

High Museum of Art

Girl with a Pearl Earring: Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis Adult Tour

An Acoustiguide Tour

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101. Gerrit Berckheyde, A Hunting Party near the Hofvijver in The Hague, Seen from the Plaats, c.1690

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Hello, I'm Michael Shapiro, Nancy and Holcomb T. Green Jr. Director of the High Museum of Art. Welcome to *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, an extraordinary exhibition of 17th-century Dutch paintings from the royal collections of the Mauritshuis in The Hague.

The Mauritshuis was named after Count John Maurice of Naussau, who built the small, but sumptuous city palace in the late 1630s. In fact, you can see it in the very center of this painting, lining the banks of The Hague's Court Pond. In the foreground, an elegant hunting party, lead by two men blowing horns, is leaving the city, followed by servants with dogs and falcons. In 17th century

Holland, hunting was an exclusive sport reserved for the noblemen that governed civic affairs. On the right, you see the old city gate, dappled with shade from two tall linden trees, bearing the coat of arms of the province of Holland. Originally part of The Hague's medieval castle grounds, the building was a prison by the time this painting was made.

Gerrit Berckheyde, who created this magnificent painting in 1690, was a specialist in meticulously rendered city views. In this case, he took unconventional liberties when he eliminated a structure next to the prison to allow for a better view of the majestic buildings facing the pond. Bathed in early morning sunlight, the city appears jewel-like against the pink and soft blue sky, epitomizing the spectacular wealth and civic splendor of Holland.

David Brenneman, Director of Exhibitions and Collections and the organizing curator of this exhibition, and Julia Forbes, our Shannon Landing Amos Head of Museum Interpretation and Digital Engagement, will be joining me to share their insights.

For detailed instructions on using this Acoustiguide, press the "question mark" at any time.

102. JACOB VAN RUISDAEL, VIEW OF HAARLEM WITH BLEACHING GROUNDS, C.1670-1675

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

I'm David Brenneman, Director of Collections and Exhibitions and Frances B. Bunzl Family Curator of European Art.

This painting by Jacob van Ruisdael is one of my favorite paintings in the exhibition. And, what I really love about it is the way that Ruisdael has created a sense of a moment in time through the lighting and also through the clouds and such details as the birds near the center of the painting. The clouds are moving. The birds are moving. We know that the light that's striking the ground will come and go in a matter of seconds.

And I love the way he uses light to illuminate the things on the ground that we're supposed to be looking at. In the foreground you see the bleaching fields. The city of Haarlem, was known throughout Europe for bleaching fabrics. So, you have these little figures that are laying out these long strips of fabric for bleaching. Then, the light takes us into the middle ground, and you see this incredible field. And then you go to the background and you see the city of Haarlem, with one of the great architectural features of the city, the church of Saint Bavo with its spire pointing upwards towards heaven.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Haarlem lies just west of Amsterdam, along the wind-swept coastal dunes. Looking at Ruisdael's splendid view, can you feel the salty breeze as it blows across the fertile lowlands from the Atlantic Ocean?

103. JAN BOTH, ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, C.1645

JULIA FORBES:

I'm Julia Forbes, the High Museum's Shannon Landing Amos Head of Museum Interpretation and Digital Engagement.

What we're looking at here is a spectacular painting by Jan Both. It was common that Dutch artists would make a pilgrimage to Italy to study the classics, to study the Renaissance, to study Roman architecture that they could see there. One of the things that makes this landscape an Italian landscape versus a Dutch landscape, is the way that the artist has used the light he might have seen in the paintings or even in the landscape in Italy. It has an almost serene emotion to it.

What's so terrific about this landscape is, while there's a lot Italian about it – the rolling hills and the really beautiful trees – he's also added these terrific details that make it very Dutch. If you look at the group that's traveling down the path, with the donkeys and horses and the group of men, one of the donkeys is braying, breaking the serenity of this beautiful landscape.

And look closely, because there's a man standing on the side of the path. He's wearing a red cape and a hat. And he's urinating on the side of the road. There's just a strange juxtaposition of this artist trying to show us all of this work that he's mastered in Italy, but yet bring his own very special brand of humor to his incredible scene.

