf draped over the chair in the foreground looks similar to the one lying on the table in *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (figs. 98, 99). Finally, as noted above, the subject of a maid delivering a letter to her unsettled employer echoes that of *Mistress and Maid* (see fig. 58).
62. Other elements in *The Love Letter* are absent from Vermeer's paintings: the fireplace, the sewing basket, the slippers, and the broom.⁷⁷ What about the *doorkijkje* (see-through)? Vermeer had employed this pictorial device, providing visual access to an adjacent room, in his earliest domestic genre scene, *A Woman Asleep* (ca. 1656–1657; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).⁷⁸ Yet *The Love Letter* features a more ingenious construction, which places the viewer in a dimly lit hallway, peeping into a bright room, where the lady and her servant exchange glances. The artist of *The Love Letter* may have adopted this spatial arrangement from Vermeer's *Gentleman Washing His Hands*, which surfaced at an Amsterdam auction on May 16, 1696, together with twenty of his other works, but has been missing ever since. The catalogue described it as "(A painting) in which a gentleman washes his hands, in a see-through room, with figures, artful and rare."⁷⁹ The fact that the auctioneer listed the words "in a see-through room" immediately after summarizing the protagonist's principal action—while omitting such a reference in their description of *A Woman Asleep*—suggests that the painting included a more prominent *doorkijkje*, possibly similar to the one in *The Love Letter*.⁸⁰ Still, there is no certainty that *A Gentleman Washing His Hands* preceded the Amsterdam painting, however logical this may seem.⁸¹ Either way, Vermeer likely did not invent this type of *doorkijkje*. The Dordrecht painter Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–1678) explored it in *A View of an Interior* ("Les Pantoufles") (fig. 100), which probably predates both *A Gentleman Washing His Hands* and *The Love Letter*.⁸² Van

Hoogstraten's enigmatic interior lacks any figures, but it does include a broom and a pair of slippers, which also appear in the Amsterdam painting. This is unlikely to be a coincidence.

63. A similar *doorkijkje* is visible in De Hooch's *Couple with a Parrot*, which, like *The Love Letter*, contains a curtain, broom, and chair in the foreground (fig. 101). Scholars tend to view De Hooch's interior scene as a response to the Amsterdam painting.⁸³ However, because this article questions the status of the latter painting as an authentic work by Vermeer, we also need to consider the possibility that the artist of *The Love Letter* instead drew inspiration from De Hooch.⁸⁴ If so, De Hooch's interior serves as an awkward *terminus post quem*; scholars date *A Couple with a Parrot* to about 1675 or shortly after, so the Amsterdam picture would likely have been completed after Vermeer's death. However, around this time De Hooch painted one or two other works in which he adopted compositional and stylistic elements from Vermeer.⁸⁵ This makes it more likely that De Hooch painted these works, including *A Couple with a Parrot*, following a sojourn from Amsterdam, his place of residence in the 1670s, to Delft. If so, one wonders whether he regarded *The Love Letter* as a work by Vermeer? Or did De Hooch draw inspiration from Vermeer's *Gentleman Washing His Hands*?
64. The Amsterdam painting also reflects Ter Borch's direct or indirect impact. Not only did he popularize the theme of amorous correspondence among genre painters of the third quarter of the seventeenth century; he also introduced the motif of a letter perceived as conveying unwelcome news.⁸⁶ Several figures glancing from the corner of their eye, sometimes out of worry, populate his genre scenes. Ter Borch also repeatedly depicted seated young ladies peering up at servants, suitors, or female companions, standing or seated at a table next to them (fig. 102). In other words, all the ingredients of the figure group in *The Love Letter* already appear in Ter Borch's work, though not combined in this way.⁸⁷
65. Finally, Gabriel Metsu's (1629–1667) *Woman Reading a Letter*, dating to the mid-1660s, features, like *The Love Letter*, a maid who has delivered a letter to her seated mistress, standing in front of a seascape (fig. 103).⁸⁸ It even includes a wicker sewing basket with a white cloth draped over the edge and a discarded slipper in the foreground, just as *The Love Letter* does. Metsu painted this interior in response to Vermeer's work—though not to the Amsterdam picture, as some scholars previously assumed.⁸⁹ In fact, given that *The Love Letter* dates from several years after Metsu's death in 1667, it is likely that the anonymous artist drew inspiration from *A Woman Reading a Letter*.⁹⁰
66. In conclusion, based on observations outlined above, *The Love Letter* may be best categorized as an ambitious variation on several of Vermeer's late works, reverberating a range of thematic, stylistic, and compositional elements—with the caveat that it may have been compositionally closest to the untraced *Gentleman Washing His Hands*. The artist combined them with ideas originating from the work of other contemporary painters, probably including Van Hoogstraten, Ter Borch, and Metsu.

Hypotheses on Authorship

67. While both *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* feature short, untidy brushstrokes indicative of an unconfident hand, there are marked differences in technique and style between the two works.⁹¹ The painter of the former employed a slightly gloopy, pasty handling of paint; remained close to their models yet transcribed most of them in a shorthand manner; and favored harsh contrasts and intense light effects. The artist of the latter picture, by contrast, adopted a more suggestive, hurried, and unbalanced technique, with a characteristically streaky application and serrated contours, and demonstrated a limited ability to resolve visual clashes. We are, therefore, looking for two different artists. Efforts to match the brushwork of either the Berlin or Amsterdam pictures to that of works by named painters, however, have thus far yielded no results. This leaves open the question of whether the two were active inside or outside of Vermeer's workshop.
68. Although neither *The Glass of Wine* nor *The Love Letter* attains Vermeer's technical brilliance, both are of considerable quality. They arguably differ in this respect from *Girl with a Flute* (fig. 104).⁹² The limited technical execution of certain passages in that *tronie*, along with its basic composition and the small format of the panel, point toward a lower level of ambition and accomplishment. Both the Berlin and Amsterdam paintings, however, indicate artists who had more experience in devising complex compositions, constructing challenging interiors, and rendering the play of natural light across figures, objects, and surfaces. This prompts the question whether we can assign them to members of Vermeer's studio. If so, we must embrace the idea that he trained long-term or more advanced students.⁹³
69. A comparison between *The Glass of Wine* and Caspar Netscher's (1635/6–1684) earliest extant genre scenes does indeed hint at the possibility that the Berlin painting is the product of a mature apprentice. Netscher trained with Ter Borch in Deventer from about 1654–1655 until 1658–1660.⁹⁴ His interior scenes from this period provide a rare insight into the type of work a student of one of the leading genre painters of this period made during an extended apprenticeship.⁹⁵ One of them, *A Woman Washing Her Hands*, dated 1657, is a creative pastiche of two recent paintings by his teacher (fig. 105).⁹⁶ Whereas the rendering of the white satin fabric—one of Ter Borch's "style signifiers"—is impressive for a student at this level, the depiction of the carpet on the table—not a salient feature of his tutor's work—is less so.⁹⁷ Netscher's *Guardroom*, completed the following year, is a free variation on a composition by his mentor that is of such high quality that Sturla Gudlaugsson regarded it as a work by Ter Borch (fig. 106).⁹⁸ In it, the ambitious student markets himself as a skilled painter of fabrics, materials, and textures, much like his teacher. However, a critical eye notices that the soldiers' faces in profile appear "flat," and the relationship between the two top figures looks awkward.⁹⁹ Similarly, *The Glass of Wine* is a pastiche that, due to its technically skilled repetition of signifiers of Vermeer's style—an interior ordered by linear perspective, enhanced with spectacular light reflections—may pass as a work by the master. Yet it falls short in its paint handling and in meeting complicated artistic challenges, such as the convincing rendition of human interaction. What separates the Berlin painting from Netscher's genre scenes, however, is that its composition and figure poses do not rely on one or two paintings but on six, including three by other artists. This required a higher level of artistic ingenuity. The possibility that Vermeer—who had himself responded to Ter Borch's and De Hooch's compositions (see figs. 52, 53, and 56) in the New York and Braunschweig

paintings (see figs. 2 and 3)—assisted the artist of *The Glass of Wine* in this respect warrants consideration.¹⁰⁰

70. An even stronger indicator that the Berlin painting originated from Vermeer's studio is the presence of the cittern on the chair (see fig. 51). This detail demonstrates that the artist studied *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* prior to its completion or examined a preparatory sketch by Vermeer of a cittern on a chair, now lost. In either case, they must have had access to his workshop.¹⁰¹
71. The signature on *The Love Letter* complicates efforts to determine whether its painter belonged to Vermeer's workshop (fig. 95). If the inscription belongs to Vermeer, then the canvas undoubtedly sprang from his studio. If so, he followed the example of, among others, Rembrandt, who occasionally signed works by his students during his early Amsterdam years.¹⁰² However, this cannot be taken as a standard practice in workshops across the northern Netherlands, and certainly not that of a high-end genre painter in Delft three to four decades later. Ter Borch, for instance, allowed Netscher to sign his works with his own name. If a third party placed the signature on *The Love Letter*, then the inscription offers little information on the authorship and origin of the painting. However, if the artist of the Amsterdam picture applied the signature, then the canvas is less likely to have come from Vermeer's studio, since it is improbable that he would have allowed a pupil to sign *their* work with *his* name. Then again, maybe *The Love Letter* left Vermeer's workshop after the latter's death.
72. Could *The Love Letter* be by an independent painter outside Vermeer's studio who took a brief interest in his work?¹⁰³ If so, this artist must have had ample access to the latter's work in other places. This is far from impossible. A local couple, Maria Simonsdr de Knuijt and Pieter Claesz van Ruijven, purchased more than half of Vermeer's oeuvre, including *Mistress and Maid* (see fig. 58) and *A Gentleman Washing His Hands*.¹⁰⁴ There is little doubt that their collection was accessible, given the relatively large number of contemporary genre painters who responded to Vermeer's works in their collection.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the pictures that De Knuijt and Van Ruijven did not acquire probably found their way to other art lovers in Delft, The Hague, and Amsterdam, who may have similarly welcomed artists into their homes.¹⁰⁶
73. Although *The Love Letter* features a range of objects present in works by Vermeer, the artist did not repeat them in the same position or at the same angle as Vermeer did. Hence, it is likely they had seen the items with their own eyes, rather than adopting them from paintings or preparatory sketches. Indeed, the artist of *The Love Letter* could have chosen any chair or scarf but depicted the ones also appearing in Vermeer's work. This suggests that they either wanted connoisseurs to recognize them as his studio props or, more likely, that these were the objects they had at hand. In the latter case, they had access to Vermeer's studio.
74. Furthermore, *The Love Letter* mimics signifiers of Vermeer's style, including the planar highlights in the faces and the pointillés on the sewing basket, cittern, and gold leather. Although not executed with the same technical subtlety, they come so close to those in Vermeer's work that one might expect the anonymous artist to have had intimate knowledge

of his working methods, possibly through personal tutelage. On the other hand, *The Love Letter* also exhibits characteristics that deviate from Vermeer's style, including the blunt shadows and the clashing colors, patterns, and shapes. If the artist were an advanced pupil, one wonders why Vermeer would not have encouraged them to adhere more closely to his style. On the other hand, the painter of *The Glass of Wine* also amplified reflections and contrasts between areas of light and dark to such a degree that they also diverge from Vermeer's work.¹⁰⁷ If he had students, Vermeer apparently did not micromanage them.

Proposed Dates

75. The artist of *The Glass of Wine* likely started and completed their painting not long after Vermeer worked on *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*. By comparison, Netscher painted his variations on Ter Borch's genre scenes discussed above within three years after his teacher finished his original works. However, the appearance of the cittern on the chair stretches the final completion date of the Berlin picture to about 1667. *The Love Letter* likely dates to the early or mid-1670s—presumably after *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (see fig. 92)—but may also stem from soon after Vermeer's death. Interest in his work dwindled soon after his passing in 1675, and contemporary genre painters ceased responding to it.¹⁰⁸ This minimizes the chance that *The Love Letter* dates from the end of the 1670s or later. Moreover, both the style of the painting as well as the lady's outfit would have looked outdated by then.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

76. The identities of the artists of *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* remain elusive. The former likely worked in Vermeer's studio. The latter may have done as well, but the uncertainty surrounding the signature on the Amsterdam painting calls for greater caution. My hope is that future scholarship will shed more light on how the artists' techniques, and their choice and handling of materials, relate to Vermeer's. This, in turn, will prompt new theories about his studio, a relatively new area of inquiry in art history whose contours have yet to be defined.

Acknowledgements

This article is dedicated to Eric Jan Sluijter, whose generous advice and guidance over the past three decades have profoundly shaped my work.

This article stems from my research for my forthcoming book on Vermeer (including a catalogue). I am deeply grateful to Melanie Gifford, who allowed me to test my thoughts, challenged me with countless questions, and clarified passages in *The Glass of Wine* and *The Love Letter* that I did not understand. I am indebted to Christian Tico Seifert for providing me with sound advice when I needed it, and to Eric Jan Sluijter for reading and commenting on the first draft of this article. I would also like to thank Michiel Franken, Michele L. Frederick, Aimee Ng, Elizabeth Nogrady, Leonore van Sloten, Gijs Verdoes Kleijn, and Marieke de Winkel for their help and insights. Furthermore, I wish to express my gratitude to Perry Chapman, the *JHNA* editors, and the two anonymous reviewers for taking the time to go through my article, challenge me, and provide insightful comments and revisions. And, of course, thanks to Jennifer Henel for her help with the images.

