





Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty: The Art of Painting

No painting by Johannes Vermeer has elicited so many penetrating interpretations during the last half century as the *Art of Painting* (fig. 1). In most discussions of this high point of Vermeer's oeuvre the allegorical significance of the young woman, the painter's model, has been pivotal. Karl Gunnar Hultén in 1949 was the first to point out that she has the attributes of the muse Clio, as described in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.¹ Ever since Jan van Gelder expanded upon Hultén's observations in a lecture published in 1958 (with annotations by Jan Emmens),² the woman has been identified as representing the muse of history.³ In my opinion, this has put many scholars on the wrong track.

Van Gelder's conclusions have frequently been repeated or elaborated. He argued that because Clio is the muse of history, the artist is painting history, the representation of which was considered the ultimate aim of the art of painting, and because Clio is a muse—one of the goddesses who inspire the arts—the painter is also presenting himself as being inspired by history.⁴ This interpretation was so convincing that, like many others, Bob Haak, in his invaluable survey of seventeenth-century Dutch art, summed it up as follows: "There can be no question about the meaning of Vermeer's painting of an artist in his studio. . . . Real as it looks, the scene is in fact an allegory and the painter a personification responding to the highest calling of his art, that of painting inspired by history."⁵

Apart from his two earliest known works, Vermeer painted, with the utmost conviction and intensity, subjects that are totally unrelated to any form of inspiration by history. Thus it is highly unlikely that he would have represented this concept in a pictorial statement about the art of painting. The assumption that the relationship between the art of painting and history is in some way central to the subject of the painting, however, has led to rather complicated and forced interpretations. Although some authors have acknowledged that the fame proclaimed by Clio has an important bearing on the meaning of the picture,⁶ in my view this has not received due consideration or been incorporated into a convincing interpretation of the subject of the painting.

We know that the description of the picture's subject as the *Art of Painting* probably came from Vermeer himself: in legal documents drawn up by his wife and his mother-in-law after Vermeer's death, it is mentioned twice as "a painting in which is represented the Art of Painting."⁷ From the same documents, dealing with his wife's efforts to keep this painting in the family after the artist's death, we may assume that she—as well as her deceased husband—had been particularly attached to it.

Vermeer most likely painted this masterpiece for himself in order to have an outstanding specimen of his art in his studio.⁸ With such a magnificent example of his abilities he

Johannes Vermeer, *Art of Painting* (detail), c. 1666–1667, oil on canvas
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

would no longer disappoint important visitors, as was the case with the French connoisseur and diplomat Balthasar de Monconys in 1663, to whom Vermeer could not show a single painting.⁹ The *Art of Painting* was probably one of the works Pieter Teding van Berckhout admired when he visited Vermeer's studio in 1669.¹⁰ In this context it is interesting to note that the inventory drawn up after the death of the painter Michiel van Musscher in 1705 describes a painting in his studio of exactly the same subject, "representing the art of painting," which seems to have been intended for display in or in front of the painter's workshop.¹¹ This picture may have resembled Van Musscher's painting of an artist in his studio of 1690 (fig. 2), a work obviously inspired by Vermeer.¹²

Let us first consider what Vermeer might have wanted the informed viewer to understand immediately when pondering the subject of the painting. The beholder's attention is first drawn to the painter and his model. He sees an anonymous painter seated before his easel and looking at a model wearing a fanciful costume, crowned by a laurel wreath, and carrying a trumpet in her right hand and a large book in her left. The trumpet and the laurel—familiar attributes in numerous allegories—would immediately have been understood as references to fame and everlasting honor and glory and, in combination with these, the book as denoting the idea that fame and glory will be recorded and preserved forever in the chronicles of history. While the painter has already drawn the contours of the figure—a half-figure—it is the laurel wreath that the artist is capturing in paint on his canvas:¹³ the laurel wreath that stays forever fresh, the sign of being lauded with eternal honor and glory.

Even should the beholder recognize the model's attire as that of Clio, this will not have changed the impression that the painting is primarily about fame, glory, and honor, in relation, naturally, to the art of painting. In his 1644 Dutch edition of Ripa's *Iconologia*, Dirck Pietersz Pers translated Clio's name in the caption of the section devoted to this muse as "Honor-Fame" (Eere-Roem). She is the muse Honor-Fame, whose name Ripa explains is derived from the Greek word *klea*, to praise, and from *kleos*, which means honor,



or "the celebration of the things about which she sings."¹⁴

Karel van Mander wrote in the *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis* (1604) that, as *kleos* indicates, Clio stands for "desire for honor, or ambition and fame" ("eersucht, oft eergiericheyt en roem"); therefore she is "an incentive to learning." Like Ripa, Van Mander noted that it was Clio's invention to describe history.¹⁵ Also in seventeenth-century poems featuring the muses, Clio is sometimes simply named "eertzucht," the desire for fame.¹⁶ Finally, in Franciscus Junius' learned treatise about painting from classical antiquity, Clio is again described as the first muse, whose name means sound reputation and fame; Junius went on to say that she represents the initial stimulus that incites us to learn, as one pri-

1. Johannes Vermeer, *Art of Painting*, c. 1666–1667, oil on canvas

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

marily chooses to practice the arts to enhance one's honor.¹⁷ Hence she is the muse who proclaims honor and fame, and therefore the one who stimulates the learning and practice of the arts to the best of one's abilities. Furthermore, the writing of history is her invention, as it is a means of recording honor and fame for posterity.

To assume that in Vermeer's painting the female figure with the attributes of Clio represents history,¹⁸ referring to the notion that the artist should endeavor to depict history or should be inspired by history (history as meaning human events and deeds from the past as recorded in textual sources),¹⁹ is beside the point. Moreover, I do not think that Vermeer, by way of this motif, reveals his adherence to the idea that the painter should consider history painting, the painting of a *historia* in the art-theoretical sense, as his

highest goal.²⁰ It is also unlikely that the artist depicts the muse of history to demonstrate an aspiration to record the higher reaches of the human mind,²¹ nor does Clio somehow refer to the history of the Netherlands.²² Finally—to end this rough enumeration of interpretations in which some concept of history occupies an important place—I do not think that the juxtaposition of the young woman as Clio and the map behind her should be seen as a comparison of two different ways of pictorially representing and comprehending history, one by means of allegory, the other through visual description.²³

The painter has before him a model with the attributes of everlasting fame, glory, and honor, and through his art this model becomes the painted image of the muse who incites the artist to aspire to these qualities, while the painting itself records and proclaims the fame and honor of his art: "Art creates Fame and Fame proclaims her glory," as Adriaen van de Venne stated in a poem that sings the praises of his art.²⁴ The painter is depicting the never-withering laurel, symbol of immortal honor and glory: through his art, which allows him to record in a painting everything that is transient, both the painter and the objects depicted live on to be praised. As Philips Angel stated at the end of his little treatise *In Praise of Painting*: "Through our art we shall wrest ourselves from the voracity of mortality, and triumph in spite of death—the strangler of all things—and shall flourish from one century to the next without withering."²⁵ This one sentence encompasses the constantly recurring notions that the painter's art conquers mortality and death by capturing all things transient, and that the painter himself triumphs over death because his name and fame will endure.²⁶

Thoughts about fame and honor in relation to the artist and his art, particularly as an enhancement of the glory of his country or city, must have been quite a preoccupation for ambitious painters in this period.²⁷ To be considered "the Embellishments of our Fatherland . . . the adornment of Fame's Temple" (as the printer of Philips Angel's booklet described the painters),²⁸ obviously mattered to them. Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck*, published in 1604 to record the fame and honor of the art of painting and its practition-

2. Michiel van Musscher, *The Artist's Studio*, 1690, oil on canvas [whereabouts unknown]



ers, contained the first account on a grand scale of the lives and works of Netherlandish masters. In the title print of this book (fig. 3) we find the attributes held by the model in Vermeer's painting: seated at the upper right, Pictura is shown wearing a laurel wreath. She is painting Natura seated at the left. Below Pictura stands a figure proclaiming with her trumpets the art and artist's fame, and on the other side is another female figure in the act of writing to secure eternal honor and glory.²⁹