104. PIETER CLAESZ, VANITAS STILL LIFE, 1630

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

The Haarlem painter Pieter Claesz created this small canvas in 1630. Called a *vanitas* still life, after the Latin word for vanity, it's meant to impress upon us that life is short and that we ought to savor every moment.

To make his point, the painter has spread numerous symbols of death, across a table covered with a heavy green cloth. A human skull dominates the composition, resting on a well-worn, leather-bound manuscript next to a sharpened quill and a bone.

On the left, a small earthen oil lamp has just been extinguished, sending a thin plume of smoke into the airless room.

Nearby, an upturned glass, polished to a sparkle, poignantly alludes to pleasures gone by.

And, perched near the edge of the table, a golden pocket watch and key further remind us of the fleeting nature of human existence.

The artist rendered every aspect of this *memento mori* with careful attention to detail. The subtle handling of light and texture invigorates the otherwise solemn arrangement, making it an early masterpiece in Pieter Claesz's distinguished career.

105. ABRAHAM VAN BEYEREN, BANQUET STILL LIFE, AFTER 1655**JULIA FORBES:**

We're standing in a room that is filled with still life paintings, but, for me, this has got to be the most spectacular.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Julia Forbes.

JULIA FORBES:

Abraham Van Beijeren, was an expert at still lifes. In fact, he specialized in these kind of elaborate groupings of ornaments for the table, and really luscious and sumptuous food.

One of the things that is really exciting about this painting is the attention to detail that this artist uses. Science is creeping in, and artists are interested in looking very, very closely, and capturing small details. And one that I really love is this silver coffee urn that's right in the center of the composition. And if you look very closely, you're going to see a reflection in that coffee urn, and that reflection is the artist himself.

One of the things I find very unsettling about this composition is, it feels like we have arrived after this banquet has happened. Things are really disheveled. As if, people have been grabbing things, and filling their plates, and if we got too close and we bumped it the wrong way, it feels like that silver tray might come right off the front and those other two glasses would fall on the floor right at our feet.

And as you work your way down he's got this really interesting detail of a watch, and it's opened up. One of the things that a lot of art historians talk about when they look at a Dutch still life is this sense of the transience of time.

So the combination of this disheveled scene and the watch that we see are ways for the artist to have us think about the fragility of life, the passing of time.

106. ABRAHAM VAN BEYEREN, FLOWER STILL LIFE WITH A TIMEPIECE, C. 1663-1665

JULIA FORBES:

This is a work by Abraham Van Beyeren. We have another still life of his in this same gallery. [And] this gives us a chance to look at him in two different ways. He's a master of the still life. And in this particular case, he's showing us this incredible group of flowers. And they're painted a little bit differently than the other still life of flowers that you will find in this gallery.

One of the things about this particular bouquet of flowers that's different than we normally see, is Van Beyeren has completely left out something very common to these bouquets, which is little insects, little flies, little butterflies that are meticulously painted on the petals of the flowers.

Here, he's really focused on the fragility of the flowers. And this is another moment wherein the Dutch artist is trying to tell us a little bit about our own fragility and our own passing of time. A couple of the flowers are already dipping their heavy heads and petals have fallen off. They're already starting to die. It's very transient.

Look closely on the left hand side of this vase. On the table, you're going to see a pocket watch with a chain. When you look at the other Abraham Van Beyeren in this room, you're going to find that exact same pocket watch and chain. And it's serving the same purpose, really, in both paintings: to remind us of the passage of time, [to] make us think about our own mortality.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

One of the details that fascinates *me* about this painting is the small reflection in the vase. Look closely and you'll see it's a window. And I like to imagine van Beyeren painting with that natural light streaming into his studio.

107. CAREL FABRITIUS, THE GOLDFINCH, 1654

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

David Brenneman:

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

This is a work that captivates me. It's a very small painting, showing a pet goldfinch sitting on its perch, the bird is painted in an incredibly realistic manner. And, the artist has taken great pains to not only paint the bird as it appears, but also the perch on which it's sitting. This type of painting was known as *trompe l'oeil*, an artistic effort to try to trick the eye, because it really shows the skill of the artist. And this artist, Carel Fabritius, who was a student of Rembrandt had enormous talent.