Biography

Adriaan E. Waiboer is an independent art historian and former head of collections and research at the National Gallery of Ireland. His publications include “Vermeer’s Impact on His Contemporaries” (2010) and *Gabriel Metsu (1629–1667): Life and Work; A Catalogue Raisonné* (2012). Waiboer has curated several exhibitions, among them *Gabriel Metsu* (2010–2011) and *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Paintings* (2017–2018). He is currently working on a book on Vermeer.

adriaanwaiboer@gmail.com

Illustrations



Fig. 1 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine*, ca. 1662–1667, oil on canvas, 67.7 x 79.6 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 912C. Photo: Christoph Schmidt (artwork in the public domain) - -Fig. 1a



Fig. 3 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass*, ca. 1661–1663, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 66.7 cm. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig, inv. no. GG 316 - Fig. 3a



Fig. 2 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, ca. 1660–1662, oil on canvas, 39.3 x 44.4 cm. The Frick Collection, New York, Henry Clay Frick Bequest, inv. no. 1901.1.125 - Fig. 2a



Fig. 4 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of woman's bodice and shirt



Fig. 5 Unidentified Artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's bodice and shirt



Fig. 6 Johannes Vermeer, *The Milkmaid*, ca. 1659–1661, oil on canvas, 45.5 x 41 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Purchased with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt, inv. no. SK-A-2344



Fig. 7 Vermeer, *The Milkmaid* (fig. 6), detail of woman's head and cap (



Fig. 8 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's head and cap



Fig. 9 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of woman's hand

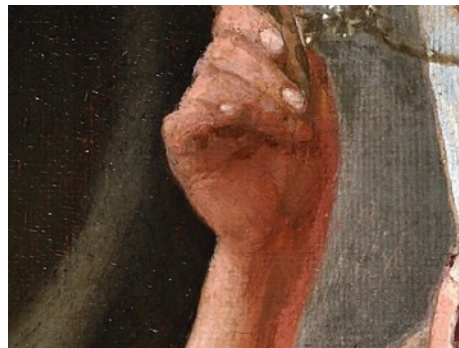


Fig. 10 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's hand



Fig. 11 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of woman's skirt



Fig. 12 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's skirt (



Fig. 15 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of man's sleeve



Fig. 13 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of man's cape



Fig. 16 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of man's sleeve



Fig. 14 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of man's cape



Fig. 17 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Reading a Letter*, ca. 1658–1659, oil on canvas, 83 x 64.5 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 1336



Fig. 18 Vermeer, *A Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 17), detail of carpet on table



Fig. 19 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of carpet on table



Fig. 20 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of music book

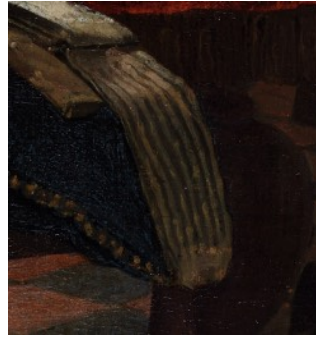


Fig. 21 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of music book



Fig. 22 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of citrine - Fig. 22a



Fig. 23 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of citrine



Fig. 24 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of finial



Fig. 27 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of window



Fig. 25 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of finial



Fig. 28 Vermeer, *A Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 17), detail of side wall



Fig. 26 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of window

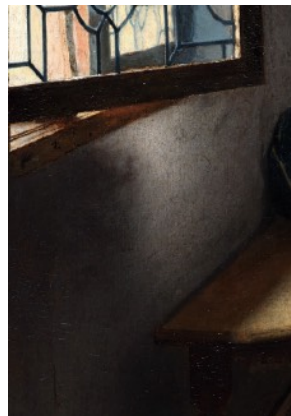


Fig. 29 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of side wall

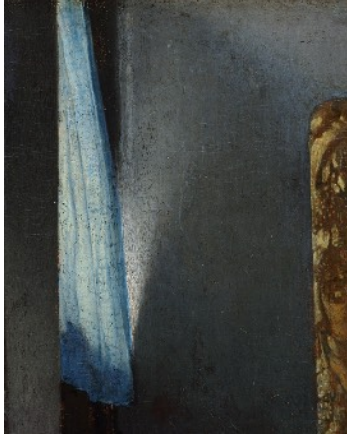


Fig. 30 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of second window



Fig. 31 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of chair



Fig. 32 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of chair



Fig. 33 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of window frame



Fig. 34 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of window frame



Fig. 35 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's skirt

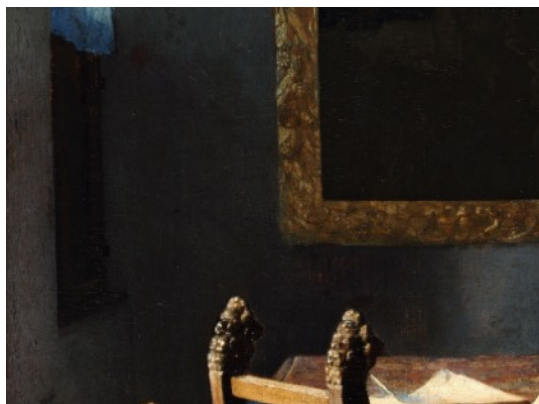


Fig. 36 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail picture frame on back wall



Fig. 39 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of (overpainted) second window



Fig. 37 Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of chair



Fig. 40 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of second window



Fig. 38 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of chair - Fig. 38a



Fig. 43 Frans van Mieris, *The Duet*, 1658, oil on panel, 31.6 x 24.9 cm. Staatliches Museen Schwerin/Ludwigslust/Güstrow, inv. no. G 82



Fig. 41 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of woman's clothing



Fig. 42 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of woman's clothing

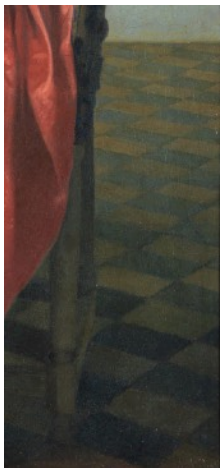


Fig. 44 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of tiled floor



Fig. 45 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of tiled floor



Fig. 46 Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of window

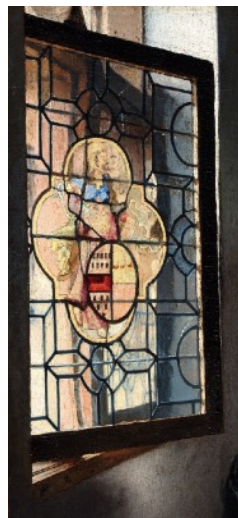


Fig. 47 Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of window



Fig. 48 Left: Vermeer, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of cape. Center: Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of cape. Right: Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of cape (not shown to scale with each other)



Fig. 49 Left: Vermeer, *Girl Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), detail of relationship between table and painting. Center: Vermeer, *A Woman with a Wineglass* (fig. 3), detail of relationship between table and painting. Right: Unidentified artist, *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1), detail of relationship between table and painting (not shown to scale with each other)



Fig. 50 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace*, ca. 1662–1664, oil on canvas, 56.1 x 47.4 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 912B. Photo: Christoph Schmidt (artwork in the public domain)

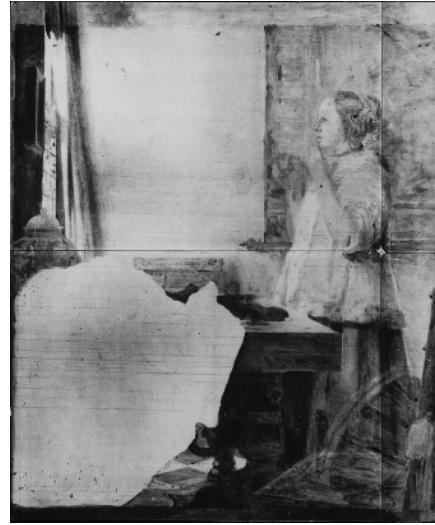


Fig. 51 Neutron activation autoradiograph of Vermeer, *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (fig. 50), bpk / Gemäldegalerie, SMB



Fig. 52 Studio of Gerard ter Borch, *A Couple in an Interior, Served by a Page*, ca. 1656–1660, oil on canvas, 67.5 x 56.5 cm. The Leiden Collection, New York, inv. no. GB-100 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 53 Gerard ter Borch, *A Gentleman Pressing a Woman to Drink*, ca. 1658–1659, oil on canvas, 41.5 x 32.0 cm. Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. RCIN 404805 © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2026



Fig. 55 Frans van Mieris, *The Oyster Meal*, 1661, oil on panel, 27 x 20 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague, Gift of Sir Henri Deterding, 1936, inv. no. 819 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 54 Frans van Mieris, *A Man and Woman with Two Dogs ('Teasing the Pet')*, 1660, oil on panel (arched top), 27.5 x 20 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 108 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 56 Pieter de Hooch, *A Young Woman Drinking with Two Soldiers*, 1658, oil on canvas, 68.8 x 60 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. RF 1974–29. © 2008 GrandPalaisRmn (Musée du Louvre). Photo: Jean-Gilles Berizzi



Fig. 57 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter*, ca. 1671–1677, oil on canvas, 44 x 38.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Purchased with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt, inv. no. SK-A-1595 (artwork in the public domain) -Fig. 57a, Fig. 57b



Fig. 58 Johannes Vermeer, *Mistress and Maid*, ca. 1666–1667, oil on canvas, 90.2 x 78.7 cm. The Frick Collection, New York, Henry Clay Frick Bequest, inv. no. 1919.1.126



Fig. 59 Johannes Vermeer, *The Astronomer*, 1668, oil on canvas, 51.5 x 45.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. RF1983–28 © 2016 GrandPalaisRmn (Musée du Louvre). Photo: Franck Raux



Fig. 60 Johannes Vermeer, *The Geographer*, 1669, oil on canvas, 51.6 x 45.4 cm. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, inv. no. 1149 (artwork in the public domain)

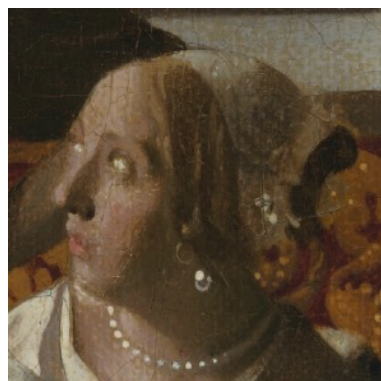


Fig. 61 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of lady's head



Fig. 62 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of maid's head



Fig. 63 Johannes Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*, ca. 1669–1671, oil on canvas, 24 x 21 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. MI 1448. © 2007 GrandPalaisRmn (Musée du Louvre). Photo: Gérard Blot

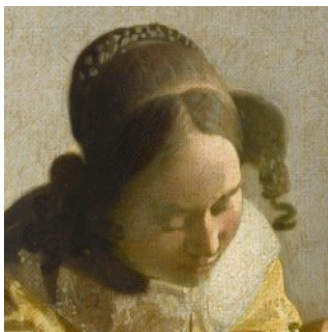


Fig. 64 Vermeer, *The Lacemaker* (fig. 63), detail of woman's head



Fig. 65 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Seated at a Virginal*, ca. 1671–1674, oil on canvas, 51.5 x 45.5 cm. The National Gallery, London, Salting Bequest, 1910, inv. no. NG2568

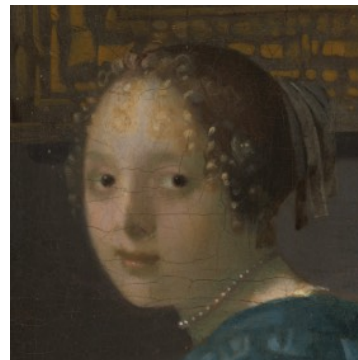


Fig. 66 Vermeer, *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* (fig. 65), detail of woman's head



Fig. 67 Johannes Vermeer, *The Guitar Player*, ca. 1671–1673, oil on canvas, 51.4 x 45 cm. Kenwood House, London, The Iveagh Bequest, inv. no. 88028841 © English Heritage Trust



Fig. 68 Vermeer, *The Guitar Player* (fig. 67), detail of jacket



Fig. 69 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of jacket



Fig. 70 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid*, ca. 1670–1672, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 60.5 cm. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Presented, Sir Alfred and Lady Beit, 1987 (Beit Collection), inv. no. NGI.4535



Fig. 71 Vermeer, *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (fig. 70), detail of woman's shirt

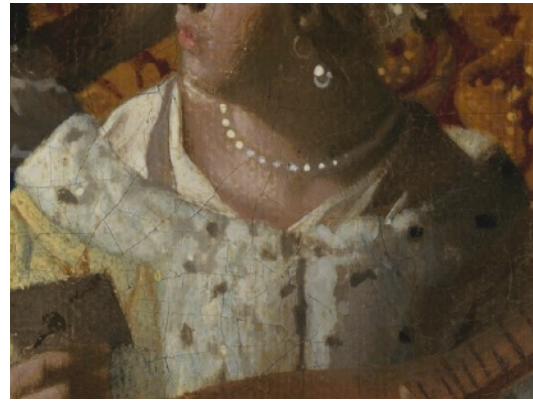


Fig. 72 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of lady's shirt



Fig. 73 Vermeer, *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (fig. 70), detail of maid's jacket



Fig. 74 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of maid's jacket



Fig. 77 Vermeer, *The Guitar Player* (fig. 67), detail of neck of guitar



Fig. 75 Vermeer, *A Woman Seated at a Virginal* (fig. 65), detail of viola da gamba