In the Netherlands, the chronicling of a painter's fame in relation to the glorification of his country or city had begun some decades earlier: between 1565 and 1570 Hadrianus Junius included in his *Batavia* (published in 1588) short biographies of famous painters from Holland.³⁰ In this notable book, the painters appeared alongside the scholars as the representatives of the "Hollandica ingenia": the illustrious men whom the province of Holland had brought forth. At the same time that Junius wrote these biographies, Ludovico Guicciardini's *Descrittione dei tutti paesi bassi* appeared (1567), in which many Netherlandish artists were enumerated.³¹ In 1572, Hieronymus Cock published a series of twenty-three portrait prints of famous Netherlandish artists, with laudatory epigrams by the humanist Domenicus Lampsonius (see fig. 10).³²

The seventeenth century spawned many descriptions eulogizing cities by extolling their past and present glory, their government, institutions, and famous "sons." Almost all of them included painters among the illustrious individuals who had contributed to the renown of the city; often they were the only group treated separately, apart from the famous scholars.³³ In some cases the lives and works of painters—even living painters—were described at length.³⁴ It must have been a great boost to the self-esteem of the painters to have their names, lives, and works outlined in these prestigious publications and to be officially considered important contributors to civic pride.³⁵

The way in which Jan Orlers introduced the painters in one of the earliest city descriptions is characteristic: he wrote that the city of Leiden, aside from the men of learning, "had always nurtured and reared in equal measure many different artists, especially many renowned and excellent painters. Their excel-



lence and deserved laudation can be demonstrated by the highly esteemed paintings one encounters both in and outside Leiden. They are therefore deserving and worthy of being written about and chronicled in all the books of eulogy and history."³⁶

Similar sentiments were often repeated: for instance, Dirck van Bleyswijck, in his *Description of the City of Delft* of 1667, introduced the painters as follows: "Let us consider now which famous painters, sculptors, and other excellent artists who compete with nature our city has also produced and reared, and who have, here and in many other places in the world, exhibited and left their work to their everlasting remembrance."³⁷ Unlike Orlers, Van Bleyswijck did not discuss the lives and works of living artists, but only mentioned their names, including, of course, that of Vermeer. However, he introduced this enumeration of living artists by stating that

3. Jacob Matham after Karel van Mander, frontispiece of Karel van Mander, *Het schilder-boeck . . .* (Haarlem, 1604), engraving. Prentenkabinet der Rijksuniversiteit, Leiden

their works will always be eulogized in every country, and wishing sincerely "... that after they have passed away, when death has snatched their artful brushes from their hands, they will earn even more praise . . . ; and, although Fame has already made their names illustrious, [he wishes] that, to be saved forever from the destructive scissors of Atropos, their names will be handed down to immortality in the books of memory of famous artists by some other eloquent pen according to their merits."³⁸

Van Bleyswijck tells us that, in addition to Karel van Mander's *Lives*, his sources were the recently published book by Cornelis de Bie, *The Golden Gallery of the Noble and Liberal Art of Painting*,³⁹ and information from several people who were knowledgeable in the arts. It is, I think, entirely possible that Vermeer was one of them. Vermeer would certainly have known the publisher Arnold Bon, who had his business on the market square, only a few steps from Vermeer's studio. It was Bon who wrote the laudatory poem on the death of Carel Fabritius that was included in Van Bleyswijck's book and ended with the well-known analogy that from the fire of this phoenix Vermeer arose to succeed Fabritius. Because in different copies of the same edition of Van Bleyswijck's book the last four lines of this poem were printed in two versions, Albert Blankert suggested that Vermeer himself persuaded Bon to change these lines during the printing process;⁴⁰ the second version places greater emphasis on the fact that Vermeer not only succeeded Fabritius but emulated his art. Vermeer's *Art of Painting* originated between 1664 and 1668, in the same period that Van Bleyswijck and Bon were working on this massive tome that appeared in 1667. This does not necessarily imply that there was any direct link between the two works, only that thoughts about the fame and honor of the art of painting and its practitioners may have been very much on Vermeer's mind.⁴¹

Vermeer probably also knew *The Golden Gallery* by the Fleming Cornelis de Bie (explicitly mentioned by Van Bleyswijck), published a few years earlier in Antwerp (1662). In addition to numerous painters from Antwerp and Brussels, De Bie also honored many painters from the cities of Holland. He treated very few Italian and French artists, which seems

to accentuate that he believed the truly talented artists of his century were Netherlandish. Among the artists whom he selected from the provinces of Holland and Utrecht were many with whose work Vermeer would have been well acquainted. In fact, Vermeer may have known some of these artists personally.⁴² The same motifs recur in virtually all of De Bie's laudatory poems: the art of painting brings immortal fame; fame proclaims its honor and glory; painting (unlike its practitioners and the things they represent) does not perish but preserves the renown of both the painter and the painting for future generations. Laurel wreaths that crown, trumpets that sound, and pens that describe abound in these panegyrics.

In addition to Karel van Mander's title print discussed above, in the seventeenth century several pictorial representations were produced in which the trumpet and the laurel wreath were associated with the art of painting.⁴³ The most ostentatious is undoubtedly the painting attributed to Michiel van Musscher, showing *Pictura* probably with the idealized features of Rachel Ruysch, the famous flower still life painter (fig. 4).⁴⁴ *Pictura*, alias Rachel Ruysch, is about to be crowned with a laurel wreath by a little genius, while Fame, with a palette in hand flying above her, trumpets the honor and glory of *Pictura* and simultaneously the art of Rachel Ruysch.

Ever since Van Gelder called the artist's attire in Vermeer's painting a "Burgundian" costume, it has, until recently, invariably been described as alluding to historical times.⁴⁵ This notion was rightly refuted by Hermann Ulrich Asemissen.⁴⁶ Suffice it to say that several comparable depictions of men wearing such slashed doublets are found in this period, some showing painters, as in a drawing of *The Painter in His Studio* by Leonard Bramer (fig. 5).⁴⁷ The costume denotes a certain bravura: it is undeniably fanciful and does not place the painter outside his time, but beyond the ordinary, which is fitting for a figure serving as the representative of this honorable art.⁴⁸

Also the beautiful map in Vermeer's painting, still showing the northern and southern Netherlands as a unified entity, has often been interpreted as referring to times past.⁴⁹ It is



4. Michiel van Musscher (attributed), *Allegorical Portrait of an Artist (Rachel Ruysch?)*, c. 1690, oil on canvas
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (Gift of Armand and Victor Hammer)



5. Leonard Bramer, *The Painter in His Studio*, c. 1650–1655, brush and black ink, gray wash, heightened in white on blue paper
Prentenkabinet der Rijksuniversiteit, Leiden

true that this map of the seventeen provinces, which was first published in 1638 by Claes Janszn Visscher,⁵⁰ did not correspond with the official political situation in Vermeer's time. It is entirely fitting in this context, however, because it shows the Netherlands as it was still embedded in the minds of contemporaries. As noted by Albert Blankert,⁵¹ from Constantijn Huygens' discussion of contemporary painters (written around 1629), to Arnold Houbraken's three-volume biographical opus published between 1718 and 1721, no distinction was made between artists from the northern or the southern provinces; they were all Netherlandish artists, in the words of Houbraken, "Nederlantsche konstschilders en schildersessen."⁵²

That something extraordinary had happened to the art of painting in this country must have been clear to many contemporaries. Around 1629 Huygens proudly wrote that no one ever attained a higher level of rep-

resenting the visible world with such lifelikeness than "his Netherlandish countrymen"—not excluding the ancients, he added.⁵³ Half a century later, Samuel van Hoogstraeten was convinced that "the art of painting in our own land, as in a new Greece, is at the height of its glory." Therefore, he continued, "as befits our fatherland, like an invaluable quarry, a pearl fishery, or a mine of precious stones, [the art of painting] can daily produce many rich jewels of cabinet painting."⁵⁴