One of the things that immediately draws your eye into the painting is the yellow on the goldfinch's wing.

Just behind the bird is a box, and the box is a bit of a mystery. Some scholars have argued that the chain, which hangs from the top rung is keeping the bird from flying away. Other scholars believe that the chain is attached to a little thimble-like bucket. During this time, goldfinches were known for performing a very specific trick, which is taking a small bucket, dipping it into a bowl of water and then bringing the bucket out. And this bird may be one of those trained pets that could perform this really amazing trick.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

It's a painting with considerable visual charm, but I think there's also a quiet poetry to it.

Carel Fabritius was one of the most talented painters of his generation, but, sadly, his life was cut short. To hear more about him, press PLAY.

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

Carel Fabritius is considered by some to be Rembrandt's most gifted pupil. He moved, at age 28, to Delft, and we know that he made paintings there. He died very tragically in the explosion of a powder magazine when he was 32 years old. And who knows how great he would have been had he survived the explosion. But if a painting like this is any evidence, he could have been as great a painter as Rembrandt.

If you look at the signature, you'll see that the painting is dated 1654. And that was the year of the explosion, which killed the artist. So it's interesting to think about this painting as possibly one of the last that he that he might have created.

108. JAN STEEN, 'AS THE OLD SING, SO TWITTER THE YOUNG', C.1665

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

David Brenneman is going to explain the moral behind this painting by Jan Steen, titled, "As the Old Sing, So Twitter the Young"

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

In today's terms, the alternate title might be *Monkey See, Monkey Do*, because what Steen presents us with is a laundry list of bad examples that adults can set for their children.

He's created this incredibly dynamic scene, featuring a whole cast of characters that lead you from one action to the next. I find this work to be a tremendous amount of fun. And, one of the things that's really fascinating is that the artist appears to have painted himself into the picture. So if you look at the right side of the painting, the gentleman in the hat, who has this wonderful laughing expression as he teaches a young boy to smoke, is believed to be the artist himself. And in fact, some of the figures in the painting are thought to have been members of the artist's family. I think he's taking a great deal of pleasure in presenting this very, very naughty scene.

Some of the details that I particularly love are at the center of the painting. We see a servant who's pouring a stream of wine into a crystal glass, that's perched on the fingertips of a woman. It's a wonderful device that creates a sense of tension. Overseeing the whole scene is a parrot in the upper left, who appears to be quite tired by what he's observing going on. A parrot perhaps symbolizes this notion that children parrot the things that they see in adults. And so we do need to be careful about the example that we set.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

To learn more about some of the other interesting details in this painting, press PLAY.

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

Other details that I love are the foot warmer underneath the seated woman in the foreground. And I also love the dog in the foreground who's just waiting for someone to interact with it.

I'm particularly curious about the naked nail in the wall, at the top right of the painting. And I wonder what the artist is trying to tell us by that. One thing that's

conspicuously missing from the painting [is] other paintings. So, if in fact the man who's teaching the boy to smoke is the artist himself, it's interesting that there are no paintings in the painting. And, perhaps, because it's such a raucous event, perhaps a painting that had been hanging there has fallen down. In any event, I love that by simply placing the nail in the wall there he's created this incredible object of curiosity.

109. GERARD TER BORCH, WOMAN WRITING A LETTER, C.1655**DAVID BRENNEMAN:**

This is a painting by the artist Gerard ter Borch. It's wonderful to have it in the exhibition because it's a second painting with a girl with a pearl earring. //This painting, I think, is in many ways just as good as Vermeer's painting. It's incredibly delicately and beautifully painted. And I love the fact that the pearl is the really the center of attention. It really draws you into the painting.

Overall, I would use the word 'exquisite' to describe this painting. It shows a teenage girl, who is writing a letter. Perhaps it's a love letter. Perhaps it's a letter to a father, who is on a ship somewhere. She's sitting at a table, on a wonderful red cushion, which you can see at the lower right. And she's pushed back the Persian carpet that would normally cover the table. You see her pot of ink on the table as well. And in the background, you see a canopy bed, which has been closed, but which would have been found in the homes of well-to-do Dutch families at that time.