Fig. 78 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of neck of cittern



Fig. 76 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of cittern

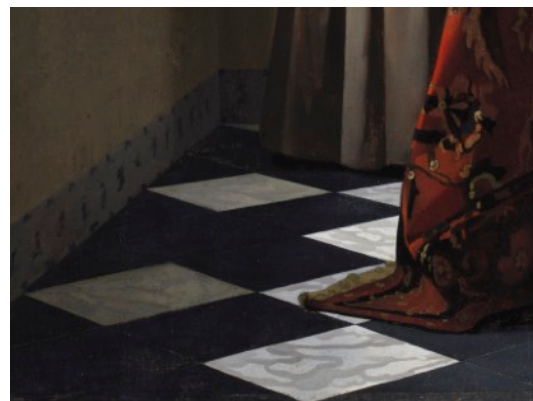


Fig. 79 Vermeer, *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (fig. 70), detail of marble floor



Fig. 80 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of marble floor



Fig. 83 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of fireplace surround (base)



Fig. 81 Vermeer, *The Geographer* (fig. 60), detail of books in background



Fig. 84 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of fireplace surround (fabric)



Fig. 82 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of sewing basket



Fig. 85 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of fireplace surround (capital)



Fig. 86 Vermeer, *The Astronomer* (fig. 59), detail of man's sleeves



Fig. 89 Vermeer, *A Woman Standing at a Virginal* (fig. 88), detail of picture frame



Fig. 87 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of chimney surround (curtain)

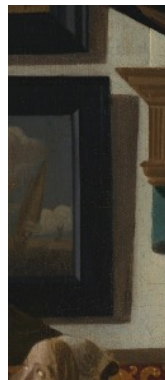


Fig. 90 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of picture frame



Fig. 88 Johannes Vermeer, *A Woman Standing at a Virginal*, ca. 1671–1674, oil on canvas, 51.7 x 45.2 cm. The National Gallery, London, Bought, 1892, inv. no. NG1383

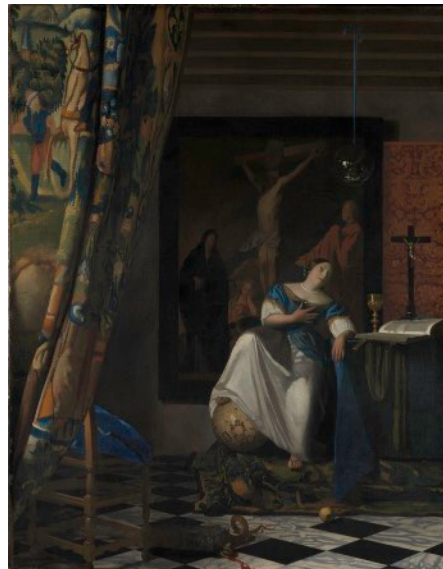


Fig. 92 Johannes Vermeer, *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith*, ca. 1671–1675, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 88.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, inv. 32.100.18 (artwork in the public domain)

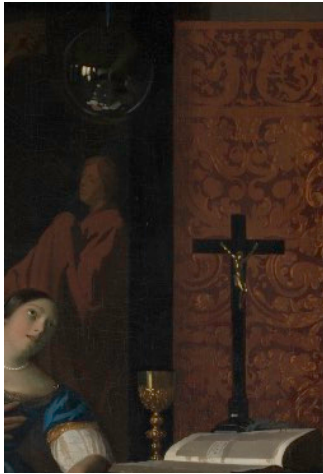


Fig. 93 Vermeer, *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (fig. 92), detail of gold leather



Fig. 94 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of gold leather

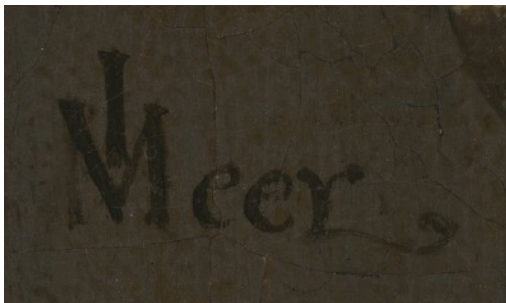


Fig. 95 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of signature

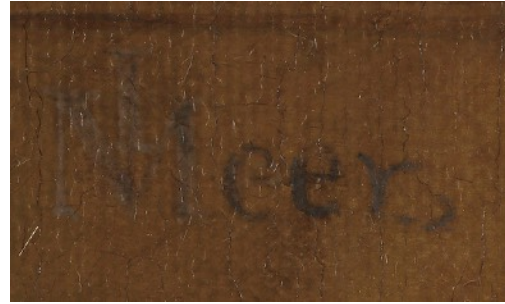


Fig. 96 Vermeer, *The Geographer* (fig. 60), detail of signature

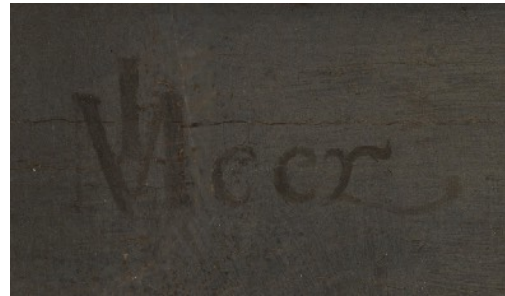


Fig. 97 Vermeer, *A Woman Seated at the Virginal* (fig. 65), detail of signature

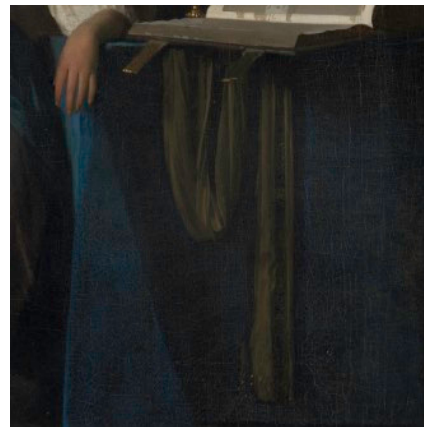


Fig. 98 Vermeer, *The Allegory of the Catholic Faith* (fig. 92), detail of scarf on table

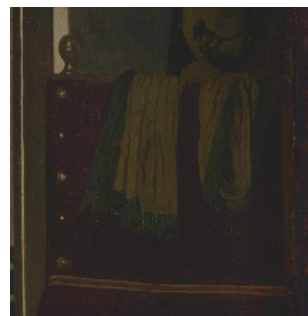


Fig. 99 Unidentified artist, *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), detail of scarf on chair



Fig. 100 Samuel van Hoogstraten, *A View of an Interior* ("*Les Pantouffles*"), ca. 1660–1662, oil on canvas, 103 x 71 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. RF 3722. © 2020 GrandPalaisRmn (Musée du Louvre). Photo: Michel Urtado



Fig. 102 Gerard ter Borch, *A Woman Playing the Theorbo-Lute and a Cavalier*, ca. 1658, oil on panel, 36.8 x 32.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, inv. no. 14.40.617 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 101 Pieter de Hooch, *A Couple with a Parrot*, ca. 1675–1678, oil on canvas, 73 x 62 cm. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne, inv. no. WRM3218. Gift, 1968. Photo: Historisches Archiv mit Rheinischem Bildarchiv (rba_c002375)



Fig. 103 Gabriel Metsu, *A Woman Reading a Letter*, ca. 1664–1666, oil on panel, 52.5 x 40.2 cm. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Sir Alfred and Lady Beit, 1987 (Beit Collection), inv. no. 4537



Fig. 104 Unidentified artist, *Girl with a Flute*, ca. 1669–1675, oil on panel, 20 x 17.8 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Widener Collection, inv. no. 1942.9.98 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 105 Caspar Netscher, *A Woman Washing Her Hands*, 1657, oil on panel, 49.3 x 40.3 cm. The Kremer Collection



Fig. 106 Caspar Netscher, *The Guardroom*, 1658, oil on panel, 97.8 x 82.6 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, inv. no. 504

Endnotes

1. These concern *Saint Praxedis* (1655; Kufu Company, Tokyo, on long-term loan to the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo), *Girl with a Flute* (fig. 104), and *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (ca. 1670–1675; The Leiden Collection, New York). For a concise attribution history of *Saint Praxedis*, see Karl Schütz, *Vermeer: The Complete Works* (Taschen, 2020), 242. More recently, Christian Tico Seifert expressed his support for the attribution to Vermeer; see his “Early Ambitions: Vermeer’s Journey from Bible to Brothel,” in *Vermeer*, ed. Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber, exh. cat. (Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023), 128–130. On *Girl with a Flute*, see Marjorie E. Wieseman, Alexandra Libby, E. Melanie Gifford, and Dina Anchin, “Vermeer’s Studio and the *Girl with a Flute*: New Findings from the National Gallery of Art,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 14, no. 2 (2022) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3>, in which the authors ascribe the painting to a member of Vermeer’s workshop or a contemporary artist with intimate knowledge of Vermeer’s technique. More recently, Pieter Roelofs reattributed it to Vermeer, in “Vermeer’s *Tronies*: An Outward Gaze of Connection,” in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 213–214. On *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, see Walter A. Liedtke and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal” (2024), *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed., ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge (New York, 2023–), <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/young-woman-seated-at-a-virginal>. More recently, Jonathan Janson rejected its attribution to Vermeer in his “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal: A Second Look,” December 11, 2024, *Essential Vermeer*, <https://www.essentialvermeer.com/misc/Young-Woman-Seated-at-a-Virginal-A-Second-Look.pdf>.
2. See, among others, A. B. de Vries, *Jan Vermeer van Delft* (J. M. Meulenhoff, 1948), 86–106; Ludwig Goldscheider, *Jan Vermeer: The Paintings; Complete Edition* (Phaidon, 1958), 133–141; Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Jan Vermeer* (Abrams, 1981), 64–157; Leonard Slatkes, *Vermeer and His Contemporaries* (Abbeville, 1981), 15–108; Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Vermeer & The Art of Painting* (Yale University Press, 1995), 167–186; Walter Liedtke, *Vermeer: The Complete Paintings* (Ludion, 2008), 55–177; Wayne E. Franits, *Vermeer* (Phaidon, 2015), passim; Karl Schütz, *Vermeer: The Complete Works* (Taschen, 2020), 214–245; *Vermeer*, ed. Roelofs and Weber, 274–291.

The only scholars who, since the Second World War, did not fully accept the attribution of the remaining thirty-four paintings to Vermeer were P. T. A Swillens, *Johannes Vermeer: Painter of Delft 1632–1675* (Spectrum, 1950), 154–168, who raised doubts about the authenticity of, among others, *The Guitar Player* (fig. 67), and rejected, among others, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* (ca. 1654–1656; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh); Albert Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft 1632–1675* (Spectrum, 1975), 166–168 (and later Albert Blankert et al., *Vermeer* (Rizzoli, 1988), 195–197), who questioned the authenticity of *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2), *A Woman with a Lute* (ca. 1663–1665; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and *Girl with the Red Hat* (ca. 1669; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC); and Benjamin Binstock, *Vermeer’s Family Secrets: Genius, Discovery, and the Unknown Apprentice* (Routledge, 2009), 247–283, 292–293, who assigned eight paintings, including *Girl with the Red Hat*, A

Woman with a Lute, and *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58), to Vermeer's eldest child, Maria (1654–after 1713). Note that Goldscheider, in *Jan Vermeer*, 134, no. 8, accepted a drawing, *A Woman with Her Foot on a Stove* (ca. 1660–1670; Klassik Stiftung Weimar, inv. KK 5566) as a work by Vermeer.

3. This, in turn, is informed by my twenty-five years of expertise in Dutch genre painting of the third quarter of the seventeenth century, including the completion of a catalogue raisonné of Gabriel Metsu's (1629–1667) oeuvre: Adriaan E. Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work; A Catalogue Raisonné* (Yale University Press, 2012), 161–328.
4. Claudia Laurenze-Landsberg, "Neutron-Autoradiography of Two Paintings by Jan Vermeer in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin," in *Inside the Camera Obscura: Optics and Art Under the Spell of the Projected Image*, ed. Wolfgang Lefèvre (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, 2007), 220–224.
5. Arthur F. E. van Schendel, "De Liefdesbrief hersteld / *The Love Letter* Restored," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 127–128; Pieter J. J. van Thiel, "Beschadiging en herstel van Vermeer's *Liefdesbrief* / The Damaging and Restoration of Vermeer's *Love Letter*," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 129–146; Luitsen Kuiper, "Restauratieverslag van Vermeer's *Liefdesbrief* / Report on the Restoration of Vermeer's *Love Letter*," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 147–167; Klaas Sipkes, "La restauración de 'La carte de amour,'" *Crónica de Holanda* 29 (1973): 10–15; Pieter J. J. van Thiel and Luitsen Kuiper, "Purloined, Damaged, Recovered, Restored: Vermeer's 'The Letter,'" *Delta* (1973): 17–34; Esther van Duijn, Sabrina Meloni, Carol Pottasch, and Ige Verslypen, "Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer: A Historical Perspective," in *Closer to Vermeer*, ed. Francesca Gabrieli et al. (Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2025), 373–375, 377.
6. Anna Krekeler, Francesca Gabrieli, Annelies van Loon, and Ige Verslypen, "Compositions in the Making: Vermeer's Changes," in Gabrieli et al., *Closer to Vermeer*, 84–85; Annelies van Loon, Francesca Gabrieli, Anna Krekeler, Ige Verslypen, and Frederik Vanmeert, "From Palette to Perfection: Vermeer's Distinctive Use of Blue and Green Pigments," in Gabrieli et al., *Closer to Vermeer*, 248, 250, 254, 256–257, 258.
7. The frequent adoption and revision of elements by genre painters in the third quarter of the seventeenth century from one another's work was the subject of the exhibition and catalogue *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer, exh. cat. (Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2017).
8. This is true for every work of art discussed in this article, but particularly so for *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), which was damaged during its theft in 1971, mainly around the edges. Hence, this article focuses exclusively on the paint handling of the area in the *doorkijkje* (see-through). On the robbery of *The Love Letter*, see, among others, Van Schendel, "De Liefdesbrief hersteld," 127–128; on the damage caused by the robbery and the subsequent treatment of the painting, see, among others, Van Thiel, "Beschadiging en herstel," 129–146, and Kuiper, "Restauratieverslag," 147–167, which feature detailed descriptions and illustrations of the painting before, during, and after the restoration process in 1971–1972. Furthermore, Vermeer's *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2) has suffered severely from reckless cleaning in the past, although the still life on the table and the chair have been preserved relatively well. The painting also has a tumultuous history of added (and

eliminated) objects. For more on this, see Krekeler et al., “Compositions in the Making,” 78–79; and Van Duijn et al., “Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer,” 364–367.