Vermeer's painting clearly reveals with what kind of art the artist achieves honor and fame. It is the art that the painting itself represents: the perfect illusion by which painting is able to render everything visible, "the power of semblance that seems real" that has to "conquer and capture" the eyes of the art lover, to paraphrase Philips Angel.⁵⁵ Because of this, the art of painting surpasses all other arts, according to the arguments in the familiar *paragone* debate, arguments revived by Angel as well as by Cornelis de Bie.⁵⁶

Vermeer seems to indicate that the other pictorial arts (sculpture, drawing, and tapestry)⁵⁷ are inadequate in their imitation of nature—such products will always look like a piece of crafted stone or clay, a piece of paper with lines, or a woven textile—whereas painting can even imitate those works of art, while the reverse is impossible to achieve.⁵⁸ Only painting can create the illusion of a perfectly convincing space filled with light, of all those different kinds of materials, substances, and textiles, and of the human figure in its most beautiful and transient form, that of a young woman. With these illusions the painter is able to present to the beholder that which is mortal or perishable as though it can withstand the passage of time.⁵⁹ This affords his art eternal glory, as heralded by the laurel wreath the artist is painting.

The notions discussed above are represented in a painting that is centered on an image of a painter who is observing and on the verge of portraying a young woman who serves as his model.⁶⁰ She is the focus of the composition: the light, the lines of perspective, the painter's gaze, all direct the beholder to the young woman—not an allegorical figure, but a girl carrying the attributes that elicit the aforementioned associations. For this image of the art of painting as aspiring

to and deserving eternal honor and glory—which probably served as an exemplary specimen of his own capacities as a painter—Vermeer drew deeply from the rich tradition of representing a painter who observes and depicts a beautiful female figure from life, a tradition that always had the purpose of underscoring the dignity of the art of painting. His composition would have reminded the connoisseur of the portrayals of *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* and *Apelles Painting Campaspe*.⁶¹ In these scenes the artists also look at their model, recording her beauty in a painting. Since these themes show the two venerated “patrons” of the art of painting at work, they imply that the representation of consummate female beauty might be considered the highest task of the painter’s art, and that in turn this beauty inspires him to achieve perfection in his art.⁶² The image of *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* reveals that the painter could represent celestial beauty as though it were actually present, an object of devotion as well as of admiration for the power of the art of painting (fig. 6).⁶³ And in profane terms, Apelles—the prince of painters, thought to have been the greatest painter of antiquity—proved that the depiction of perfect female pulchritude and grace is paradigmatic for everything that painting can achieve.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century laudatory poems, for instance in the book of Cornelis de Bie, contemporary painters were praised ad nauseam as being equal to or having surpassed Apelles. Apelles’ name was synonymous for all that a painter could strive for. At the same time it would have evoked images of inimitable female beauty and grace; that was what Apelles had been praised for in particular. All the well-known anecdotes about Apelles concern the depiction of female beauty, especially of Venus, the personification of beauty and seduction. Apelles was even said to have died while painting a Venus that surpassed everything else. In this Van Mander elaborated on Pliny by adding the topos that it was as if nature could no longer tolerate having to yield to the paintings of Apelles. However, Van Mander concluded, this was to no avail, because by giving life through his paints, Apelles’ name became immortal.⁶⁴

The most famous story about Apelles is the one of his painting Alexander the Great’s



mistress Campaspe. Inspired by her beauty, Apelles painted her from life as *Venus*, creating a work that was long and highly esteemed from Alexander the Great to Emperor Augustus.⁶⁵ This painting, and the fact that Campaspe was given to him by Alexander, earned Apelles his eternal fame. In Joos van Winghe’s quite well-known depiction of *Apelles Painting Campaspe* (fig. 7), the painter’s model—accompanied by Cupid who strikes his arrow into Apelles’ heart—is not just Campaspe but also Venus herself, that is, beauty and grace personified. Van Winghe’s features can be recognized in the painter’s face, and a genius is about to crown him with a laurel wreath.⁶⁶

The way in which Van Mander recounted the story of Apelles falling in love with Cam-

6. Maarten de Vos, *Saint Luke Painting the Madonna*, 1602, oil on panel
Museum voor Schone Kunsten,
Antwerp

pasphe is quite remarkable. Van Mander elaborated on his source, adding that since Apelles knew more about beautiful women than Alexander, he was all the more prone to being ravished and conquered by love when looking steadily at his model while painting.⁶⁷ Thus Van Mander emphasized that the painter should be considered a connoisseur of feminine pulchritude, and precisely for this reason—combined with the fact that he has to study his beautiful model carefully—he is particularly prey to the seductive powers of an attractive woman.⁶⁸ Both notions seem to be stressed in Willem van Haecht's painting of a large Antwerp *kunstkamer* (with paintings from the collection of Cornelis van der Geest)—an allegory of the art of painting⁶⁹—in which Apelles is painting a quite decently dressed Campaspe (fig. 8); next to Campaspe stands a servant who holds a drawing of the

Judgment of Paris. The activities of Apelles/the painter echo what Paris is doing: judging (and being seduced by) consummate female beauty.⁷⁰ However, in the painter's case the result is an image of beauty and grace that will forever delight and seduce the eyes of the beholder.

That the depiction of female beauty may stand for the painter's highest goals is also evident from several allegories of painting in which Pictura is working on a Venus-like nude. In a little painting by Johann Rottenhammer for instance (fig. 9), Pictura, surrounded by other arts, captures Venus in paint while a laurel wreath is held above her head: through Pictura's depiction unperishable beauty can be forever admired.⁷¹ Several painters portrayed themselves as a contemporary Apelles in the midst of painting or having completed a Venus-like figure. Examples range from the portrait of Frans Floris in which he is holding up a small panel representing a nude (fig. 10), to Frans van Mieris the Younger's presentation of the three generations of Van Mieris painters (fig. 11).⁷² The old father Willem van Mieris is seated in the foreground, while Frans the Younger holds a portrait of his famous grandfather and simultaneously points proudly to the latter's portrait in Arnold Houbraken's book of biographies of Netherlandish painters. A painting of Venus stands on the easel.

Frans van Mieris the Elder made a playful variation of the theme in a painting of c. 1657, formerly in Dresden but sadly lost in World War II (fig. 12).⁷³ Here the painter is shown depicting a young woman who seems to be characterized as a contemporary Venus owing to the presence of a rather conspicuous plaster cast of a Cupid "flying" right above her head. The painter and his model are engaged in animated conversation, while the maid looks knowingly at the beholder. The painter's love is undoubtedly aroused by his model's beauty, which stimulates him to depict her with such beauty and verisimilitude that her image in turn will seduce the eye of the beholder.⁷⁴

All these painters are shown in the process of capturing or having completed the immortalization of youthful female beauty. This is precisely what Vermeer chose to represent in the *Art of Painting*. It is also what a painter in a poem by Jacob Cats claims he is able to do

7. Joost van Winghe, *Apelles Painting Campaspe*, c. 1600, oil on canvas
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna





when called upon to demonstrate the superiority and dignity of his art (which is part of an argument to convince his beloved that she should marry him rather than other suitors, among them a poet). The painter promises her that:

*This pleasant image of your youthful days
I will pass on, by way of my art,
To the age which follows ours.
So that your beautiful radiance, even after a
thousand years,
Will still be known in our kingdom;
And that your fresh youth will still
Be contemplated and adored by all neighboring
towns
So that you will live forever through my art,
Although your time of life has long been gone.⁷⁵*