One of the things that ter Borch does exceedingly well in this painting is to give us a sense of various textures by creating some really wonderful contrasts. And so the pearl that she's wearing contrasts with her skin, and I love the way that her neck and shoulders are emerging out of her bodice. It's almost as if her skin and her head and her shoulders are made of really fine alabaster. There's a certain delicacy, and it does contrast with the heaviness of the things that surround her, It's really an incredible inventory of virtuoso technique.

110. JAN STEEN, THE OYSTER EATER, C.1658-1660**MICHAEL SHAPIRO:**

A beautiful young woman sprinkles salt on a raw oyster. Spread out on the table before her are a silver platter with a piece of bread, some salt and pepper, and a knife. More oysters are arranged on the rich blue tablecloth, next to a blue porcelain jug and a glass of white wine. In the kitchen, two servants open more oysters, a native catch that was popular for its naturally briny flavor and suggestive allusions to love-making. Salt, too, was considered an aphrodisiac, only adding to the painting's suggestive message.

The girl looks out at us evocatively, offering a glistening oyster and, perhaps, herself, to the viewer. Her velvet, fur-lined coat and lacy collar suggest that she is wealthy and that she may be seductively entertaining a visitor in her well-appointed chambers.

Jan Steen painted this quite small but very delightful picture in the late 1650s, rendering each detail with precision. Not a single brush stroke can be detected, lending the scene a stunningly realistic quality. Colors and textures range from the smooth metal of the silver plate to the dull sheen of the wine jug and the girl's flawless complexion. The silvery ribbons in her hair compliment the silken curls that frame her face. Steen was an absolute master at such genre scenes. He infuses ordinary people with exquisite insight and wit.

111. PIETER DE HOOCH, A MAN SMOKING AND A WOMAN DRINKING IN A COURTYARD, C.1658-1660

JULIA FORBES:

One of the things that's unique about Dutch 17th-century art is the idea of the genre scene, the painting of everyday life. Pieter De Hooch was a master of making these genre scenes, and this one is particularly fun, but also full of some interesting contradictions.

One of the characteristics of this scene that's really surprising, is how still and how calm everything seems. While we're seeing that there's some action taking place – someone's smoking, someone's drinking, [a] young girl is walking – we don't actually feel any of that action. It feels as if he's snapped a camera, and he's frozen everything in time, even the sky, the trees, as we look back into that distance, towards that bell tower, we're just not seeing any air. You feel like you want to open up a window and let the air in.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Take a closer look at the woman in the center of the picture, and at the glass she's holding.

JULIA FORBES:

It's a particular glass that was used for a Dutch drinking game. It has these little ridges around it. And in the game, you were meant to try to drink a specific amount of the beer, so that when you sat the glass back down on the table, you had emptied it to a point that matched up evenly with one of those rings. So it's really interesting that De Hooch would take this type of drinking game and put that in the hands of this woman, who's presumably serving this maybe wealthy man who lives in this house.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Originally, De Hooch included another person in this intimate backyard scene. To hear more about it, press PLAY

JULIA FORBES:

One of the curiosities about this painting is that De Hooch made another version of this, and in that version, there's a second man in the painting. So there's been some conservation done, and some x-raying of this painting. And even some of the evidence that we can see just looking at this painting ourselves, helps us realize that maybe someone is missing.

So as we look to the very left of the painting, there's a red jacket that's hanging over the railing. But the man that is in our scene actually is wearing his jacket. He's smoking. But if we look at the table that's between the man and the woman with the glass of beer, there's another pipe that's there.

in that other version of the painting, there is a second man who's there with this one, smoking and talking. For some reason, De Hooch decided to paint him out of this composition. It's always interesting to think about an artist's process and the choices that an artist makes.

**112. FRANS HALS, PORTRAIT OF ALETTA HANEMANS (1606-1653), 1625
[WITH MENTION TO #13]**

JULIA FORBES:

We're standing in front of one half of a pair of paintings by Dutch master Frans Hals. Indications that, Aletta, this young woman, is recently married is her wedding ring and even the gloves that she's clasping in her left hand. She's been painted soon after her marriage, so this is a wedding portrait.