9. Sale, Jan van Loon, Delft, July 18, 1736, no. 16 (accessed via Lugt’s *Repertoire* Online, no. 466); Gerard Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen, met derzelver pryzen . . .* (P. G. van Baalen, 1752), 2:390, no. 16: “Een zittend drinkend Vrouwtje, met een staande Mans-Persoon, door vander Meer” (A seated woman drinking, with a man standing, by vander Meer). Bequeathed within the Hope family for generations, the painting entered the collection of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin in 1904. For the full provenance of the Berlin painting, see, among others, the entry (with provenance compilation by Willem L. van der Watering) in Blankert et al., *Vermeer* (1988), 179–180. *The Glass of Wine* was not among the twenty-one works by Vermeer that Jacob Dissius sold at auction in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696, having inherited them from his parents-in-law, Maria Simonsdr de Knuijt and Pieter Claes van Ruijven.
10. On the grouping of *The Glass of Wine* with *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*, see, among others, Paul Johansen, “Jan Vermeer van Delft: À propos de l’ordre chronologique de ses tableaux,” *Oud Holland* 38 (1920): 189–190; Lawrence Gowing, *Vermeer* (1952; repr. Gilles de la Mer, 1997), 113–114; Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 59–60; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 90, 92, 98; Slatkes, *Vermeer*, 45–49; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 80–82, 84, 87–88.
Some scholars, including Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 84–87, date *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass* to the late 1650s, but the paintings’ reliance on Frans van Mieris’s *Man and Woman with Two Dogs* (“*Teasing the Pet*”) (fig. 54) and *The Oyster Meal* (fig. 55), which are dated 1660 and 1661, respectively, suggests that Vermeer painted them in the early 1660s (see, for instance, Franits, *Vermeer*, 126).
11. For examples of encomiums on the spatial illusion and lighting of *The Glass of Wine*, see, among others, Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 90; Slatkes, *Vermeer and His Contemporaries*, 46–47; Walter Liedtke, “The Glass of Wine,” in *Vermeer and the Delft School*, ed. Walter Liedtke, exh. cat. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 376–378; Schütz, *Vermeer*, 66; and Ariane van Suchtelen, “Fashionable Intruders,” in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 175.
12. Gowing, *Vermeer*, 30.
13. Edward Snow, *A Study of Vermeer: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (University of California Press, 1994), 40.
14. Also note the jumble of sketchy strokes in light and dark gray, which alludes to a shadow, cast by the woman’s cap, on her left shoulder.
15. The woman’s left sleeve in *The Glass of Wine* does not lend itself to a comparison with that in *A Woman with a Wineglass* because of the metallic braiding on the latter. Viewing the sleeve alongside the fabric on the back of the lady’s skirt in the Braunschweig picture suggests discrepancies in modeling, particularly in the shadows. These appear firm and blocky in the Berlin painting and gentle and bendy in Vermeer’s picture in Braunschweig. Furthermore, the artist of *The Glass of Wine* brushed flicks of light pink paint of different sizes, shapes, and degrees of opacity across the sleeve’s fabric to simulate Vermeer’s highlights. On close inspection, however, they look muddy. The rendering of the right sleeve is equally displeasing. The scatter of white, pink, and gray dabs on the top barely conveys the impression of the satin fabric, ornamented with cord, appearing in partial shade.

16. The light reflected on the woman's curiously empty glass, built up with wiggly strokes of white paint, appears exaggerated in comparison with corresponding passages in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*. Snow, *Study of Vermeer*, 40, noted that the woman's wineglass in the Berlin painting appears empty.
17. The rendering of the green fabric of the cape is also incongruous with the vigorously brushed yet more subtly modeled, pointillé-laden folds of the blue apron of *The Milkmaid*. A comparison with the paint handling of the man's cape in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* is excluded here because of its compromised condition (see n. 8: This is true for every work of art discussed in this article, but particularly so for *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), which was damaged during its theft in 1971, mainly around the edges. Hence, this article focuses exclusively on the paint handling of the area in the *doorkijkje* (see-through). On the robbery of *The Love Letter*, see, among others, Van Schendel, "De Liefdesbrief hersteld," 127–128; on the damage caused by the robbery and the subsequent treatment of the painting, see, among others, Van Thiel, "Beschadiging en herstel," 129–146, and Kuiper, "Restauratieverslag," 147–167, which feature detailed descriptions and illustrations of the painting before, during, and after the restoration process in 1971–1972. Furthermore, Vermeer's *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2) has suffered severely from reckless cleaning in the past, although the still life on the table and the chair have been preserved relatively well. The painting also has a tumultuous history of added (and eliminated) objects. For more on this, see Krekeler et al., "Compositions in the Making," 78–79; and Van Duijn et al., "Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer," 364–367.).
18. It is also worth comparing the sleeve of the man's shirt in *The Glass of Wine* to that of the male figure in Vermeer's earlier *Officer and a Smiling Woman* (ca. 1657–1658; The Frick Collection, New York). Despite appearing in the shade, the sleeve in the former painting is modeled in greater detail and hence registers as more voluminous and undulating.
19. According to a letter written by Katherine A. McIver to Bernice Davidson (at the time research curator at The Frick Collection, New York), quoting Dr. William Prizer (then professor of musicology at the University of California, Santa Barbara), on April 10, 1982, preserved in the curatorial file of *Girl Interrupted at Her Music* at The Frick Collection (generously shared by Aimee Ng, John Updike Curator there). Prizer argued that the sheet in Vermeer's painting represents a specific musical composition but considered it unlikely that one could identify it. Leonore van Sloten, senior curator at the Rembrandthuis, Amsterdam, confirmed Prizer's observations and added that the songbook was probably French in origin (Leonore van Sloten to the author, June 2025).
20. A handful of music notes appear on one of the music books lying on the table, but their rendering is coarse in comparison to those in the open songbook in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*.
21. Even in his earlier *Officer and a Smiling Woman* (ca. 1657–1658; The Frick Collection, New York) and *A Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 17), in which Vermeer rendered several areas in his characteristically stippled painting technique, the windows register as tranquil, in part because of the meticulous, straight depiction of the lead came.
22. A similarly dark fog hangs in the far corner of the room, in front of the blocked window.
23. See also the wall below the window in *An Officer and a Smiling Woman*. The same areas in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass* are unsuited to comparison with that in *The Glass of Wine* because both are dark and less distinct. Moreover, the left wall in the New York painting has suffered from overcleaning in the

past (see n. 8: This is true for every work of art discussed in this article, but particularly so for *The Love Letter* (fig. 57), which was damaged during its theft in 1971, mainly around the edges. Hence, this article focuses exclusively on the paint handling of the area in the *doorkijkje* (see-through). On the robbery of *The Love Letter*, see, among others, Van Schendel, “*De Liefdesbrief hersteld*,” 127–128; on the damage caused by the robbery and the subsequent treatment of the painting, see, among others, Van Thiel, “*Beschadiging en herstel*,” 129–146, and Kuiper, “*Restauratieverslag*,” 147–167, which feature detailed descriptions and illustrations of the painting before, during, and after the restoration process in 1971–1972. Furthermore, Vermeer’s *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2) has suffered severely from reckless cleaning in the past, although the still life on the table and the chair have been preserved relatively well. The painting also has a tumultuous history of added (and eliminated) objects. For more on this, see Krekeler et al., “*Compositions in the Making*,” 78–79; and Van Duijn et al., “*Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer*,” 364–367.).

24. Another example of a stark contrast between light and dark is the seat of the wooden bench, where the illumination (and lack thereof) almost divides the seat into two strips of light and darker brown. Also, note the oddly bright red-orange patch on the side of the bench, presumably bouncing off indirect daylight from the overhanging rug.
25. Philip Steadman, *Vermeer’s Camera: Uncovering the Truth Behind the Masterpieces* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 128: “There are some perplexing features too in the lighting of *The Glass of Wine*, which the reconstruction wholly fails to reproduce or explain. The two casements in the far window are obviously shuttered. But why does the diagonal shadow on the far wall strike upward from the top of their frame? Why is the bench below the near window so sharply divided across its width into light and shade? And why is there such a brightly-lit patch on the wall below the sill of this window? I have no answers to these questions.”
26. The darkness of these surfaces has undoubtedly deepened over time, given the gloomy tone of the landscape on the backwall and the way the gentleman’s hair almost melts into his hat.
27. Another example is the black-and-orange floor tiles under the table, which appear relatively bright given the dearth of direct daylight reaching this area. The phenomenon of “over-exposing” certain elements appears in many eighteenth and nineteenth-century copies after seventeenth-century originals. It presumably results from a copyist’s ambition to model every passage with equal attention, thereby losing sight of the relative strength of illumination in relation to surrounding areas.
28. See n. 10:
 On the grouping of *The Glass of Wine* with *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*, see, among others, Paul Johansen, “Jan Vermeer van Delft: À propos de l’ordre chronologique de ses tableaux,” *Oud Holland* 38 (1920): 189–190; Lawrence Gowing, *Vermeer* (1952; repr. Gilles de la Mer, 1997), 113–114; Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 59–60; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 90, 92, 98; Slatkes, *Vermeer*, 45–49; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 80–82, 84, 87–88.
 Some scholars, including Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 84–87, date *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass* to the late 1650s, but the paintings’ reliance on Frans van Mieris’s *Man and Woman with Two Dogs* (“*Teasing the Pet*”) (fig. 54) and *The*

Oyster Meal (fig. 55), which are dated 1660 and 1661, respectively, suggests that Vermeer painted them in the early 1660s (see, for instance, Franits, *Vermeer*, 126).

29. *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* is Vermeer's only extant genre scene on a landscape-format support. In choosing this orientation, Vermeer possibly followed De Hooch, who re-introduced horizontal supports for his interior scenes in the late 1650s (*The Bedroom*, ca. 1658–1660, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Domestic genre scenes with a landscape format by other artists are rare in the early 1660s, though not unique.
30. See Van Suchtelen, "Fashionable Intruders," 177, who described the original curtain in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* (fig. 2) as "translucent blue"; and Krekeler et al., "Compositions in the Making," 78, who did not specify the color of the curtain.
31. Or the fact that an accumulation of the fabric impels the female figure in *A Woman with a Wineglass* to sit up straight, while her counterpart in *The Glass of Wine* leans back.
32. Some later genre paintings feature similar pink-orange combinations of a bodice and skirt: *An Interior, with a Woman Refusing a Glass of Wine*, possibly by Ludolf de Jongh (ca. 1665–1670; The National Gallery, London), and two paintings by Jacob Ochtervelt: *Two Women and a Man Making Music* (ca. 1675–1680; The National Gallery, London) and *A Woman Standing at a Harpsichord, a Man Seated by Her* (ca. 1675–1680; The National Gallery, London). All of these works ultimately reveal the impact of Van Mieris's *Duet* (fig. 24).
33. Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 92.
34. One reason the artist of *The Glass of Wine* may have chosen to align the picture frame on the back wall with the table is to prevent the male figure from overlapping a greater part of the lower right corner of the painting. Such an arrangement would have made the composition more closely aligned with that of *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* but perhaps too much so. In striving for a more original solution, the artist may therefore have shifted the painting to the left.
35. My thanks to Melanie Gifford for drawing my attention to the peak-shift effect. For more on this, see, among others C. Martindale, "Peak Shift, Prototypicality and Aesthetic Preference," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6, nos. 6–7 (1999): 52–54; H. M. Hanson, "Effects of Discrimination Training on Stimulus Generalization," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 58, no. 5 (1950): 321–334. Compare the way in which Metsu added circular highlights to the slipper in the foreground of his *A Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 103), which are not in accordance with the illumination of the rest of the scene and constitute a clear reference to Vermeer's pointillés; see E. Melanie Gifford, "Fine Painting and Eloquent Imprecision," in *Gabriel Metsu*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer, exh. cat. (Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2010), 172. On the use of the peak-shift effect in works by artists from Rembrandt's circle, see E. Melanie Gifford, "Rembrandt and the Rembrandtesque: The Experience of Artistic Process and Its Imitation," in *Rembrandt Now: Technical Practice, Conservation and Research*, ed. Marika Spring and Ashok Roy (Archetype Publications in association with The National Gallery, London, 2022), 84–94, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/media/5t0bre5n/rembrandt-now-online-pdf-170322.pdf>
36. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. was the first to publish the neutron autoradiograph of *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* and discuss Vermeer's pentimenti in the painting (figs. 50, 51), in "Woman with a Pearl Necklace," in *Johannes Vermeer*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., exh. cat. (Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague, and National Gallery of Art,

Washington, DC, 1995), 154. See also Laurenze-Landsberg, “Neutron-Autoradiography,” 220–224; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 115–116.