Thus the painter emphasized that her youth-

ful beauty will forever be “adored” by anyone who looks at the painting. This is the kind of art that Vermeer brought to its highest perfection in most of his paintings: a breathtaking illusion of female beauty that elicits the love of the beholder for her image. One is also reminded of lines of verse by the poet and painter Adriaen van de Venne:

*Who is able to speak and sing about the merit
and fame
Of such a sweet art, full of benefit and delight,
That creates out of nothing a beloved
sweetheart. . . .
The eye desires, man yearns
And I long all the more for this reason:
Because I see an image that has neither body
nor speech,
Movement nor feeling, and is but semblance,*

8. Willem van Haecht,
*Collector's Cabinet with
Apelles Painting Campaspe*
(detail), c. 1630, oil on panel
Royal Cabinet of Paintings
Mauritshuis, The Hague



9. Johann Rottenhammer,
Allegory of the Arts,
c. 1610–1620, oil on copper
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,
Gemäldegalerie

10. Johannes Wierix,
Portrait of Frans Floris,
1572, engraving
From J. Lampsonius, *Pictorum
Aliquot . . . Effigies* (Antwerp, 1572;
4th ed. Th. Galle, Antwerp);
Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam

11. Frans van Mieris the
Younger, *The Three
Generations Van Mieris*,
1742, oil on panel
Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal,
Leiden





12. Frans van Mieris the Elder, *The Artist's Studio*, c. 1657, oil on panel
formerly Gemäldegalerie, Dresden
[lost in World War II]



13. Samuel van Hoogstraeten, *The Artist Painting for the Sake of Glory: Glorie Causa*, exterior panel on the short side of the *Perspective Box with Views of a Dutch Interior*, c. 1655–1660, oil on panel
National Gallery, London

*As if it were to turn its face against mine. . . .
The eye is never satisfied, desire is never
satiated,
As long as one remains involved with art and
love.*⁷⁶

Possibly stimulated by Van Mieris' painting, Vermeer set out to create an image that linked the pictorial representation of female beauty with the everlasting fame and honor of the art of painting. Perhaps he had also seen Samuel van Hoogstraeten's spectacular perspective box, now in London: if so, he may have been inspired by the now rather damaged panels on the outside (the two shorter sides) showing a painter working for the love of art, *Amoris Causa*, and an artist painting for the sake of fame and glory, *Gloriae Causa* (fig. 13).⁷⁷ The first portrays a female figure that seems to be a conflation of the personification of Nature (with her many breasts) and the muse Urania (crowned with stars);⁷⁸ the other, toiling at his easel, receives a golden chain and a laurel wreath. As Van Hoogstraeten before him, Ver-

meer also drew upon the rich tradition of painters at their easels seen from behind.⁷⁹ Instead of the conventional turn of the head (fig. 8), they both emphatically depersonalized the artist by not showing his face.⁸⁰ The identity of the painter is withheld from us: he is *the* painter. At the same time, however, we seem to be peering over the shoulder of the artist who presents all this to us, that is, Vermeer himself.⁸¹

Like a contemporary Apelles (and like Vermeer), this painter observes and paints a young woman from life, capturing her transient beauty, creating a perfect illusion that will always proclaim the glory of his art and of the art of his country in general: the enticingly beautiful image will be forever there to be "contemplated and adored," to quote Cats. Just how successful Vermeer was in creating this kind of painting is evidenced by the vast number of people who continue to adore his works in our time.

NOTES

1. Karl G. Hultén, "Zu Vermeers Atelierbild," *Kunst-historisk Tidskrift* 18 (1949), 92. Hultén interpreted the subject as a sophisticated joke, an ironic comment on baroque history painting.
2. Jan G. van Gelder, *De Schilderkunst van Jan Vermeer*, with commentary by Jan A. Emmens (Utrecht, 1958). As early as 1951 Van Gelder published a short notice in *Oud Holland* corroborating Hultén's conclusion and added: "The explanation is in my opinion very simple: the muse of History inspires the painter / the art of painting"; Jan G. van Gelder, "Jan Vermeer's Clio," *Oud Holland* 66 (1951), 44–45.
3. An exception is Hessel Miedema, "Johannes Vermeers 'Schilderkunst,'" *Proef. Werkgroepbulletin* (September 1972), 67–76, esp. 71–72.
4. Van Gelder 1958, 11–19; see also the annotations by Emmens, 23–24.
5. Bob Haak, *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century* (New York and Amsterdam, 1984), 449–450. See also Albert Blankert, *Johannes Vermeer van Delft 1632–1675* (Utrecht and Antwerp, 1975), 70; Albert Blankert, John Michael Montias, and Gilles Aillaud, *Vermeer* (Amsterdam, 1987), 124; and Peter Sutton, "Introduction," in *Masters of Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, ed. Peter Sutton [exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Fine Art, Gemäldegalerie, and the Royal Academy] (Philadelphia, Berlin, and London, 1984), LV.
6. Emmens emphasized in his annotation 15 (Van Gelder 1958, 23–24) that Clio also represented fame (referring to Franciscus Junius; see below, note 17). Before the young model was identified as Clio, Elisabeth Neurdenburg ("Johannes Vermeer. Eenige opmerkingen naar aanleiding van de nieuwste studies over den Delftschen Vermeer," *Oud Holland* 54 [1942], 70–71) was the first to discuss the female figure as the personification of fame. See also Hans Sedlmayr, "Jan Vermeer: Der Ruhm der Malkunst," first published in *Festschrift für Hans Jantzen* (Berlin, 1951), but here cited from the reprint in Hans Sedlmayr, *Kunst und Wahrheit* (Hamburg, 1958), 165–167. Authors who stressed that Clio was also the muse who proclaims fame include Miedema (1972), 72; Lawrence Gowing, *Vermeer* (London, 1972), 139; William E. Hubschmitt, "The Art of Painting: An Iconographic Examination of 'De Schilderconst' by Johannes Vermeer of Delft" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Binghamton; Ann Arbor, 1987), 199–203; John Michael Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu* (Princeton, 1989), 201; Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* (New Haven and London, 1995), 134.
7. "... een schilderije waerinne wert uitgebeeld de Schilderconst." For the documents see Blankert 1987, 213 (24 February 1676; Catharina Bolnes) and 215 (12 April 1677; Maria Thins).
8. The hypothesis that the painting was meant for the new building of the Saint Luke's Guild seems unlikely (for instance, Blankert 1987, 124–126 and Hans Ulrich Asemissen, *Jan Vermeer. Die Malkunst, Aspekte eines Berufsbildes* [Frankfurt am Main, 1993], 23–24). Who would have refused (or returned) such a painting? A quarrel with the guild at the time of the picture's completion does not seem very probable either, since Vermeer was head of the guild in 1662–1663 and 1670–1671 (before and after the creation of the *Art of Painting*).
9. Balthasar de Monconys, *Journal des voyages de Monsieur de Monconys*, 2 vols. (Lyons, 1666), 2:149: "Vermer qui n'avoit point de ses ouvrages." The fact that we know two sources in which a visit by an important connoisseur to Vermeer's studio is mentioned means that such visits must have occurred quite often.
10. On this document, see Ben Broos, "'Un celebre Peijntre nommê Verme[e]r,'" in *Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art and Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis] (Washington and The Hague, 1995), 49–50. According to Teding van Berckhout's diary, he visited Vermeer (whom he calls an "excellent" and "celebre" painter) twice; he wrote that Vermeer showed him "quelques curiositéz de sa main" and during his second visit "quelques eschantillons de son art dont la partie la plus extraordinayre et la plus curieuse consiste dans la perspective." Broos suggested that the *Art of Painting* was one of the paintings Teding van Berckhout had seen.
11. Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare* (The Hague, 1915–1922), 993. The painting was described as "een uytsetbort verbeeldende de schilderconst" and was located in the "schilderskamer" (painter's studio). The precise meaning of the term "uytsetbort" is not entirely clear; Bredius translated it, erroneously I think, as "Aushängeschild." However, it should not be mistaken for a shop signboard, which was then, as now, called an "uithangbord." The verb "uytsetten" was used in the seventeenth century especially for the display of merchandise by the shopkeeper or tradesman in his shop window or on the street, and could also be used for displaying or exhibiting works of art (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal* 18.3:2407). I am certainly not suggesting that Vermeer's painting was meant as a kind of signboard to put outside, but only that, in a way, the function might have been comparable to Van Musscher's painting—as a showpiece for the display of his art to art lovers and prospective clients. Van Musscher's work might have been the same as the one that was sold in the sale of his paintings in 1706 as "A painter in his studio, very beautiful" (Gerard Hoet and Pieter Terwesten, *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen, met derzelver pryzen*, 3 vols. [The Hague, 1752–1770], 2:90, no. 11).
12. Van Gelder 1958 (8, fig. 1) reproduced this painting by Van Musscher as a comparison with Vermeer's work.
13. The painting that the artist is working on is quite unusual for Vermeer: the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* comes closest in scale and size. Looking at what the painter is doing as if it were absolutely "realistic," we would have to conclude that there will be no place for the trumpet and the map in the painting of the half-length figure he is working on. Vermeer's

