

Already One Less Vermeer



by Miles Mathis

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First note that the National Gallery exhibition announcing this finding opens in DC today, 10/8, which is of course aces and eights, Chai. Coincidence? Nope. These people can't go to the bathroom without signaling someone with numerology. They are absolutely addicted to cloak and dagger, even when it seems completely unnecessary.

Strange timing, isn't it? Last December I blew the cover of the entire Vermeer project, including the fake Vermeer at the center of the [Gardner Museum hoax](#) and [Girl with a Pearl Earring](#). And here we are less than a year later and suddenly the National Gallery decides to dump one of its four famous Vermeers. Do you really think that is just a coincidence? No, it would appear they are reading me over there. I would expect more revelations in the upcoming years, as the world's other top museums try to spin this as well.

Spin it? Yes, that is what is obviously going on. They huddled and came up with this plan, agreeing it was better to lose one than all four. So they are letting *Girl with a Flute* take the fall, while trying to confirm the authenticity of the others. She was already iffy due to curator Arthur Wheelock's previous admission in the 1990s that she might not be genuine. She was "attributed to" Vermeer, though we aren't told by whom. Some blind man, I guess. "Attributed to" in artspeak means there is no consensus that this is a Vermeer. Other important people had previously doubted its authenticity. But when the Metropolitan Museum's Walter Liedtke had pressed Wheelock to relent, Wheelock backed down, removing the "attributed to" hedge. You can be sure Wheelock is now wishing he had stood his ground, since he has been made to look not only foolish, but weak. Liedtke's legacy has also taken a big hit, though he died in 2015.

The announcement yesterday in the *Washington Post* is a compendium of absurdities, as usual. They admit the National Gallery has two other fake Vermeers in storage, which they were forced to concede were forgeries years ago. The author says,

How these grotesque parodies were ever taken seriously as Vermeers is difficult to say.

Precisely, and people will someday say the same about the ones I am outing. I am already saying that about dozens of fake Vermeers still on the walls.

We are now told *Girl with a Flute* is “clumsy”, “awkward and abrupt” and “of very limited skill”, but at the same time that it is “close but no cigar”. You see how they are trying to make excuses for themselves, as if they needed all these expensive x-ray machines and analyzers to see the difference in technique among four paintings on their walls attributed the same person. But I could tell at a glance. Let me show you exactly how:



The first thing that leaps out at me is the hand holding the flute. That is very poorly painted, and looks nothing like many of the other fake Vermeers. In fact, it looks Modern, which is how I know they are still wrong: this was not painted by some colleague or student of Vermeer, it was painted by some bozo forger in the past 150 years, and maybe a lot more recently than that. She has three fingers, doesn't she: the artist forgot to paint or even indicate the line between the longest finger and the ring finger. The head is another atrocity, no better than a "grotesque parody" of a real head. One eye is far lower than the other, and though all faces have some asymmetry, this goes far beyond that. The transitions are all extremely clunky, witness the green as the forehead hits the hat. And is our lady bald? Even worse, where are her ears? Where are her eyelids? Why are her eyebrows disappearing? Have you ever seen a Chinese hat in that pattern? What is in the background? Looks like a Gauguin painting, which obviously doesn't fit our timeline.

Also notice that the head is a near perfect oval, almost as if the artist used a stencil. I have never seen a head shaped like that, because no real head *is* shaped like that. I have painted or drawn thousands of heads, so I know the face is much more complex than that in its basic outline. And look how clunky the value transitions are in the chin and the end of the nose, as if this woman is made out of little cubes. That's how they have been teaching people to draw faces since the 1950s, in little books they mail you when you send in your drawing of a horsie and pay your \$5.

Speaking of bad transitions, look where the red on her cheek ends in a line, at the level of her mouth. Skin isn't colored like that. Finally, the desk—or whatever she is resting her hands on—is another disaster. It is just thrown in there with no effort to join it to the hands. It almost looks like water.

The *Post* included a second article in the sidebar entitled, "So Vermeer didn't paint 'Girl With a Flute.' Why think less of it?" It is by their senior art critic and resident blind man Philip Kennicott, who was paid to noodle around for several pages in the attempt to save this painting. He suggest the "experts" may still be wrong, and that we shouldn't quit loving this painting just because the implied signature is gone. Balderdash from first to last, since I doubt anyone ever loved this thing. If they ever thought they did, they did only because they were supposed to or because it was worth millions. Now that I point out all the huge flaws, they will say, "Oh, yeah, I see that. Well, I never liked it anyway".

Unfortunately, this isn't the only Vermeer atrocity at the National Gallery. What about this one?



Yes, far better than what we were just looking at, but still not good. The coat is very nice and the hands are fair, but the background is blah and the head is foggy. The head doesn't fit the treatment, in size, in finish, or in focus, and almost looks like it was replaced at some point. The hair is—at the very least—a poor artistic choice, since it looks like she has just been to the salon and still has her wet hair up in curlers. Not attractive. She has no neck. The coat is too big for her and she looks like a pinhead. And what is that supposed to be a painting of in the background? A couple of rocks? It doesn't even balance the composition. And the gray in the background appears to be painted *around* the figure, this being especially obvious at the chair. You are supposed to work the figure and the forward objects *into* the background. The chair ornaments also look fishy, as if they were added later or repainted. Plus, why does this lady in the same coat look different in every painting?