37. Sturla J. Gudlaugsson, *Gerard ter Borch* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1959–1960), 2:135; see also Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 81. The painting Gudlaugsson included in his catalogue raisonné of Ter Borch’s work (Gudlaugsson, *Ter Borch*, 1:81, pl. 122; 2:135–136) is currently in The Leiden Collection, New York, where it is catalogued as “Studio of Gerard ter Borch” (Fig. 52). Given that the same composition is known through several paintings of lesser quality (not by Ter Borch) yet served as the starting point for several contemporary artists, including Quiringh van Brekelenkam (after 1622–1669 or after), Jan Steen (1626–1679), Gabriel Metsu, De Hooch, and Frans van Mieris (see figs. 54, 55, 56, 58, 101), it is highly likely that painting in The Leiden Collection points to an original by Ter Borch that is now lost.
38. Gudlaugsson, *Ter Borch*, 2:170, first observed the relationship between Ter Borch’s *Gentleman Pressing a Woman to Drink* and *The Glass of Wine*. However, he assumed that Ter Borch drew inspiration from *The Glass of Wine*. Hence, Gudlaugsson suggested a date of about 1660 for Ter Borch’s painting, as he assumed that Vermeer’s painting dated to around 1660. A date of about 1658–1659, as listed on the website of the Royal Collection Trust, seems more apt for Ter Borch’s painting: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/7/collection/404805/a-gentleman-pressing-a-lady-to-drink>.
39. Otto Naumann, in *Frans van Mieris de Elder (1635–1681)* (Davaco, 1981), 1:60–61, acknowledged the significance of Ter Borch’s work for Van Mieris’s *Oyster Meal* but did not specifically identify *A Couple in an Interior, Served by a Page* as one the artist’s sources of inspiration. Ter Borch’s figure group, with a standing suitor in a large cape, courting a woman, who is seated nearly parallel to the picture plane, inspired Van Mieris to paint a similar figure group in *A Man and Woman with Two Dogs* (“*Teasing the Pet*”). Rather than extending his left hand to clutch a silver tray, the gentlemen grabs the ear of a little dog. In *The Oyster Meal*, Van Mieris loosely repeated the arrangement and changed Ter Borch’s empty silver tray into one laden with oysters. Ter Borch’s *Gentleman Pressing a Woman to Drink* served as inspiration to Van Mieris as well, given the similarities in composition, the suitor’s pushy—one might say inappropriate—behavior, and the woman’s cleavage in full view.
40. On the relationship between Vermeer’s and Van Mieris’s compositions, see, for instance, Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 84, 87; and Franits, *Vermeer*, 126. My forthcoming book on Vermeer will examine the intricate connections between Vermeer’s, Ter Borch’s, and Van Mieris’s paintings in detail.
41. Naumann, *Frans van Mieris*, 1:61, observed that *The Glass of Wine* “borrows certain elements from both the Van Mieris pendants in The Hague.” He argued that Vermeer based the suitor’s cape and broad-brimmed hat on the male protagonist’s outfit in Van Mieris’s *Man and Woman with Two Dogs* (“*Teasing the Pet*”). Naumann also argued that the white jug on the corner of the table was a borrowing from its companion piece, *The Oyster Meal*, which features a similar faience container in the same position. See also Adriaan E. Waiboer, “A View Beyond Delft: Johannes Vermeer’s *Woman with a Lute* and Its Relationship to Frans van Mieris,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 9, no. 1 (2017). DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2017.9.1.16](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2017.9.1.16).
42. Gowing, *Vermeer*, 116, was probably the first to link De Hooch’s *Young Woman Drinking with Two Soldiers* to Vermeer’s *Woman with a Wineglass*. De Hooch’s painting helped Vermeer shape the interior and the woman raising a glass.

43. Both the distance between the figures and the picture plane and that between the viewer's standpoint and the wall on the left in *The Glass of Wine* are greater than in Vermeer's *Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*. Hence, the artist of the Berlin painting depicted the woman marginally more frontally than is the case in the New York and Braunschweig paintings. The female figure in *A Woman with a Wineglass* sits virtually parallel to the picture plane. The one in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, however, is slightly turned away from the viewer; her chest is barely visible. In *The Glass of Wine*, the woman also sits parallel to the picture plane, but as she is positioned more to the right, we see more of the front of her body than is the case in the Braunschweig painting.
44. We should not overlook an anonymous, possibly contemporary painting at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh; see Dennis P. Weller, *Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Paintings* (North Carolina Museum of Art, 2009), 59–62. The Raleigh work freely quotes elements from, among others, *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*, *A Woman with a Wineglass*, and *The Geographer* (fig. 60). The woman in the foreground of this intriguing picture echoes the lady in *The Glass of Wine*, despite wearing a silver skirt and low-cut bodice and gazing straight ahead. Did the artist of the Raleigh painting consider *The Glass of Wine* an original work by Vermeer? Or did they lift the female figure from a composition by Vermeer no longer known to us?
45. Walter Liedtke has aptly argued that “Vermeer had an extraordinary ability to combine and revise artistic sources, so that one scarcely recognizes the connection between his invention and its prototypes”; Walter Liedtke, “The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer,” in *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer*, ed. Walter Liedtke, exh. cat. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2009), 17. The question of how Vermeer responded to the work of contemporary genre painters is central to my forthcoming book on Vermeer.
46. Sale, J(an). Messchert van Vollenhoven (widower of Margaretha Catherina van Lennep) and C. H. A van Engelenberg (part Messchert van Vollenhoven), Amsterdam (Roos), March 29, 1892, no. 14 (accessed via Lugt's *Repertoire Online*, no. 50649). *The Love Letter* originated from Margaretha's father, Pieter van Lennep, who may have acquired the painting through his wife, Margaretha Cornelia Kops. The Kops family once owned *A View of Delft* (ca. 1660–1661; Mauritshuis, The Hague). The Vereniging Rembrandt purchased *The Love Letter* days before the public sale in March 1892 from one of Margaretha Catherina van Lennep's heirs for 15,000 guilders and transferred it to the Rijksmuseum the following year. Like *The Glass of Wine*, *The Love Letter* was not among the twenty-one works by Vermeer that Jacob Dissius sold at auction in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696, having inherited them from his parents-in-law, Maria Simonsdr de Knuijt and Pieter Claes van Ruijven. The sale did include “Een Juffrouw die door een Mejd een brief gebragt word” (A young lady to whom a letter is brought by a Maid) (Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst*, 1:34, no. 7), which scholars generally believe to be *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58). See, among others, Willem L. van der Watering's provenance compilation for the entry in Blankert et al., *Vermeer* (1988), 186–187; Ben P. J. Broos, “The Love Letter,” in Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* (1995), 182–184; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 196, 197.
47. Albert Blankert, “Vermeer's Modern Themes and Their Tradition,” in Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* (1995), 39, argued that “The maid may be amused by the lady's embarrassment.”
48. On the interpretation of the seascape in *The Love Letter*, see Eddy de Jongh, “Johannes Vermeer, De liefdesbrief,” in *tot Lering en Vermaak: Betekenissen van Hollandse*

genrevoorstellingen uit de zeventiende eeuw, ed. Eddy de Jongh, exh. cat. (Rijksmuseum, 1976), 269–271.

49. Infrared reflectography and more recent macro X-ray fluorescence (M-XRF) imaging of Vermeer's *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58) has revealed that the artist originally decorated the rear wall with a type of wall decoration, probably a tapestry, featuring four figures; see Margeret Iacono and James Ivory, *Vermeer's Mistress and Maid* (The Frick Collection in association with D. Giles, 2018), 40–43; and Dorothy Mahon, Silvia A. Centeno, Margaret Iacono, Federico Caró, Heike Stege, Andrea Obermeier, "Johannes Vermeer's Mistress and Maid: New Discoveries Cast Light on Changes to the Composition and the Discoloration of Some Paint Passages," *Heritage Science* 8, no. 30 (2020), [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1186/S40494-020-00375-2](https://doi.org/10.1186/S40494-020-00375-2). In my forthcoming book on Vermeer, I will argue that the original background scene depicts the Visitation, a fitting backdrop to a genre scene of a maid delivering a message to her mistress.
50. See, for instance, Gowing, *Vermeer*, 152; Goldscheider, *Jan Vermeer*, 141; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 140–142; Wheelock, *Vermeer & The Art of Painting*, 184; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 156–158; Franits, *Vermeer*, 208; Schütz, *Vermeer*, 214–245; Franits, *Vermeer*, 208; Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 288. The only scholars who have dated *The Love Letter* earlier, that is before *The Astronomer* (1668) and *The Geographer* (1669), were De Vries, *Jan Vermeer van Delft*, 98 (ca. 1666); Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 59–60 (ca. 1667); and Slatkes, *Vermeer and His Contemporaries*, 73–4 (ca. 1666–1667). Following Sturla Gudlaugsson ("Kanttekeningen bij de ontwikkeling van Metsu," *Oud Holland* 83, no. 1 (1968): 37), Blankert and Slatkes considered Gabriel Metsu's *Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 103) as a *terminus ante quem* for dating *The Love Letter*. They assumed that Metsu responded to *The Love Letter*. Since the latter died in October 1667, *The Love Letter* would have to have been painted before that, which is highly implausible. The direction of influence is more likely to be the opposite, as I argue in "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?: The Relationship Between Two Dutch Genre Painters," in *Gabriel Metsu*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer, exh. cat. (Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2010), 43–44, 51n34.
51. Pieter J. J. van Thiel, in "Verkregen met steun van de Vereniging Rembrandt," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 31, no. 3 (1983): 197, quoted Bredius's undated letter from the archives of the Vereniging Rembrandt: "Ik hoop maar, dat wij geen malligheid doen, als we later de twee Vermeers van Six krijgen, is dit mindere stuk toch geheel overbodig." The "two Vermeers from Six" Bredius referred to are *The Milkmaid* (fig. 6) and *The Little Street* (ca. 1659–1661; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), which found their way to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in 1908 and 1921, respectively.
52. Gowing, *Vermeer*, 56, who further asserted that "Nothing (in *The Love Letter*) is lacking of the lively descriptiveness which Vermeer has skirted so cautiously in all his work."
53. John Nash, *Vermeer* (Scala, 1991), 82.
54. Note that one of the shadows, to the right of the woman's left eye, looks oddly positioned.
55. Note that none of the upper lips are missing in Vermeer's work of the late 1660s and early 1670s, including *The Astronomer*, *The Geographer*, and *The Lacemaker* (fig. 63).
56. The woman's earring may strike the viewer as typical of Vermeer's style, but it reveals a few idiosyncrasies when compared with those appearing in his work. The largest reflection, situated toward the top, has a round, rather than a drop-like, form. As such, it ignores the tapered shape of the pearl. The elongated highlight at the bottom, representing light

bouncing off the white fur, is relatively bright for a secondary reflection. It is certainly too long, as it is unlikely to rebound light originating from the lady's left shoulder. The source of the third reflection to the right, finally, remains undetermined. It is unlikely to come from her white cap, which appears largely in the shade.

57. In accordance with hairstyles at the time, young ladies in Vermeer's late paintings wear their hair tied back in a bun, either with a parting on the front and ringlets on either side (toward the back), as in *The Lacemaker*, or with small curls on the front, as in *A Woman Seated at the Virginal*.
58. The black blob is unlikely to depict a chignon, since it is distinctly darker than the lady's hair at the front. Moreover, such caps typically did not leave hair exposed at the back; see, for instance, Gabriel Metsu, *A Woman Reading a Letter* (see fig. 103). A handful of contemporary genre paintings depict women wearing a headband, which is strapped around the middle of the top of their head and tied below the updo, and as such, leaves a woman's hair exposed at the front and back (see, for instance, Jacob Ochtervelt, *Two Women Making Music*, ca. 1669–1670, Museum Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, Kassel). However, such hair bands are much narrower than what the woman in *The Love Letter* wears on her head.
59. On ermine fur on jackets in Vermeer's paintings, or what in reality would have been an imitation, see De Winkel, "The Interpretation of Dress," 329.
60. Around the woman's left underarm, the fur looks particularly drab. In the same area, the artist created the underarm by robustly juxtaposing a patch of dark brownish-green paint with areas in light and peachy pink, segregated by a strip in a brown midtone. A comparison with how delicately Vermeer painted a similar area in *The Guitar Player*, though lit from the right, underscores the difference in dexterity between the two artists.
61. Even more to the right, the young lady's fingers, pressing invisible strings, appear rugged when viewed alongside the tenderly sculpted left hand—lit from the right—of the musician in *The Guitar Player*. The nuanced transitions between directly lit, lightly shaded, and fully shaded parts of her fingers, palm, and wrist are absent from *The Love Letter*.
62. Note that in the bottom left corner of the marble floor, a number of the gaps between the black-and-white tiles reveal a light brown underlayer.
63. The most successfully modeled object is arguably the broom. Note, however, that the bottom part of the broom's hairs in the center constitute a reconstruction, dating from after the picture's robbery in 1971 (see n. 8: On the grouping of *The Glass of Wine* with *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass*, see, among others, Paul Johansen, "Jan Vermeer van Delft: À propos de l'ordre chronologique de ses tableaux," *Oud Holland* 38 (1920): 189–190; Lawrence Gowing, *Vermeer* (1952; repr. Gilles de la Mer, 1997), 113–114; Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 59–60; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 90, 92, 98; Slatkes, *Vermeer*, 45–49; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 80–82, 84, 87–88. Some scholars, including Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 84–87, date *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music* and *A Woman with a Wineglass* to the late 1650s, but the paintings' reliance on Frans van Mieris's *Man and Woman with Two Dogs* ("Teasing the Pet") (fig. 54) and *The Oyster Meal* (fig. 55), which are dated 1660 and 1661, respectively, suggests that Vermeer painted them in the early 1660s (see, for instance, Franits, *Vermeer*, 126).). By contrast, the scarce definition of the shoes, particularly in the black fabric, manifests in a wobbly illusion of three-dimensionality in perspective. Moreover, crude, half-loaded dabs in

white, red, and gray hint at unidentifiable decoration on the top of both slippers. Note that these observations pertain to the top parts of the shoes, which remained undamaged during the theft. A small part of the bottom center of the left slipper and the heel of the right slipper were lost and later reconstructed.