main purpose must have been to emphasize the laurel wreath. Therefore, I also think that it makes no sense to assume that he consciously depicted a method of painting that is not his own (Daniel Arasse, *Vermeer: Faith in Painting* [Princeton, 1994], 52) or an old-fashioned way of painting (Jørgen Wadum, "Vermeer in Perspective," in Washington and The Hague 1995, 67). As a matter of fact, exactly the same method [with a light ground, an underdrawing in white chalk, and only a part of the painting already entirely "filled in"] is shown by Frans van Mieris in his painting of *The Artist's Studio* (fig. 12).

14. Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia of uytbeeldinghe des verstands*, trans. Dirck Pietersz Pers (Amsterdam, 1644), 338: "CLIO. Eere-Roem. Dese Musa is Clio van 't Griex woort Klea genoemt, 't welck bediet prijsen, of van Kleos 't welck eere bediet, of viering van de dingen, waar van zy singht." It is remarkable that from Ripa's account of Clio, only the description of her attributes (the laurel wreath, trumpet, and book of Thucydides) has always been cited.

15. Karel van Mander, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis*, in his *Het schilder-boeck* (Haarlem, 1603–1604), fol. 43v: "Clio is, so 't Griex woort Kleos mede brenght, eersucht, oft eergiericheyt en roem, gelijk als wesende eenen prikkel, om tot leeren geport te worden: haer vindinghe was, gheschiedenissen te beschrijven."

16. See, for instance, *Den Nederduytschen Helicon* (Alkmaar, 1610), 50–51: in a poem "explaining" the roles of the nine muses (called "Choor, ofte versamelinghe der Muses"), the first muse, Clio, is exclusively presented as the "eer-sucht" or "eergierigheyt" that inspires learning and the practice of the arts.

17. Franciscus Junius, *De Schilder-konst der Oude* (Middelburg, 1641), 13–14: "De eerste . . . is Clio; . . . 't welck enen goeden naem ende faem beteyckent; soo dat ons met desen naem d'eerste beweginghe die ons tot het leeren aendrijft te kennen wordt ghegeven, aengesien de wetenschap der Konsten meer ghesocht wordt om sijn eere daer door te verbreyden." The English version is as follows: "The first . . . is named Clio . . . signifying fame: and by this name there is insinuated unto us the first and greatest motive that stirreth in us a desire of learning; seeing the knowledge of good Arts and Sciences doth extend our fame to the memory of late posterities" (*The Painting of the Ancients* [London, 1638], 16).

18. Samuel van Hoogstraeten indeed called Clio in the first place "de Historieschryfster" ("the Author-ess of History") in his treatise of 1678. However, this is a special case. He had to make every muse a patroness for one of his chapters on different aspects of the art of painting. In this case it was quite natural to choose Clio, the one who invented the writing of history, for the third chapter devoted to the subjects of history painting (that he did not give her the first chapter, although she is the first muse, makes clear that he used the muses freely for his own ends). In the book's title print, on the other hand, Clio is the one who shows the artists "the beauty of the Visible World." Samuel van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de*

hooge schoole der schilderkonst (Rotterdam, 1678), 68–69 (the pages of the title print and of the explanatory poem are not numbered).

19. For instance: Van Gelder 1958, 11; Kurt Badt, "Modell und Maler" von Vermeer (Cologne, 1961), 102; Blankert 1975, 70 (and 1987, 144); Evert van Straaten, *Johannes Vermeer 1632–1675. Een Delfts schilder en de cultuur van zijn tijd* (The Hague, 1977), 83; Haak 1984, 449–450; Josua Bruyn, "Mittelalterliche 'doctrina exemplaris' und Allegorie als Komponente des sog. Genrebildes," in *Holländische Genremalerei im 17. Jahrhundert Symposium Berlin 1984*, ed. Henning Bock and Thomas W. Gaechtgens (Berlin, 1984), 51; Hubschmitt 1987, 189–198.

20. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Jan Vermeer* (New York, 1981), 98; Hans-Joachim Raupp, *Künstlerbildnis und Künstlerporträts in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert* (Hildensheim, Zurich, and New York, 1984), 326; Sutton 1984, lv.

21. Wheelock 1995, 131. That this ideal seems rather removed from Vermeer's works was solved by stating that "the essence of Vermeer's art had always been to reach below the superficial level of reality to probe those essential truths of human existence." Compare also Leonard J. Slatkes, *Vermeer and His Contemporaries* (New York, 1981), 78, who suggested "that, as the subject of the painting indicates, Vermeer saw himself as a history painter in the purest sense of the word."

22. For the "nostalgic" interpretation (Vermeer looking back to better times for painters under the Habsburg empire), see in the first place Charles de Tolnay, "L'Atelier de Vermeer," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 41 (1953), 265–272 (see also below, notes 45 and 49). For other references to the history of the country, see Hubschmitt 1987, 205–209 and Asemissen 1988, 52–56.

23. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1983), 165–167. See also Celeste Brusati, *Johannes Vermeer* (New York, 1993), 5; and Arasse 1994, 47–48 (an inventive elaboration on Alpers' concept).

24. Adriaen van de Venne, "Zeeusche mey-clacht ofte schyn-kycker," in his *Zeeusche Nachtegael* (Middelburg, 1623), 66: "De Cunst verweect de Faem, de Faem vermelt haer lof." See also note 76 below.

25. Philips Angel, *Lof der schilder-konst* (Leiden, 1642), 58: "Wy . . . sullen de verslindinghe der sterflickheyt door onse Konst ontwarstelen, ende in spijte der breeck-neck aller dingen (de doodt) overwinnen; ende van eeuw tot eeuw onverwelckelick bloeyen." See also Eric Jan Sluijter, *De lof der schilder-kunst. Over schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613–1675) en een traktaat van Philips Angel uit 1642* (Hilversum, 1993), 32–34 (cited as 1993a in the following notes); and Eric Jan Sluijter, "The Painter's Pride: The Art of Capturing Transience in Self-Portraits from Isaac van Swanenburgh to David Bailly," in *Fashioning the Individual: Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance*, ed. Karl Enekenl (Amsterdam, 1998).

26. Compare also the print by Hendrick Hondius I, dated 1626 (F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish*

Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, vols. 1– [Amsterdam, 1949–], 9:87, on which is written three times “The end crowns the work” (below the print this is written over “Memento Mori”). These words accompany a view in an artist’s studio with a panel standing on an easel and many accoutrements of the art of painting, drawing, and engraving in the foreground, while in the middle, on a pile of books, is a skull crowned with a laurel wreath. See Barbara Hezzen-Stoll, “Een Vanitasstillven van Jacques de Gheyn II uit 1621: Afspiegeling van Neostoïsche Denkbeelden,” *Oud Holland* 93 (1979), 218.