I will be told he took the coat out of his model's closet and put it on different models. Fair enough. That conflicts with the history we are sold, but it is a possibility. So here is an even better question: why is the paint handling different in all four? Why is the light quality different in all four? Why is the overall treatment so different in all four? Absolutely nothing is the same, from brushwork, to color schemes, to finish, to choice of model or pose. I could sit here all day pointing out big problems.

Here's just one more: the coat in the last doesn't match the color of the others. It is markedly less yellow. In fact, none of them really match in color. That coat goes from naples yellow to lemon yellow to an almost bright gold sheen in the third painting. [All these paintings are up at Wiki in hidef](#), if you want to see for yourself.

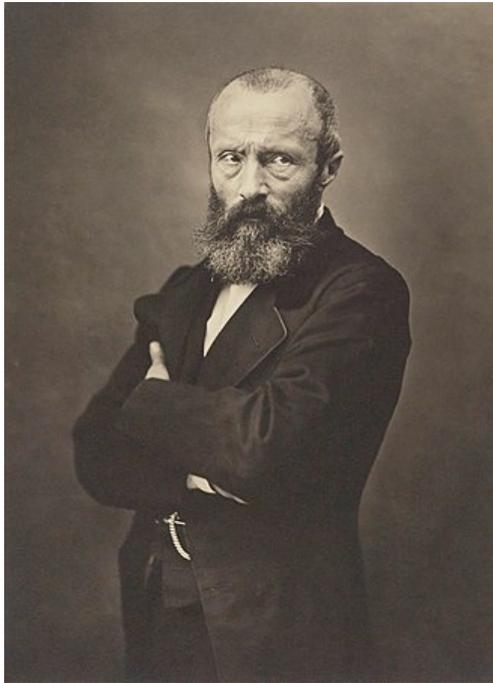
But it hardly matters, because even if these are by the same person, they aren't good paintings. They aren't Vermeers though: almost all these "Vermeers" have obvious signs of repainting and multiple hands. The first and third above are known to have had major things painted out in the background, and that is obvious regardless. They look ruined at a glance.

The Glass of Wine in Berlin is probably the best of the lot



but that isn't the floor of Vermeer's studio, which we are supposed to think was black and white Masonic. That is a great painting, regardless of who painted it. I don't think Vermeer painted it because, as I said in those previous papers, I don't think there was a Vermeer. I think he was created out of whole cloth by the galleries and museums in the 19th century, collecting together a bunch of somewhat similar interior scenes and forging signatures on them. It worked, because it increased the value of that set of paintings by thousands of times.

Remember, I showed you this lovely looking person is the actual guy who led this conjob, along with the first director of the Rijksmuseum:



That's art critic Theophile Thore-Burger, also a fake Communist running projects at the time. So, some sort of agent. I have told you many times art critics are scum, and shown you extensive proof of it. Well, this guy allegedly “found” 66 Vermeers all at once, in his attic I guess, and though a third of them were immediately dismissed as fakes, somehow the other 2/3rd were eventually accepted by the shady dealers of the world.



That's one of them, rich lawyer and bigwig Victor de Stuers, son of a general and the Baroness Beyens. The Beyens were Jewish and related to the Oppenheims. Wiki refuses to tell us where these Beyens got their huge wealth, but a large part of it was through marrying the daughters of bankers, as with the

Oppenheims and Gouins. As head of the Rijksmuseum, de Stuers did some good work in architectural conservation, but was apparently not above filling his museum with fakes despite that. I guess he thought—like the *Post's* Kennicott—that fakes needed to be conserved as much as any other paintings.

But let us return to *The Glass of Wine* and compare that lady's arms to the arms we have been looking at, and indeed all the other arms and hands in the rest of Vermeer's *oeuvre*.



That's so much better in all ways than what we have been looking at, isn't it? It has a solid consistency to it that makes it look both old and period. If it is a fake, it is a lot better than the others. It actually does deserve to be conserved. It is really daring, too, and fakes never are. Imagine trying to paint someone with a wineglass corked to her nose, or wanting to. No forger would come up with that, because it would be far too easy to fail, and wouldn't be salable. The floor is also beautifully painted, and only a true master could achieve that. The man's head is also really good, far better than what we have been looking at:



Nothing wrong there, and that is very difficult since we are way under lifesize. The smaller you go the more mistakes stand out. Just think about it: if you are painting a head 10 inches tall and you make a 1/16th inch error, your error is .6%. If you are painting a head three inches tall and you make the same mistake, your error is 2.1%. Some people may not see an error under 1%, but almost everyone will see an error over 2%. But in truth, a 1/16th error even on a lifesize head can be catastrophic, especially in the eyes or mouth. Moving the corner of a mouth up or down 1mm can change an entire likeness or expression. In painting trees or chairs you don't have to worry about that, but in painting faces you do.