64. A similar fireplace surround appears in the background of De Hooch's *Woman Drinking with Two Men, and a Serving Woman* (ca. 1658; The National Gallery, London).
65. On a more minute level, strokes in green, overlapping those in red and yellow, cause the border between the two materials to look jagged.
66. The carved cannelures of the wooden pilaster below it are unequal in width, as are the spaces between them.
67. Van Loon et al., "From Palette to Perfection," 248, recognized "dark leaves" in the teal chimney hanging. Note that in the wooden cornice on top, the spaces on either side of the row of cannelures are unequal in width. Moreover, a vertical shadow to the right spills over the edge below.
68. A similar strip of illumination appears on the inside of the mirror on the back wall in Vermeer's *Woman at a Virginal, with a Man* (ca. 1662–1664; The Royal Collection Trust).
69. The only way in which the dark line would make sense is if the part of the inner molding closest to the picture, like the outer moldings, were (nearly) flat and therefore would not reflect the daylight entering through the invisible window on the left. This is unlikely. On the left side of the frame, the dark gray tone of the inside molding to the left signals that the polished ebony reflects the light coming from the left as well. However, judging by the wall, this side of the frame is in the shade. The only way it could catch daylight is if the molding were to protrude. If so, why do the horizontal bars only reflect light on the left, not the right? Does it fade out this quickly? Does the frame curve convexly? Rather than mimicking a light reflection they had observed directly, the artist o
70. One of the exceptions is *A Woman with a Balance* (ca. 1664–1665; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC), in which the painting of the Last Judgment on the back wall hangs relatively low, and the bottom part of the window is blocked by a shutter.
71. Even Gabriel Metsu, who responded to Vermeer by cherry-picking stylistic features, was aware that soft double shadows cast by frames was one of the signifiers of his style (Fig. 103).
72. Gowing, *Vermeer*, 56, perhaps had the juxtaposition of the gold leather and the yellow and blue garments in mind when he wrote that *The Love Letter* employs "contrast of tone and color of a sharpness which is never approached elsewhere in his work."
73. The first painting in which the signature appears is Vermeer's *Woman at a Virginal, with a Man* (ca. 1662–1664; The Royal Collection Trust). For more on Vermeer's signatures, see "Johannes Vermeer: Signatures," *Essential Vermeer*, accessed May 28, 2025, <https://www.essentialvermeer.com/references/signatures.html>.
74. Analysis of signatures needs to be conducted with caution, if only because they are painted, not written, yet often simulate—wholly or partially—handwritten letters. The inscription on *The Love Letter* is a case in point. While the "I," "V," and "M" form a carefully composed monogram, the extended serif at the bottom of the "r" mimics fluidly applied calligraphy. Vermeer's signatures tend to be small and frequently indistinct—and therefore hard to read during first-hand examination of a painting behind glass—further complicating their assessment. For more on the possibilities and pitfalls of the analysis of signatures, see W. Froentjes, H. J. J. Hardy, and R. Ter Kulle-Haller, "Een schriftkundig

onderzoek van Rembrandt signature,” *Oud Holland* 105, no. 3 (1991): 185–208; and Michiel Franken and Jaap van der Veen, “The Signing of Paintings by Rembrandt and His Contemporaries” (2022), in Wheelock, Nogrady, and Van Cauwenberge, *Leiden Collection Catalogue*, <https://www.theleidencollection.com/essays/the-signing-of-paintings-by-rembrandt-and-his-contemporaries>.

75. The three signatures on (the cupboard in) *The Geographer*, *A Woman Seated at a Virginal*, and the earlier *Girl with the Blue Shawl* (ca. 1666–1668; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) are most suited to comparison here, as they are clearly legible. Other inscriptions of the same type appearing in Vermeer’s late works, such as *A Woman Writing a Letter, with Her Maid* (fig. 70) and *The Guitar Player* (fig. 67), are either crooked (to fit on a piece of paper) or hard to read, respectively.
76. *A Woman with a Pearl Necklace* (fig. 50); *A Woman with a Lute* (ca. 1663–1665; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); *A Lady Writing* (ca. 1665–1667; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC); *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58). Note that the pearl necklace in *A Lady Writing* lies on the table in front of her.
77. Wheelock, *Vermeer & The Art of Painting*, 70–71, suggested that Vermeer initially included a basket with clothes in the bottom right corner of *The Milkmaid* (fig. 6), which he later discarded. This object is more likely to have been a *vuurmand* (fire basket), as argued by Gregor J. M. Weber in “In Search of the Perfect Illusion of Space,” in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 154. Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, in “De een en dertigste Vermeer,” *De Nederlandsche Spectator* (1899), 224, mentioned that part of a fireplace was visible to the right in *A Woman Interrupted at Her Music*. This was a later addition, however, and has since been removed during treatment in 1900–1901. See Krekeler et al., “Compositions in the Making,” 78; and Esther van Duijn et al., “Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer,” 364–367.
78. Vermeer adopted this type of *doorkijkje* from Nicolaes Maes’s (1634–1693) interiors of the mid-1650s. Wilhelm R. Valentiner was probably the first to link Vermeer’s *Woman Asleep* to Maes, although he assumed that the direction of influence was opposite; Wilhelm R. Valentiner, “Zum 300. Geburtstag Jan Vermeers, Oktober 1932: Vermeer und die Meister der holländischen Genremalerei,” *Pantheon* 10 (1932): 319–320. See also Gowing, *Vermeer*, 89; Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 90–92; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 74.
79. Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst*, 1:34, no. 5: “Daer een Seigneur zyn handen wast, in een doorsiende kamer, met Beelden, konstig en raer van dito.” Gowing, *Vermeer*, 152, argued that “One of his (Vermeer’s) lost pictures seems to have contained a vista into another room” in connection to *The Love Letter*.
80. Adriaan E. Waiboer, “A Clean Competition: Some Hypotheses on Vermeer’s Lost *Gentleman Washing His Hands*,” in *Aemulatio: Essays in Honour of Eric Jan Shuijter*, ed. Anton W. A. Boschloo et al. (Waanders, 2011), 407–418. The description of *A Woman Asleep* (ca. 1656–1657; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in the 1696 auction catalogue reads, “Een dronke flapende Meyd aen een Tafel, van denzelven” (A drunk sleeping girl at a table, by the same (artist)); Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst*, 1:34, no. 8.
81. Since the painting sold for 95 guilders, the fourth-highest price of all works by Vermeer on offer that day—after *A View of Delft* (ca. 1660–1661; Mauritshuis, The Hague) at 200 guilders, *The Milkmaid* (fig. 6) at 175 guilders, and *A Woman with a Balance* (ca.

1663–1665; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) at 155 guilders—we can be sure that it was one of Vermeer’s most striking works.

82. Eddy Schavemaker, “Doorkijkjes,” in Waiboer, *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting*, 226, estimated the date of Van Hoogstraten’s *View of an Interior* (“*Les Pantoufles*”) (fig. 100) at ca. 1655–1662. Given its close resemblance to *A View into a Corridor* (1662; Dyrham Park, Dyrham, South Gloucestershire), it is likely that Van Hoogstraten completed *View of an Interior* not long before he commenced his trip to Britain in May 1662.

The date of *A Gentleman Washing His Hands* is unknown. However, the fact that the painting was likely to be a response to Gerard ter Borch’s *Woman Washing Her Hands* (ca. 1655–1656; Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden) suggests that it dates at least to the late 1650s, when Vermeer began responding thematically to the Deventer artist’s work for the first time. However, the presumed complexity of the interior in *A Gentleman Washing His Hands* points to a later date, possibly even as late as 1668 or 1669, when he painted other genre scenes featuring male protagonists: *The Astronomer* and *The Geographer* (Waiboer, “A Clean Competition,” 407–418). Another argument for placing *A Gentleman Washing His Hands* toward the latter part of 1660s is that *The Love Letter* only draws on works by Vermeer from the latter part of his career. Then again, this is admittedly circular reasoning.

83. Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch* (Phaidon, 1980), 39. Some authors—including Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “The Love Letter,” in Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* (1995), 180—claimed that De Hooch’s painting bore a date of 1668 and, therefore, assumed the opposite direction of influence. Peter C. Sutton reported that during first-hand observation of the painting in 1996 he had been unable to find the date and therefore reverted to the date he had proposed in his monograph on De Hooch in 1980, which was based on the figures’ costumes; see Peter Sutton, “Couple with a Parrot,” in *Pieter de Hooch, 1629–1684*, ed. Peter C. Sutton, exh. cat. (Yale University Press in association with the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, and the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, 1998), 178; and Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch* (1980), 39. See also Eddy Schavemaker, “Doorkijkjes,” 229–230, 291n9.
84. Instead of, or possibly in addition to, Vermeer’s *Gentleman Washing His Hands* and Van Hoogstraten’s *A View of an Interior* (“*Les Pantoufles*”) (fig. 100).
85. In *Three Figures at a Table, and a Couple at a Harpsichord* (ca. 1675–1677; Lord Barnard, Raby Castle, Darlington) (illustrated in Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch* (1980), 110, no. 118, pl. 121), De Hooch based the spacious interior with two rows of windows, a table in the foreground to the side, and the couple, seen from the back, at a virginal on Vermeer’s *Woman at a Virginal, with a Man* (ca. 1662–1664; Royal Collection Trust). De Hooch’s *Couple Playing Cards* (ca. 1675–80; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) seems to repeat the juxtaposition of a silhouetted officer with a hat and sash, seated with his back to the viewer, and a brightly illuminated, smiling woman from Vermeer’s *Officer and a Smiling Woman* (ca. 1657–1658; The Frick Collection, New York). However, it is uncertain whether De Hooch actually based his painting directly on Vermeer’s composition, as this arrangement was not unique (see Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 72–75).
86. Peter C. Sutton, “Love Letters: Dutch Genre Painting in the Age of Vermeer,” in *Love Letters: Dutch Genre Paintings in the Age of Vermeer*, ed. Peter C. Sutton, exh. cat. (Bruce Museum and National Gallery of Ireland, 2003), 14–49; Gerard ter Borch, *A Woman*

Receiving a Letter from a Messenger (ca. 1657; Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek).

87. A possible intermediary was Gabriel Metsu's *Woman Tuning Her Cittern, Approached by a Man* (ca. 1659–1662; Museumslandschaft Hessen-Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister), which, like *The Love Letter*, represents a young lady in a fur-trimmed jacket with a cittern, seen from the front, pivoting her head to the left and directing her gaze at a smiling figure behind her, who holds one arm akimbo. Metsu's woman does not look worried, however. See Waiboer, "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?," 44.
88. On Metsu's response to Vermeer's work, see Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu*, 124–127.
89. See n. 50: See, for instance, Gowing, *Vermeer*, 152; Goldscheider, *Jan Vermeer*, 141; Wheelock, *Jan Vermeer* (1981), 140–142; Wheelock, *Vermeer & The Art of Painting*, 184; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 156–158; Franits, *Vermeer*, 208; Schütz, *Vermeer*, 214–245; Franits, *Vermeer*, 208; Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 288. The only scholars who have dated *The Love Letter* earlier, that is before *The Astronomer* (1668) and *The Geographer* (1669), were De Vries, *Jan Vermeer van Delft*, 98 (ca. 1666); Blankert et al., *Johannes Vermeer van Delft* (1975), 59–60 (ca. 1667); and Slatkes, *Vermeer and His Contemporaries*, 73–74 (ca. 1666–1667). Following Sturla Gudlaugsson ("Kanttekeningen bij de ontwikkeling van Metsu," *Oud Holland* 83, no. 1 (1968): 37), Blankert and Slatkes considered Gabriel Metsu's *Woman Reading a Letter* (fig. 103) as a *terminus ante quem* for dating *The Love Letter*. They assumed that Metsu responded to *The Love Letter*. Since the latter died in October 1667, *The Love Letter* would have to have been painted before that, which is highly implausible. The direction of influence is more likely to be the opposite, as I argue in "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?: The Relationship Between Two Dutch Genre Painters," in *Gabriel Metsu*, ed. Adriaan E. Waiboer, exh. cat. (Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2010), 43–44, 51n34.
90. Waiboer, "Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?" 43–44.
91. In fact, the paint handling of neither *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1) nor *The Love Letter* corresponds to that of works whose attribution to Vermeer has been questioned or rejected in recent scholarship, with the possible exception of *Girl with a Flute* (fig. 104). Some passages in this picture by a member of his studio or circle feature a type of paint handling reminiscent of that in *The Love Letter*, including the serrated edges caused by brushstrokes ending perpendicularly to borders of objects. Whether this means that the paintings are by the same artist requires further research. I am grateful to Melanie Gifford, whose questions, based on her close familiarity with *Girl with a Flute*, inspired me to delve into the possible relationship between this painting and *The Love Letter*. We agreed that more in-depth research, including technical examination, is needed to make more substantial claims about a possible relationship between the two pictures. On the rejected attribution of *Girl with a Flute* to Vermeer, see Wieseman et al., "Vermeer's Studio," DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3). The reattribution of the painting to Vermeer by the Rijksmuseum for the exhibition *Vermeer* (2023), as expressed by Roelofs, "Vermeer's Tronies," in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 213–214, is unconvincing, as the arguments presented to counter the rejection do not outweigh those offered by Wieseman et al. Note that Roelofs drew on elements in *The Love Letter* to justify the attribution of *Girl with a Flute* to Vermeer: "We also find several of the apparent anomalies in *Girl with a Flute*, such as the coarse upper layer showing visible brushstrokes and the thickly applied green earth around the face, in *The Love Letter*." These

observations are presumably based on findings by Van Loon et al., “From Palette to Perfection,” 248, 254, 257, who noticed a parallel in the use of green earth in shadows in both paintings:

As mentioned above, new research at the Rijksmuseum revealed subtle variations in the use of green earth across some paintings, such as *The Geographer* and *The Love Letter*. In fact, upon closer examination of the skin tones, there appears to be a stronger resemblance between the disputed *Girl with a Flute* and *The Love Letter* than between the latter painting and *The Geographer*. Notably, in *The Love Letter*, Vermeer applied the muddy green paints for the shadows in thick layers, which in some areas pooled and almost dripped. National Gallery of Art researchers made a similar observation in *Girl with a Flute*. While the validity of their detailed observations is acknowledged, interpreting the difference in the use of green earth solely as a sign of a different hand seems too one-sided.

