JOHANNES VERMEER’S CREATIVE PROCESS: NEW FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

lecture by Dr. Melanie Gifford

Johannes Vermeer was a Dutch artist whose 36 surviving paintings are among the great treasures in the world’s finest museums. His beautiful scenes of 17th century domestic life in interior settings are remarkable for their purity of light and form, qualities that convey a serene, timeless sense of dignity.

A team of art historians, conservators, and museum scientists researched the four paintings by and attributed to the renowned artist at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. New analytical imaging techniques and earlier microscopic analysis provide insights into the artist’s distinctive painting techniques and materials. The lecture will highlight the research findings and demonstrate at a microscopic level how Vermeer transformed paint into an evocation of light.

Dr. Melanie Gifford, a member of the research team, focuses on Dutch and Flemish painters in her work. She worked as a painting conservator before completing a PhD in art history. Gifford is currently the J. Clawson Mills Scholar at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she is working on a book on 17th century landscapes in The Netherlands, focusing on radical painting techniques.

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