On the way out, let me remind you why Thore-Burger and other critics, historians, galleries, and other phony experts created this whole Vermeer project: \$MONEY\$. Astonishing amounts of it. Remember, we saw in my paper on the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum that they claim the stolen Vermeer in that event is now worth **\$250 million**. That's for an extremely flawed work, not even considered Vermeer's best. There is only one Vermeer left in a private collection (Buckingham Palace), so how could any money be made on Vermeers? Well, these paintings do come up at auction occasionally, or new ones are faked and then discovered—as we have seen a spate of recently with [Botticelli](#) and [Leonardo](#). These fakes are then used to [launder gargantuan piles of dirty money](#). So although the conjobs back in the 1860s were relatively small compared to that, they have grown exponentially since then, accelerating into the stratosphere since the 1970s. Once the banks got involved, it was Katy bar the door, and they have since taken over the entire field of art to use as a chit and a screen for their thefts. It took me thirty years to figure out that was what Modernism was all about, but I finally got there. It took so long because I was blocked at every juncture, with some new “expert” arriving on the scene every decade to misdirect me. The mainstream and alternative presses have created a mountain of fake criticism, fake research, and fake conspiracy theory to divert us away from this pretty simple answer. We always knew the field of Modern art couldn't be real, filled as it is with absolute garbage and nothing else, but it was hard to figure out who was benefitting from this con. There was no *cui* to this

bono until we tripped across the money laundering angle, which blew the whole thing wide open.

So that only leaves us with this question: do these analysts working at the National Gallery and other places really not know that? Or, to put it another way, is this ignorance or evil? At what level, if any, do these art experts stop being con artists and start being relatively innocent dupes? I can't say, but my belief is the directors and curators can't plead ignorance. The gallery owners can't plead innocence. The top people at Sothebys and Christies can't plead ignorance. The top critics can't plead ignorance. The art historians can't plead ignorance. The editors of the major mags can't plead ignorance. Possibly at the level of assistant curator or something we start to meet people who aren't aware of what is going on around them, although after a few months on the job even they should start to catch on. You would have to be nearly legally blind to work among all these fake paintings and fake people and not start to ask questions. Once these people do start to ask questions—and some of them are—they need to ask questions not only of those that have conned them. They need to ask questions of themselves, such as “Am I really qualified to be working in the field of art when I can't see past my own eyelashes? Should I be passing myself off as some sort of expert or professional in the field when I can't see basic differences between one paint sample and another, without the help of machines?” Which is just to say, those who can't do what I did above, seeing at a glance differences in brushwork, treatment, tone, color, finish, line, and signature style, should leave it to those who can.

Addendum November 29, 2022: Just one month later, the *Epoch Times*, go figure, is now running interference on this for the big dogs. Their art writer Lorraine Ferrier has published [this piece](#), not only reselling Vermeer as real, but promoting the idea that the National Gallery recently proved he had a studio—“where he worked with assistants and taught students and apprentices”. Wow, what an exciting new discovery, right? How did they discover that? We keep waiting for Ferrier to tell us what indication or proof they found, but she never does. Not the slightest hint of evidence or argument is forthcoming. Finally, I could see that she was implying that simply because they had now downgraded *Girl with a Flute* to “studio of Vermeer”, that was proof Vermeer had a studio.

“The existence of other artists working with Johannes Vermeer is perhaps one of the most significant new findings about the artist to be discovered in decades. It fundamentally changes our understanding of Vermeer,” said the gallery’s director Kaywin Feldman, in a press release.

But wait, calling a painting “studio of Vermeer” doesn't magically create a studio of Vermeer, with actual people in it. This new attribution is just a wild guess, based on pretty much nothing. It is only to say the painting *isn't* by Vermeer. Who actually painted it is completely unknown. Like the rest of Vermeer's works, this work has exactly zero provenance in its first two centuries, so it could have been painted by any one of thousands of artists up until the 19th century.

In fact, Ferrier undercuts her own salesmanship by admitting that what the experts found in their recent work does not support the current attributions to Vermeer. To start with, she admits that the *Girl with a Flute* and *Girl with a Red Hat* are painted on panels, which was *not* Vermeer's usual support.

The same model appears to peer out of the two small paintings that Vermeer, rather unusually, had painted on wooden panels.

But she is lying even there, since anyone can see the two women aren't the same model, the woman in *Red Hat* being far more delicate.

Even worse, Ferrier is forced to admit that

Vermeer underpainted “Girl With the Red Hat” using coarsely ground pigments, and finished the work by using finely ground pigments. In “Girl With a Flute,” the artist reversed the process, giving the painting a coarse, almost granular finish.

That is a huge red flag, one that Ferrier and the “experts” refuse to read right. It obviously means that whoever painted *Flute* didn't use Vermeer's method, indicating he *wasn't* taught by Vermeer and therefore couldn't have been a student or assistant. All the real evidence goes in one direction while these dishonest people continue to go in the other, simply because that is where the money points.

We can see that Ferrier has been paid to spin this all positive regardless:

The gallery’s “loss” of “Girl With a Flute” as a Vermeer painting has meant an exciting gain in understanding the master’s work.

Except that it hasn't.