92. On the attribution of *Girl with a Flute*, see Wieseman et al., “Vermeer’s Studio.” See also n. 1 (These concern *Saint Praxedis* (1655; Kufu Company, Tokyo, on long-term loan to the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo), *Girl with a Flute* (fig. 104), and *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal* (ca. 1670–1675; The Leiden Collection, New York). For a concise attribution history of *Saint Praxedis*, see Karl Schütz, *Vermeer: The Complete Works* (Taschen, 2020), 242. More recently, Christian Tico Seifert expressed his support for the attribution to Vermeer; see his “Early Ambitions: Vermeer’s Journey from Bible to Brothel,” in *Vermeer*, ed. Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber, exh. cat. (Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023), 128–130. On *Girl with a Flute*, see Marjorie E. Wieseman, Alexandra Libby, E. Melanie Gifford, and Dina Anchin, “Vermeer’s Studio and the *Girl with a Flute*: New Findings from the National Gallery of Art,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 14, no. 2 (2022) DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3), in which the authors ascribe the painting to a member of Vermeer’s workshop or a contemporary artist with intimate knowledge of Vermeer’s technique. More recently, Pieter Roelofs reattributed it to Vermeer, in “Vermeer’s *Tronies*: An Outward Gaze of Connection,” in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 213–214. On *A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal*, see Walter A. Liedtke and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal” (2024), *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed., ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge (New York, 2023–), <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/young-woman-seated-at-a-virginal>. More recently, Jonathan Janson rejected its attribution to Vermeer in his “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal: A Second Look,” December 11, 2024, *Essential Vermeer*, <https://www.essentialvermeer.com/misc/Young-Woman-Seated-at-a-Virginal-A-Second-Look.pdf>.) and n. 91 (In fact, the paint handling of neither *The Glass of Wine* (fig. 1) nor *The Love Letter* corresponds to that of works whose attribution to Vermeer has been questioned or rejected in recent scholarship, with the possible exception of *Girl with a Flute* (fig. 104). Some passages in this picture by a member of his studio or circle feature a type of paint handling reminiscent of that in *The Love Letter*, including the serrated edges caused by brushstrokes ending perpendicularly to borders of objects. Whether this means that the paintings are by the same artist requires further research. I am grateful to Melanie Gifford, whose questions, based on her close familiarity with *Girl with a Flute*, inspired me to delve into the possible relationship between this painting and *The Love Letter*. We agreed that more in-depth research, including technical examination, is needed to make

more substantial claims about a possible relationship between the two pictures. On the rejected attribution of *Girl with a Flute* to Vermeer, see Wieseman et al., “Vermeer’s Studio,” DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3). The reattribution of the painting to Vermeer by the Rijksmuseum for the exhibition *Vermeer* (2023), as expressed by Roelofs, “Vermeer’s Tronies,” in Roelofs and Weber, *Vermeer*, 213–214, is unconvincing, as the arguments presented to counter the rejection do not outweigh those offered by Wieseman et al. Note that Roelofs drew on elements in *The Love Letter* to justify the attribution of *Girl with a Flute* to Vermeer: “We also find several of the apparent anomalies in *Girl with a Flute*, such as the coarse upper layer showing visible brushstrokes and the thickly applied green earth around the face, in *The Love Letter*.” These observations are presumably based on findings by Van Loon et al., “From Palette to Perfection,” 248, 254, 257, who noticed a parallel in the use of green earth in shadows in both paintings:

As mentioned above, new research at the Rijksmuseum revealed subtle variations in the use of green earth across some paintings, such as *The Geographer* and *The Love Letter*. In fact, upon closer examination of the skin tones, there appears to be a stronger resemblance between the disputed *Girl with a Flute* and *The Love Letter* than between the latter painting and *The Geographer*. Notably, in *The Love Letter*, Vermeer applied the muddy green paints for the shadows in thick layers, which in some areas pooled and almost dripped. National Gallery of Art researchers made a similar observation in *Girl with a Flute*. While the validity of their detailed observations is acknowledged, interpreting the difference in the use of green earth solely as a sign of a different hand seems too one-sided.

93. In theory, Vermeer may have also have employed journeymen in his workshop. However, the odds are slim, given that his extant oeuvre, comprising mostly small works revealing the involvement of a single hand, does not point toward a working method that relied on the contribution of assistants. On journeymen in the northern Netherlands, see Maarten Prak, “Paintings, Journeyman Painters and Painters’ Guilds during the Dutch Golden Age,” in *Invisible Hands? The Rise and Status of the Painter’s Journeyman in the Low Countries c. 1450–c. 1650*, ed. Natasja Peeters (Peeters, 2007), 145–149.
94. Marjorie E. Wieseman, Caspar Netscher and Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting (Davaco, 2002), 24–25.
95. This discussion excludes Netscher’s *Toilet* (ca. 1658–1660; Kunstmuseum, Basel) and *Presentation of a Medallion Portrait* (ca. 1658–1660; Szépművészeti Museum, Budapest), as it is uncertain whether these paintings date from the period of the artist’s training with Ter Borch or shortly after.
96. While Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher*, 168, no. 4, added a question mark to her transcription of Netscher’s date of “1657,” Peter van der Ploeg listed it as 1657 in “Caspar Netscher, A Lady Washing Her Hands,” in *Dutch and Flemish Old Masters from the Kremer Collection*, ed. Peter van der Ploeg et al. (Fondation Aetas Aurea, 2002), 120. Netscher’s *Woman Washing Her Hands* is a pastiche of Ter Borch’s *Woman Washing Her Hands* (ca. 1655–1656; Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden) and *The Rural Postman* (ca. 1654; State Hermitage Museum, Saint-Petersburg). The first painting inspired Netscher to depict a young lady concentrating on her ablutions, but he reversed the figures horizontally. He changed Ter Borch’s young maidservant into a Black page. The switch in skin color is probably a response to Ter Borch’s *Rural Postman*, which features a

Black female servant in the background pushing aside the curtain of a bed. Netscher adopted this figure but reversed her and gave her white skin color. Furthermore, he appropriated the bare interior with an indistinct corner and door opening to the left from this painting by Ter Borch.

97. I have borrowed the term “style signifiers” from Melanie Gifford and Linda Deming Glinsman, “Collective Style and Personal Manner: Materials and Techniques of High-Life Genre Painting,” in Waiboer, *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting*, 81.
98. Gudlaugsson, *Gerard ter Borch*, 1:295, pl. 138; 2:147, no. 138, as Gerard ter Borch; Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher*, 54, 170–171, no. 6. Netscher’s *Guardroom* is a free variation of Ter Borch’s *Carousing Soldiers* (ca. 1656–1657; present location unknown, formerly Baron E. de Rothschild; Gudlaugsson, *Gerard ter Borch*, 1:282, pl. 123; 2:136–137, no. 123). Netscher inverted the foreground figures horizontally from the first painting but retained the soldier, holding a pipe, at the top of the triangle. Rather than looking down at his companions, however, Netscher made him gaze to the left, at a female servant on whom he may have loosely based the maid in *The Refused Letter* (ca. 1657; Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich), in which she emerges at an angle from behind her mistress.
99. The word “flat” is borrowed from Wieseman, *Caspar Netscher*, 54, who used it to describe the rendering of a page in Netscher’s *Toilet* (ca. 1658–1660; Kunstmuseum, Basel).
100. For instance, Vermeer may have assisted his pupil by lending them drawings he had made after Ter Borch’s and De Hooch’s works (figs. 52, 53, 56).
101. If the painter of *The Glass of Wine* trained with Vermeer, one would expect them to have completed more works in their teacher’s style during or immediately after their apprenticeship. Then again, it is not out of the question that they abandoned Vermeer’s style, which would have increasingly encountered competition from the stylized manner of painting by Van Mieris and his followers from the mid-1660s. They could also have changed careers or passed away, or their works have simply have not survived.
102. As concluded by the Rembrandt Research Project, following a collaboration with handwriting analysts of the Dutch Forensic Laboratory. See Franken and Van der Veen, “Signing of Paintings by Rembrandt and His Contemporaries.”
103. If so, one wonders why this artist’s output was limited to one, or perhaps a few, not-yet-identified works. See n. 101: If the painter of *The Glass of Wine* trained with Vermeer, one would expect them to have completed more works in their teacher’s style during or immediately after their apprenticeship. Then again, it is not out of the question that they abandoned Vermeer’s style, which would have increasingly encountered competition from the stylized manner of painting by Van Mieris and his followers from the mid-1660s. They could also have changed careers or passed away, or their works have simply have not survived.
104. John Michael Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu: A Web of Social History* (Princeton University Press, 1989), 246–257. Maria Simonsdr de Knuijt’s and Pieter Claes van Ruijven’s collection passed on to their daughter, Magdalena van Ruijven, and then to her husband, Jacob Dissius. His collection, including twenty-one works by Vermeer, appeared at auction in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696. Not all descriptions in the catalogue (Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst*, 1:34–6) are equally clear and can apply in some instances to more than one surviving work by Vermeer. However, “Een Juffrouw die door een Mejd een brief gebragt word” (A young lady to whom a letter is brought by a Maid) is likely to be

Mistress and Maid (fig. 58). See n. 46:

Sale, J(an). Messchert van Vollenhoven (widower of Margaretha Catherina van Lennep) and C. H. A van Engelenberg (part Messchert van Vollenhoven), Amsterdam (Roos), March 29, 1892, no. 14 (accessed via Lugt's *Repertoire Online*, no. 50649). *The Love Letter* originated from Margaretha's father, Pieter van Lennep, who may have acquired the painting through his wife, Margaretha Cornelia Kops. The Kops family once owned *A View of Delft* (ca. 1660–1661; Mauritshuis, The Hague). The Vereniging Rembrandt purchased *The Love Letter* days before the public sale in March 1892 from one of Margaretha Catherina van Lennep's heirs for 15,000 guilders and transferred it to the Rijksmuseum the following year. Like *The Glass of Wine*, *The Love Letter* was not among the twenty-one works by Vermeer that Jacob Dissius sold at auction in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696, having inherited them from his parents-in-law, Maria Simonsdr de Knuijt and Pieter Claes van Ruijven. The sale did include "Een Juffrouw die door een Mejd een brief gebragt word" (A young lady to whom a letter is brought by a Maid) (Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst*, 1:34, no. 7), which scholars generally believe to be *Mistress and Maid* (fig. 58). See, among others, Willem L. van der Watering's provenance compilation for the entry in Blankert et al., *Vermeer* (1988), 186–187; Ben P. J. Broos, "The Love Letter," in Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer* (1995), 182–184; Liedtke, *Vermeer*, 196, 197.