27. That the fame of the art of painting of the Netherlands was an important concept in Vermeer’s painting was already emphasized by Neurdenburg (1942, 70–71) and Sedlmayr (1951; ed. 1958, 165–166); see also Blankert 1987, 124. Wheelock referred to contemporary books such as the city descriptions as conveying the notion that painting brought fame to the city or country: Wheelock 1995, 129 and 134.

28. Angel 1642, “Preface of the Printer” (no page number): “Vercierceels van ons Vaderland . . . tot op-pronckinge van des Faems Tempel.”

29. On Van Mander’s title print, see Hessel Miedema, *Karel van Mander. Den Grondt der edel vry schilderconst*, 2 vols. (Utrecht, 1973), 2:315–317.

30. Hadrianus Junius, *Batavia* (Leiden, 1588), 238–240.

31. Ludovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione dei tutti paesi bassi* (Antwerp, 1567), 97–100; Guicciardini did not write biographies but only short characterizations, especially the enlarged Dutch translation of 1612 must have stimulated the many seventeenth-century Dutch city chronicles. See Sluijter 1993a, 11–12 and 78.

32. For this series, called *Pictorum aliquot celebrium germaniae inferioris effigies*, see Raupp 1984, 18–23.

33. See Sluijter 1993a, 11–12 and 78.

34. This is especially true of Jan Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden* (Leiden, 1614; 2d enlarged ed. 1641) and to a lesser extent of Theodorus Schreveilius, *Harlemias* (Haarlem, 1648).

35. See Sluijter 1993a, 11–15 and Truus van Bueren, “Het Florence van het Noorden. De roem van de Haarlemse schilderkunst in de 17de eeuw,” in *De trots van Haarlem. Promotie van een stad in kunst en historie*, ed. Koos Levy-van Halm et al. [exh. cat., Frans Hals Museum and Teylers Museum] (Haarlem, 1995), 63–70.

36. Orlers 1641, 352 (1614 ed., 259): “in gelijcker maten ende wijze en is de selvige niet ledich geweest in het voeden ende op te brengen vele ende verscheyden Constenaren: insonderhey in het voortbrengen van vele vermaerde ende treffelicke Schilders, wiens waerdicheydt ende verdienden lof, genoegsaem met hare overschoone ende onwaerdeerlicke Schilderijen, soo binnen als buyten der Stede wesende, bewesen kan weren: daer mede sy verdient hebben ende waerdich zijn, omme in all Loff ende Tijd-Boecken opgeschreven ende gheregistreert te worden.”

37. Dirck van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (Delft, 1667), 842: “Laet ons nu gaen sien wat vermaerde Schilders, Beeld-houwers en andere uytstekende, en gelijk als de natuyr-trotsende konstenaren, onse Stadt oock voort-gebracht en uytgelevert heeft, die verscheyde van hare Konstrijcke en verwonderens-waerdighe wercken van hare handen hier en daer in de wereld ten toon ende der gedachtenisse hebben nagelaten.”

38. Van Bleyswijck 1667, 859: “sy, na haer overlyden, als de Doot hare konstige pincelen uyt haere handen sal hebben weg-geruckt, noch meerdere lof sullen verdienen, als ick van den afgestorvenen hebbe geseyd: en dat, gelijk de Faem hare namen albereyts roemruchtbaer heeft gemaect, de selfde oock naer verdiensten, door d’een of d’ander wel-schryvende pen, in de gedacht-boecken der vermaerde Konstenaren, d’onsterflijckheyt sullen overgelevert werden, om voor de verderflijcke Schaer van Atropos eeuwig bevrijd te zijn.”

39. Cornelis de Bie, *Het gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilderconst* (Antwerp, 1662).

40. Van Bleyswijck 1667, 853–854. Blankert 1987, 154 and 211.

41. Broos (Washington and The Hague 1995, 51–52) suggested that from this supposed changing of the lines of Bon’s poem, as well as from the *Art of Painting*, it appears that Vermeer was not modest about his art.

42. Vermeer certainly knew Leonard Bramer personally. Other Delft artists praised by De Bie were Michiel van Mierevelt and Palamedes Palamedesz (both dead at that time). There are a remarkable number of artists from Utrecht (Abraham and Cornelis Bloemaert, Hendrick ter Brugghen, Dirck van Baburen, Jan Both, Jan van Bylert, Gerard van Honthorst, Paulus Moreelse, Cornelis van Poelenburgh) and from Leiden (David Bailly, Gerrit Dou, Jan Lievens, Frans van Mieris, Rembrandt).

43. One of the earliest and best known is the engraving of Jan Saenredam after Bartholomeus Spranger of 1600, made as an *in memoriam* for his deceased wife, and including Spranger himself at the left, surrounded by the arts. A genius with a laurel wreath and Fame with her trumpet fly above his head, both referring to the art of Spranger who preserved the image of his wife, in the medallion to the right, for eternity (see Sluijter 1998). Many examples are illustrated in Ger Luijten, “De Triomf van de Schilderkunst: een titeltekening van Gesina ter Borch en een toneelstuk,” *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 36 (1988), 283–314, esp. figs. 15, 24, 30, 31, 32. As a matter of fact, the figure of Pictura adorning the right side of the cartouche in the upper left corner of Claes Jansz Visscher’s large map in the background of Vermeer’s painting (right above the head of the model) is also crowned with a laurel wreath.

44. On this painting, see also Eddy de Jongh, *Faces of the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, Kumamoto Prefectural Museum of Art and Tokyo Station Gallery, and Kunsthal, Rotterdam] (The Hague, 1994), English supplement, 36 and

65–66. The painting has also been attributed to Constantijn Netscher (as in Luijten 1988, fig. 32).

45. The first to note that the costume was not from Vermeer's own time was Charles de Tolnay (1953, n.5).

46. Asemissen 1993, 38–40. Asemissen referred to the many genre paintings of the 1630s with men wearing slashed doublets and to the fact that this item of clothing must have been fashionable in France and England. More relevant are his comparisons with the young officer in a painting by Caspar Netscher of 1665–1666 (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest), with the *Artist's Workshop* by Adriaen van Ostade of 1656 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), and with the drawing of a *Painter in His Studio* by Leonard Bramer (fig. 5). Michael Levey refuted some time ago that the costume should be seen as historical (but without good arguments): Michael Levey, *The Painter Depicted: Painters as a Subject in Painting* (London, 1981), 27. Also see Wheelock 1995, 131 and the next note.

47. See for other painters wearing a slashed doublet: Adriaen van Ostade (above, note 46) and a painting by Abraham Snaphaen (*Painter Standing in a Window*, a self-portrait?, whereabouts unknown, photo Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague). My colleague and a specialist in costumes, Irene Groeneweg, brought several examples of this type of slashed doublet to my attention. She also pointed out that, given certain technical aspects of Vermeer's doublet, he must have painted it from life, and that only the doublets of the officer in Caspar Netscher's painting (above, note 46) and of two officers in two *Civic Guard* paintings of 1648, show the same, very thin numerous strips as the one worn by Vermeer's artist (Bartholomeus van der Helst, *The Celebration of the Peace of Münster at the Crossbowmen's Headquarters*, 1648, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: the eighth man from the left in a yellow costume; Govert Flinck, *The Civic Guard of Amsterdam Celebrating the Treaty of Münster*, 1648, Amsterdams Historisch Museum: the sixth man from the right). These are quite different from the many doublets with much wider strips (mostly with sleeves slashed from the shoulders) that were especially fashionable from the 1620s to the 1640s; the latter type is also the costume worn by the man on the left in Vermeer's *Procuress* (perhaps a self-portrait), which is *not* the same jacket as that worn by the artist in the *Art of Painting*, as Asemissen stated. The costume of the officer in Van der Helst's *Civic Guard* is, except in color, identical to Vermeer's; he is the only one who also has the same unusual sleeves, which are slashed only at the elbow. Comparable sleeves, but with much wider strips and without the slashed doublet, are found in a 1676 *Self-Portrait* by Frans van Mieris (Uffizi, Florence) and one attributed to his son Jan van Mieris (collection of Lord Farnham; see Eric Jan Sluiter, in *Leids Kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 8 [1989], fig. 7).

