



Johannes Vermeer

Picture Study

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Christ in the House of Martha and Mary

Johannes Vermeer, c. 1654-1655



The Little Street
Johannes Vermeer, c. 1657-1661



Girl with a Pearl Earring
Johannes Vermeer, c. 1665-1667



The Art of Painting
Johannes Vermeer, c. 1666-1668



The Astronomer
Johannes Vermeer, 1668



The Allegory of Faith
Johannes Vermeer, c. 1670-1674



Johannes Vermeer

ARTIST BIO NOTES

These notes are provided to aid the teacher's own background research on the artist and his or her works. This is not meant to be presented to students as a list of facts and dates. When you first introduce the artist, tell students where the artist fits into the timeline of history, and where the artist lived and worked. Add a few more details with each new picture, but the information you share should be short and simple unless your students ask questions or wish to know more. Keep the main focus of your Picture Study time on observation and narration of the details of the picture.

Note: if a footnote appears with a fact that is not a direct quote, the fact comes from ONE source only.

LIFE & CHARACTER

Italicized portions indicate historical events affecting the artist's life

- ◆ 1632, born in Delft, a prosperous Dutch town at the time, to a lower middle-class family. Father, among other jobs, was an art dealer. Raised Protestant.
- ◆ 1653, married Catherina Bolnes, a woman from a high-class Catholic family. Unsure whether Vermeer fully converted himself to Catholicism. 15 children, 11 surviving past infancy.
- ◆ Worked as an art dealer like his father
- ◆ 1672-78, war between France and Netherlands causes economic problems in Delft
- ◆ With large family and not much fame, Vermeer suffered greatly financially
- ◆ 1675, died young (43). His wife attributed death to the stress of caring for large family with little income.
- ◆ Not well-known, sad ending, but now his art is greatly esteemed – his works housed in several European (Louvre) and American museums (National Gallery of Art)

TRAINING & CAREER

- ◆ No clear records of artistic training, many conjectures about who might have influenced; agreement that his father's art dealing must have influenced his interest in art.
- ◆ 1653, entered St. Luke's Guild in Delft, where he would have undergone artistic training (unsure by whom or for how long)
- ◆ 1650s, beginning of his works; not much fame outside of Delft, but visited by some international art collectors; no known commissions
- ◆ 1662, appointed headmaster of St. Luke's Guild
- ◆ 1672, appointed headmaster a second time

ART STYLE & ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Did not gain fame during his lifetime. Recognized later on for his masterpieces.
- ◆ Early works seem to display influence of Rembrandt in color and subject – religious and mythological
- ◆ Moved from historical, religious, mythological works to his more famous works: depicting scenes of daily life indoors. Though fellow artists similarly depicted indoor scenes, Vermeer's exceptionally beautiful works have risen over time above other artists' works into worldwide fame.
- ◆ Known for paying special attention to his inclusion of light into his works, often playing with light streaming in from a window
- ◆ Style: painting one or two figures, usually; symbolism woven into his scenes; cool colors; attention to detail
- ◆ Only 36 works attributed to him
- ◆ *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*: likely to be an early work based on the religious subject matter
- ◆ *The Astronomer*: located today in the Louvre; one of two paintings Vermeer dated

ARTIST BIO LINKS

<http://original.search.eb.com.ezproxy.phc.edu/eb/article-233670> (log in required)

http://www.essentialvermeer.com/vermeer's_life.html

http://www.essentialvermeer.com/timelines/timeline_vermeers_life_5.html

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/verm/hd_verm.htm

http://www.wga.hu/bio_m/v/vermeer/biograph.html

PICTURE SOURCES

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_\(Jan\)_Vermeer_-_Christ_in_the_House_of_Martha_and_Mary_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_(Jan)_Vermeer_-_Christ_in_the_House_of_Martha_and_Mary_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Vermeer_van_Delft_025.jpg

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_Vermeer_\(1632-1675\)_-_The_Girl_With_The_Pearl_Earring_\(1665\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_Vermeer_(1632-1675)_-_The_Girl_With_The_Pearl_Earring_(1665).jpg)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Vermeer_van_Delft_011.jpg

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johannes_Vermeer_-_The_Astronomer_-_WGA24685.jpg

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vermeer_The_Allegory_of_the_Faith.jpg