105. Adriaan E. Waiboer, "Vermeer's Impact on His Contemporaries," *Oud Holland* 123, no. 1 (2010): 51–64.
106. Apart from Ter Borch, genre painters of the third quarter of the seventeenth century, including Vermeer, appear to have sold most of their paintings to a local clientele—or their works ended up in Amsterdam soon after their deaths. This is suggested by the table "Geographical Distribution of Paintings" in Waiboer, *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting*, 267. See also Montias, "Vermeer's Client and Patrons," ch. 13 in *Vermeer and His Milieu*, 246–262. Judging by the early provenances of Vermeer's existing paintings and a handful of works listed in early sources that cannot be identified (see the provenance section of the entry in Blankert et al., *Vermeer* (1988), 171–197), his paintings ended up in Delft, The Hague, or Amsterdam during the artist's lifetime. There is no indication that many of Vermeer's works crossed the border abroad immediately after he completed them. The earliest painting to leave the northern Netherlands was probably "A small work with a young woman playing the clavecin (*sic*) with accessories by Vermeer," which appeared in the collection of Diego Duarte from Antwerp on July 12, 1682 (Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu*, 257, 358, doc. 415). Duarte's painting was possibly *A Woman Standing at the Virginal* (fig. 89) or *A Woman Seated at the Virginal* (fig. 65).
107. In this context, it is interesting to note that the members of the Rembrandt Research Project assigned *The Holy Family at Night* (ca. 1645–1646; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), which "long enjoyed great fame as a painting by Rembrandt," but which features "extreme" light reflections compared to Rembrandt's small nocturnes, to the latter's workshop rather than to a follower. See Ernst van der Wetering, ed., *Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, vol. 5, *Small-Scale History Paintings* (Springer, 2011), 384, 385–386.
108. Waiboer, "Vermeer's Impact on His Contemporaries," 58–61.
109. Compare *The Love Letter* to works by the Delft genre painter Johannes Verkolje (1650–1693) of the late 1670s, such as *The Temptation* (1678; Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister); those by Frans van Mieris from nearby Leiden, including *A Woman at Her Toilet* (1678; Musée du Louvre, Paris); and the collaborative

Woman Playing the Lute and a Man with a Viola da Gamba (1677–1679; present location unknown, illustrated in Eddy Schavemaker, *Eglon van der Neer (1635/6–1703): His Life and His Work* (Davaco, 2010), 484–485) by Eglon van der Neer and Adriaen van der Werff, who were active in Rotterdam at the time.

Bibliography

Binstock, Benjamin. *Vermeer's Family Secrets: Genius, Discovery, and the Unknown Apprentice*. Routledge, 2009.

Blankert, Albert, with contributions by Rob Ruurs and Willem L. van de Watering. *Johannes Vermeer van Delft 1632–1675*. Spectrum, 1975.

Blankert, Albert, John Michael Montias, and Gilles Aillaud. *Vermeer*. Rizzoli, 1988.

Duijn, Esther van, Sabrina Meloni, Carol Pottasch, and Ige Verslypen. “Retouching and Overpainting Vermeer: A Historical Perspective.” In *Closer to Vermeer*, edited by Francesca Gabrieli, Barbera van Kooij, Anna Krekeler, et al. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2025.

Franits, Wayne E. *Vermeer*. Phaidon, 2015.

Franken, Michiel, and Jaap van der Veen. “The Signing of Paintings by Rembrandt and His Contemporaries” (2022). In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed., edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady with Caroline Van Cauwenberge. New York, 2023–. <https://theleidencollection.com/essays/the-signing-of-paintings-by-rembrandt-and-his-contemporaries>.

Frøentjes, W., H. J. J. Hardy, and R. Ter Kulle-Haller. “Een schriftkundig onderzoek van Rembrandt signature.” *Oud Holland* 105, no. 3 (1991): 185–208.

Gifford, E. Melanie. “Fine Painting and Eloquent Imprecision.” In *Gabriel Metsu*, edited by Adriaan E. Waiboer. Exh. cat. Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2010.

Gifford, E. Melanie. “Rembrandt and the Rembrandtesque: The Experience of Artistic Process and Its Imitation.” In *Rembrandt Now: Technical Practice, Conservation and Research*, edited by Marika Spring and Ashok Roy. Archetype in association with The National Gallery, London, 2022. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/media/5t0bre5n/rembrandt-now-online-pdf-170322.pdf>.

Gifford, Melanie, and Linda Deming Glinsman. “Collective Style and Personal Manner: Materials and Techniques of High-Life Genre Painting.” In *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*, edited by Adriaan E. Waiboer. Exh. cat. Yale University Press in association with National Gallery of Ireland, 2017.

Goldscheider, Ludwig. *Jan Vermeer: The Paintings; Complete Edition*. Phaidon, 1958.

Gowing, Lawrence. *Vermeer*. 1952; repr. Gilles de la Mare, 1997.

Gudlaugsson, Sturla J. *Gerard ter Borch*. 2 vols. Martinus Nijhoff, 1959–60.

Gudlaugsson, Sturla. “Kanttekeningen bij de ontwikkeling van Metsu.” *Oud Holland* 83, no. 1 (1968): 13–43.

Hanson, H. M. “Effects of Discrimination Training on Stimulus Generalization.” *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 58, no. 5 (1950): 321–334.

Hoet, Gerard. *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen, met derzelver pryzen . . .* 2 vols. The Hague, 1752.

Hofstede de Groot, Cornelis. “De een en dertigste Vermeer.” *De Nederlandsche Spectator* (1899): 224.

Iacono, Margeret, and James Ivory. *Vermeer’s Mistress and Maid*. The Frick Collection in association with D. Giles, 2018.

Janson, Jonathan. “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal: A Second Look,” December 11, 2024. *Essential Vermeer*. <https://www.essentialvermeer.com/misc/Young-Woman-Seated-at-a-Virginal-A-Second-Look.pdf>.

Johansen, Paul. “Jan Vermeer de Delft: À propos de l’ordre chronologique de ses tableaux.” *Oud Holland* 38 (1920): 185–199.

Jongh, Eddy de, ed. *tot Lering en Vermaak: Betekenissen van Hollandse genrevoorstellingen uit de zeventiende eeuw*. Exh. cat. Rijksmuseum, 1976.

Krekeler, Anna, Francesca Gabrieli, Annelies van Loon, and Ige Verslypen. “Compositions in the Making: Vermeer’s Changes.” In *Closer to Vermeer*, edited by Francesca Gabrieli, Barbera van Kooij, Anna Krekeler, et al. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2025.

Kuiper, Luitsen. “Restauratieverslag van Vermeer’s *Liefdesbrief* / Report on the Restoration of Vermeer’s *Love Letter*.” *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 147–167.

Laurenze-Landsberg, Claudia. “Neutron-Autoradiography of Two Paintings by Jan Vermeer in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin.” In *Inside the Camera Obscura: Optics and Art Under the Spell of the Projected Image*, edited by Wolfgang Lefèvre. Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, 2007.

Liedtke, Walter. “The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer.” In *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer*, edited by Walter Liedtke. Exh. cat. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009.

Liedtke, Walter, ed. *Vermeer and the Delft School*. Exh. cat. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001.

Liedtke, Walter. *Vermeer: The Complete Paintings*. Ludion, 2008.

Liedtke, Walter A., and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. “Young Woman Seated at a Virginal” (2024). In *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, 4th ed., edited by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Elizabeth Nogrady

with Caroline Van Cauwenberge (New York, 2023–). <https://theleidencollection.com/artwork/young-woman-seated-at-a-virginal>.

Loon, Annelies van, Francesca Gabrieli, Anna Krekeler, Ige Verslypen, and Frederik Vanmeert. “From Palette to Perfection: Vermeer’s Distinctive Use of Blue and Green Pigments.” In *Closer to Vermeer*, edited by Francesca Gabrieli, Barbera van Kooij, Anna Krekeler, et al. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2025.

Mahon, Dorothy, Silvia A. Centeno, Margaret Iacono, Federico Caró, Heike Stege, and Andrea Obermeier. “Johannes Vermeer’s *Mistress and Maid*: New Discoveries Cast Light on Changes to the Composition and the Discoloration of Some Paint Passages.” *Heritage Science* 8, no. 30 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-020-00375-2>.

Martindale, C. “Peak Shift, Prototypicality and Aesthetic Preference.” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6, nos. 6–7 (1999): 52–54.

Montias, John Michael. *Vermeer and His Milieu: A Web of Social History*. Princeton University Press, 1989.

Nash, John. *Vermeer*. Scala, 1991.

Naumann, Otto. *Frans van Mieris de Elder (1635–1681)*. 2 vols. Davaco, 1981.

Ploeg, Peter van der. “Caspar Netscher, A Lady Washing Her Hands.” In *Dutch and Flemish Old Masters from the Kremer Collection*. Edited by Peter van der Ploeg, Epcó Runia, and Ariane van Suchtelen. Fondation Aetas Aurea, 2002.

Prak, Maarten. “Paintings, Journeyman Painters and Painters’ Guilds during the Dutch Golden Age.” In *Invisible Hands? The Rise and Status of the Painter’s Journeyman in the Low Countries c. 1450–c. 1650*, edited by Natasja Peeters. Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 23. Peeters, 2007.

Roelofs, Pieter. “Vermeer’s Tronies: An Outward Gaze of Connection.” In *Vermeer*, edited by Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber. Exh. cat. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023.

Schavemaker, Eddy. *Eglon van der Neer (1635/6–1703): His Life and His Work*. Davaco, 2010.

Schendel, Arthur F. E. van. “*De Liefdesbrief hersteld / The Love Letter Restored*.” *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 127–128.

Schütz, Karl. *Vermeer: The Complete Works*. Taschen, 2020.

Seifert, Christian Tico. “Early Ambitions: Vermeer’s Journey from Bible to Brothel.” In *Vermeer*, edited by Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber. Exh. cat. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023.

Sipkes, Klaas. “La restauración de ‘La carte de amour.’” *Crónica de Holanda* 29 (1973): 10–15.

Slatkes, Leonard. *Vermeer and His Contemporaries*. Abbeville, 1981.

Suchtelen, Ariane van. "Fashionable Intruders." In *Vermeer*, edited by Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber. Exh. cat. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023.

Snow, Edward. *A Study of Vermeer: Revised and Enlarged Edition*. University of California Press, 1994.

Steadman, Philip. *Vermeer's Camera: Uncovering the Truth Behind the Masterpieces*. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Sutton, Peter C. "Love Letters: Dutch Genre Painting in the Age of Vermeer." In *Love Letters: Dutch Genre Paintings in the Age of Vermeer*, edited by Peter C. Sutton. Exh. cat. Bruce Museum and National Gallery of Ireland, 2003.

Sutton, Peter C. *Pieter de Hooch*. Phaidon, 1980.

Sutton, Peter C. *Pieter de Hooch, 1629–1684*. Exh. cat. Yale University Press in association with the Dulwich Picture Gallery and the Wadsworth Atheneum, 1998.

Swillens, P. T. A. *Johannes Vermeer: Painter of Delft 1632–1675*. Spectrum, 1950.

Thiel, Pieter J. J. van. "Beschadiging en herstel van Vermeer's *Liefdesbrief* / The Damaging and Restoration of Vermeer's *Love Letter*." *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 20, no. 3 (1972): 129–146.

Thiel, Pieter J. J. van. "Verkregen met steun van de Vereniging Rembrandt." *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 31, no. 3 (1983): 195–231.

Thiel, Pieter J. J. van, and Luitsen Kuiper. "Purloined, Damaged, Recovered, Restored: Vermeer's 'The Letter.'" *Delta* (1973): 17–34.

Valentiner, Wilhelm R. "Zum 300. Geburtstag Jan Vermeers, Oktober 1932: Vermeer und die Meister der holländischen Genremalerei." *Pantheon* 10 (1932): 305–324.

Vries, A. B. de. *Jan Vermeer van Delft*. J. M. Meulenhoff, 1948.

Waiboer, Adriaan E. "A Clean Competition: Some Hypotheses on Vermeer's Lost *Gentleman Washing His Hands*." In *Aemulatio: Essays in Honour of Eric Jan Sluijter*, edited by Anton W. A. Boschloo, Jacquelyn N. Coutr  , and Stephanie S. Dickey. Waanders, 2011.

Waiboer, Adriaan E. *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work; A Catalogue Raisonn  *. Yale University Press, 2012.

Waiboer, Adriaan E., ed. *Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry*. Exh. cat. Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2017.

Waiboer, Adriaan E. "Vermeer's Impact on His Contemporaries." *Oud Holland* 123, no. 1 (2010): 51–64.

Waiboer, Adriaan E. “A View Beyond Delft: Johannes Vermeer’s *Woman with a Lute* and Its Relationship to Frans van Mieris.” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 9, no. 1 (2017). DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2017.9.1.16](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2017.9.1.16).

Waiboer, Adriaan E. “Why buy a Vermeer when a Metsu is available?’: The Relationship Between Two Dutch Genre Painters.” In *Gabriel Metsu*, edited by Adriaan E. Waiboer. Exh. cat. Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery of Ireland, 2010.

Weber, Gregor J. M. “In Search of the Perfect Illusion of Space.” In *Vermeer*, edited by Pieter Roelofs and Gregor Weber. Exh. cat. Rijksmuseum in association with Hannibal, 2023.

Weller, Dennis P. *Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Paintings*. North Carolina Museum of Art, 2009.

Wetering, Ernst van der, ed. *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*. Vol. 5: *Small-Scale History Paintings*. Springer: 2011.

Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr. *Jan Vermeer*. Abrams, 1981.

Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr., ed. *Johannes Vermeer*. Exh. cat. Waanders in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, 1995.

Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr. *Vermeer & The Art of Painting*. Yale University Press, 1995.

White, Christopher. *The Dutch Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Wieseman, Marjorie E. *Caspar Netscher and Late Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting*. Davaco, 2002.

Wieseman, Marjorie E., Alexandra Libby, E. Melanie Gifford, and Dina Anchin. “Vermeer’s Studio and the *Girl with a Flute*: New Findings from the National Gallery of Art.” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 14, no. 2 (2022). DOI: [10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3](https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2022.14.2.3).

Winkel, Marieke de. “The Interpretation of Dress in Vermeer’s Paintings.” In *Vermeer Studies*, edited by Ivan Gaskell and Michiel Jonker. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1998.