48. In this context, Michael Levey (1981, 27) referred to Leonardo da Vinci's observation in his *Trattato della pittura*, that the painter, as opposed to the sculptor, sits well dressed and relaxed at his easel (one of Leonardo's many arguments in the *paragone* discussion); see also Sedlmayr 1958, 172. Interest-

ingly, the notion seems to have existed that painters did not fit into the usual categories because of bohemianlike self-fashioning among some of them. This appears from a pamphlet written by a lawyer who wanted to introduce a strict dress code according to rank and status and who obviously did not know what to do with painters because they defied categorization: "Concerning the painters, I did not yet present a decree: these people are so diverse, and many of them outrageous [*dol van geest*]; some of them are indeed painters who depict everything ingeniously and are divine in art and wit [*divin sijn van kunst ende verstant*], others being only daubers or house painters" (*ten onderscheyt Boeckje. Ofte tractaetje vande fouten en dwalingen der politie, In ons vaderlant . . . Door J van B.* [Amsterdam, 1662]; Royal Library, The Hague, pamphlet 8670). Irene Groeneweg kindly brought this pamphlet to my attention some years ago.

49. The same holds for the double-headed eagle atop the chandelier, which, in combination with the map and the "old-fashioned" clothes, was interpreted as a symbol of the Habsburg empire (first by De Tolnay 1953, 293; see also Hubschmitt 1987, 132 and Asemissen 1993, 53–55). One could suggest that the eagle was inserted here as a prevailing attribute of the sense of sight, since the image of the painter at his easel could also serve as an allegory of sight. Remarkably, a comparable chandelier with the double-headed eagle was included in the famous painting of the *Allegory of Sight and Smell* by Jan Brueghel and Peter Paul Rubens (Museo del Prado, Madrid); here the eagle—this time with crowned heads and conspicuously illuminated—certainly refers to the Habsburg empire as well, since it was painted for the court in Brussels (see Asemissen 1993, 55). However, in my view the double-headed eagle in Vermeer's painting is too inconspicuous to have been intended as a motif with particular significance. The same type of chandelier appears in a well-known painting by Gerard ter Borch of c. 1660 (*The Letter*, Buckingham Palace, London) and in two views of the south aisle of the *Old Church* in Delft by Cornelis de Man (Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, and Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; see also Walter A. Liedtke, *Architectural Painting in Delft* [Doornspijk, 1982], figs. 98 and 99). See above, note 13 for the supposed "old-fashioned" technique of the painting on which the artist is working.

50. Kees Zandvliet, "Vermeer and the Significance of Cartography in His Time," in *The Scholarly World of Vermeer* [exh. cat., Museum van het Boek Meermann-Westreenianum, The Hague] (Zwolle, 1996), 68–69 and 76–78. A copy of the map of 1636 is in Slott Skokloster, Uppsala. The fundamental study of this map is James A. Welu, "The Map in Vermeer's 'Art of Painting,'" *Imago Mundi* 30 (1978), 9–30.

51. Blankert 1987, 124. See Asemissen 1993, 31–34 for the peculiar speculations of several authors about the fold in the middle of the map.

52. For Constantijn Huygens' discussion of painters in the autobiography of his youth, see A. H. Kan, *De jeugd van Constantijn Huygens door hemzelf*

beschreven [Rotterdam, 1971], 65–87 and Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1718–1721). Cornelis de Bie [De Bie 1662], also made no distinction.

53. Kan 1971, 66.

54. Samuel van Hoogstraeten 1678, 330: "de Schilder-konst in onzen staet, als in een nieuw Grieken, in 't best van haer bloeijen is; dat zy den Vaderlande eygen, als een onkostelijke mijne, parelvisserye, en edelgesteente groeve, dagelijcx veel rijke juweelen van kabinetstukken kan uitleveren."

55. Angel 1642, 40: "schijn eyghentlijke kracht . . . overweldighen en in nemen."

56. Angel 1642, 23–33. De Bie 1662, 21–22. Angel borrowed most of his arguments from Johan de Brune's introduction to Franciscus Junius 1641; in turn De Brune based his discussion on Benedetto Varchi. On Angel and the *paragone*, see Sluijter 1993a, 21–36 and 79.

57. The most common argument in the *paragone* discussion was that, of the arts, only painting could imitate *everything* visible convincingly (see Sluijter 1993a, 21–23). It is interesting to note that tapers—try—in Vermeer's painting so conspicuously included in the foreground—was normally not mentioned in the *paragone* discussions, though Adriaen van de Venne did single it out to state that painting was far superior: "Noch dienter meer geseyt van goede Schilderyen, / Hoe dat sy over-treft de Zy-Tapijtseryen: / Het Glinster-gouden-leer en 't glimpende geweeff"; Van de Venne 1623, 64. Given that Vermeer does not suggest that the curtain hangs before the *painting*, references to the story of Zeuxis and Parrhasios are not relevant in this case.

58. I do not propose this as *the* meaning of the objects referred to. However, none of the attempts to provide many of the objects with an emblematic meaning is convincing, for example, as connoting Disegno and Pictura (Van Gelder 1958, 12–13), Doctrina, Studium, Imitatio, and Ingenium (Miedema 1972, 68–71), the other muses, Polymnia, Euterpe and Thalia (Gowing 1970, 139), or to the other crafts in Saint Luke's Guild (Asemissen 1993, 19–20).

59. See also Sluijter 1998, with further references.

60. For an interesting account of the "erotic" relationship between the painter and his model as depicted by Vermeer, see Edward A. Snow, *A Study of Vermeer* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1979).

61. References to these traditions (mainly of Saint Luke) were made by several authors, among them Van Gelder 1958, 14–15; Gowing 1970, 140; Blankert 1987, 126; and Hubschmitt 1987, 112–113, 188–189.

62. On female beauty as a paradigmatic subject for the art of painting, see Eric Jan Sluijter, "Venus, Visus en Pictura," in *Goltzius Studies: Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617)*, ed. Jan Piet Filedt Kok et al., *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 42–43 (1991–1992) [Zwolle, 1993], 350, 362–370, 372 (cited as 1993b in the following notes). Also, the less often

depicted subject of Zeuxis painting Helena fits in this context (see for examples Hans Ulrich Asemissen and Gunter Schweikhart, *Malerei als Themen der Malerei* [Berlin, 1994], 14–19).

63. This painting by Maarten de Vos was made, as so many depictions of Saint Luke Painting the Virgin, for an altar of Saint Luke's Guild; the painting was the middle panel of a triptych with scenes from the life of Saint Luke, made in 1602 for the painter's chapel in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. See Gisela Kraut, *Lukas malt die Madonna. Zeugnisse zum künstlerischen Selbstverständnis in der Malerei* (Worms, 1986), 111–121.

64. Karel van Mander, *Het leven der oude antijsche doorluchtighe schilders*, in his *Het schilder-boeck* (Haarlem, 1603–1604), fol. 80r–v. See, for Van Mander's source, a French translation of Pliny's text: Hessel Miedema, *Karel van Mander. Het leven der oude antijsche doorluchtighe schilders* (Amsterdam, 1977), 80r–v.

65. Van Mander, *Het leven*, fol. 80r.

66. On this painting (and the depiction of *Apelles and Campaspe* as an allegory of painting), see Max Winner, "Die Quellen der Pictura Allegorien in gemalten Bildergalerien des 17. Jahrhunderts in Antwerpen" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cologne, 1975), 29–31.

67. Van Mander, *Het leven*, fol. 79r. For the text of Van Mander's source, see Miedema 1977, 79r.

68. See Sluijter 1993b, 368.

69. See Winner 1975, 33–40 (see 32–33 for several Antwerp paintings of a *kunstkamer* with a painting of *Apelles and Campaspe* in a conspicuous place). See for Van Haecht's painting: Ben Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis* (Den Haag, 1987), 162–174.

70. On the *Judgment of Paris* in relation to allegories on the art of painting, see Eric Jan Sluijter, *De "heydensche fabulen" in de Noordnederlandse schilderkunst, circa 1590–1670* (Ph.D. diss., University of Leiden, 1986), 218–219 and Sluijter 1993b, 367. The drawing or print shows the composition of Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving after Raphael. The figure of *Apelles* repeats the posture of *Paris*.

71. On *Venus and Pictura* (and also the conflation of the two), see Sluijter 1993b, 362–371. This article discusses several examples in relation to Goltzius' brilliant *Visus* invention, in which the artist paints *Venus* (the paragon of beauty, as well as the prime seductress of the eyes), who represents at the same time the personification of *Sight* (the sense that most strongly evokes desire).

72. See Sluijter 1993b, 368 and Sluijter 1996. On the painting by Frans van Mieris the Younger, see *Leidse Fijnschilders. Van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de jonge 1630–1760*, ed. Eric Jan Sluijter, Marlies Enklaar, and Paul Nieuwenhuizen [exh. cat., De Lakenhal, Leiden] (Zwolle, 1988), 144–146.

73. Van Gelder (1958, 9–10) referred to this painting in relation to Vermeer's *Art of Painting* (comparing the space), as did Blankert (1987, 126), who pointed

out the fundamental difference in composition and lighting. In Blankert 1975, 71, a connection between the two was suggested, but at that time the author was not sure which of the two paintings was earlier. However, Otto Naumann dated the painting c. 1655–1657 (*Frans van Mieris the Elder*, 2 vols. [Doornspijk, 1981], 1:44 and 2:21–23). A dating before 1657 seems too early; c. 1657 is in my view the most plausible date. See also Hubschmitt 1987, 115–116.

74. On the topos of the arousal of the painter's love by his model and the effect this has on the verisimilitude of the painting, see Sluijter 1993b, 369–371. On contemporary thoughts about the arousal of love and lust through the eyes and the seductive powers of painting (especially paintings of beautiful women), see Sluijter 1986, 270–281 and Sluijter 1993b, 356–359.

75. The long passage of Cats' poem (from *Trou-ringh*, first published in 1637) in which the painter defends his art was also cited by Philips Angel as part of the *paragone* with poetry; see Eric Jan Sluijter, "Didactic and Disguised Meanings? Several Seventeenth-Century Texts on Painting and the Iconological Approach to Dutch Painting of This Period," in *Art in History / History in Art*, ed. David Freedberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica, 1991), 177–179 and Sluijter 1993a, 24–25. Angel 1642, 29: "Ick sal dit aerdich Beelt van uwe jonghe daghen, / Aen d'Eeuwe die ons volcht soo konstich overdragen. / Dat uwe schoone glans, oock over duysent jaer, / Aen al het Coninckrijk sal wesen openbaer: / Dat uwe frisse jeucht door al de naeste steden / Sal werden aengesien, sal werden aenghebeden; / Soo dat ghy door de Kunst als eeuwich leven sult, / Schoon dat u levens tijt sal langhe sijn vervult."

76. Van de Venne 1623, 59–60: "Wie can de deucht en rom uyt-spreken of uyt-singen / Van sulcken soeten const, soo nut en vol gerief, / Dat door haer wert gemaect van niet een soete lief. / . . . / Begeerich is de oog, verlangend' is de mens; / 't Verlangen is in my te meer om dese reden, / Om dat ick sie een beelt dat lijf en heeft noch reden, / Beweging noch gevoel, en evenwel een schijn, / Als of het sijn gesicht ging drayen tegen 'tmijn. / . . . / De oog is noyt vervult, 't gewens is noyt versaet, / Soo lang men met de cunst en min-sucht omme-gaet." In the margin of this passage, in which Van de Venne sings about his art as being capable of representing a beloved woman, are the short texts: "The art of painting kindles joy in people" ("Schilder-const maect den mensche verblijdt"); "The art of painting is mute" ("Schilder-const is stom"); "Art makes desirous" ("Const doet verlangen"), and "The eye, a sweet tempter" ("De ooghe een soeten aen-locker").

77. On the outside of his box Van Hoogstraeten depicted the three incentives to practice the art of painting: the desire for fame, the love of art, and the desire for money. On the top of the box he painted an anamorphically distorted image of *Venus and Cupid*; see *National Gallery Catalogues. The Dutch School*, 2 vols. (London, 1991), 1:204–206, and Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago, 1995), 213–215. In Vermeer's painting the first two benefits of the art-

ist seem to be incorporated, but certainly not the desire for money. See also the next note.

78. The model of the painter working for *Amoris Causa* has been identified as the muse Urania (London 1991, 204; Brusati 1995, 213), the one who leads the artist "to climb the stairway to the stars," as Van Hoogstraeten writes in book 9 of his *Inleyding*, dedicated to this muse. However, the fact that she has several breasts means that she also represents Nature (compare, for instance, the frontispiece of Karel van Mander, our fig. 3). A drawing in which Van Hoogstraeten depicted the same benefits of the art of painting shows a *Pictura* working before an easel, surrounded by a figure sounding a trumpet, two embracing Cupids, and the figure of Nature, offering riches (Brusati 1995, fig. 153). This corresponds with Van Hoogstraeten's primary requirement for the painter: "That he not only appear to adore art, but that he is in love with representing the pleasantries of beautiful nature" (Van Hoogstraeten 1678, 11–12).

79. For numerous examples (among them depictions of Saint Luke, Apelles, and Zeuxis), see *Maler und Modell* [exh. cat., Staatliche Kunsthalle] (Baden-Baden, 1969); Levey 1981; *La peinture dans la peinture* [exh. cat., Musée des Beaux-Arts] (Dijon, 1982); Raupp 1984; Asemissen and Schweikhart 1994. See also our figs. 8 and 9. The following are some printed book illustrations with this type of painter that might have been well known in this period (not to be found in the literature mentioned above): Jost Amman, *Der Handmaler*, in Jost Amman and Hans Sachs, *Eygentliche Beschreibung aller Stände* (Frankfurt, 1568); Otto van Veen, *Cuique suum studium*, emblem in Otto van Veen, *Emblemata Horatiana* (Antwerp, 1607); and the emblem *Nulla dies sine linea*, in Justus Reifenberg, *Emblemata Politica* (Amsterdam, 1632), 51 (the painter in the background who is painting a female nude).

80. In a much earlier painting, *A Painter Painting a Still Life* (1630s or 1640s), by Jacob van Spreeuwen, the bearing of the figure of the artist is remarkably close to that of Vermeer's painter: he also looks to the left (toward a still life on a table) and only one hand is visible, which is identically poised on his maulstick and touching the canvas, while nothing of his face is shown (private collection, Sweden; reproduced in *Oud Holland* 62 [1947], 74, fig. 2). Compare also Theodore Galle (Raupp 1984, fig. 182), Joos van Craesbeeck (Raupp 1984, fig. 201), and the painter in Van Hoogstraeten's title print of chapter 3 of his *Inleyding* (Van Hoogstraeten 1678), with Polyhymnia. In the last case a painter is making a portrait of a lady sitting for him; but the portrayal on his canvas shows the lady accompanied by Cupid, which turns her representation into a picture of Venus.

81. See Levey 1981, 27: "an element of self-identification would seem unavoidable. In reaction against too simple earlier interpretations of the scene as Vermeer's studio, modern scholarship is in danger perhaps of missing something obvious and intentional." For this "self-identification," see also Asemissen 1993, 40–42 and Arasse 1994, 54.