Now, you'll notice that Aletta and her husband nearby are both wearing the spectacular white collars. And this again was a fashionable choice in Holland. You see this regularly in these very formal Dutch portraits.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Aletta's gown is also the height of contemporary fashion,

JULIA FORBES:

Many of us might look at her and think, wow, she's already pregnant. But she's not pregnant. She's actually wearing a really fascinating Dutch foundation garment that makes her clothes hang out in front of her [and] She's also wearing a really stunning black coat, and I encourage you as you stand here today to really look at all the detail Hals gets into this.

While Frans Hals was clearly commissioned to paint a wedding portrait of this very wealthy young couple from Haarlem, I'm sure they chose him because of his mastery in technique. You really can see how he's shown off his skill at painting a wide range of textures.

The folks at the Mauritius have had an opportunity to do some conservation on these paintings, and while the wonderful pink of her skirt is really beautiful to us today, we know that it would have been an even deeper purple. So the contrast between those folds [of] that beautiful pink dress against the darkness of the black coat, and then against the gold embroidered bodice that she's wearing – it must have been a really quite spectacular portrait.

113. REMBRANDT, SUSANNA, 1636

JULIA FORBES:

Here, Rembrandt tells us the Old Testament story of Susanna. Susanna's a young woman, who's married. And these two men, who were hiding in the bushes, on the right side of the painting, have come to take advantage of her. They blackmail her, telling her that if she won't sleep with them, they will tell her husband and the entire town that she's committed adultery and ruin her reputation and her marriage.

Susanna, being the very proper young woman that she is, refuses them. They indeed slander her and tell the community, but her patience and her perseverance in telling the truth is rewarded because the evil men are found out and God protects her, and her reputation is not ruined in the end.

Rembrandt uses really dramatic story telling in the way he presents Susanna to us. She's really our star, her beautiful skin contrasted against the luxurious fabric of her outer garment and her undergarment. Everything that's bathed in light is given a great deal of attention, from the jewelry, to the decoration in her hair, the necklace that she wears, even the shoes that she's slipping out of.

And as we move into the hazy darkness of the background, where we know that the evil is lurking, things become a little less specific. The brushwork is much more loose. And as we move way into the background, we almost disappear into the blackness of the night.

114. REMBRANDT, SIMEON'S SONG OF PRAISE, 1631

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

This is a painting by Rembrandt, who is considered one of the greatest artists of all time. One of his signature tools is the way that he uses light to both illuminate and to create meaning. This is a relatively early painting in Rembrandt's career, and it shows the influence of one of his early teachers, Peter Lastman.

Prior to Rembrandt, very few Dutch artists painted scenes of history, scenes from the Bible. Rembrandt really made them into an entirely new way of painting.

This particular painting shows a scene from the New Testament, where Simeon, a prophet, had asked God to allow him to live to see the arrival of the Savior. And, so, in the scene we see Simeon, who's the old man with the white beard and the white hair, holding the baby Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem.

Just by him, we see the kneeling Mary, and then we also see Joseph, who's holding a couple of doves in his hand, which are going to be sacrificed in honor of this momentous occasion. With [her] back turned to us, we also see St. Anne, who is giving a blessing to this scene.

Rembrandt takes this moment and creates this incredible drama, not only through the spotlighting of the scene, by drawing our attention to what it is that we should be focusing on, but also by creating this amazing stage set. It's fantastic; these pillars rising up and this cavernous space. He's trying to paint something that he would never have been able to see in real life.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Rembrandt was just 25 years old when he made this painting. He already demonstrated enormous talent, foreshadowing his future artistic direction.

**115. REMBRANDT, 'TRONIE' OF A MAN WITH A FEATHERED BERET,
C.1635-1640**

MICHAEL SHAPIRIO:

Rembrandt painted this bust-length character study, or *tronie*, in the mid-1630s. The word *Tronie* actually meant “face” in 17th-Century Dutch and these paintings featured unidentified sitters often with exaggerated facial expressions or elaborate costumes. Rembrandt was instrumental in creating a thriving market for these works that became popular money-makers for artists at the time.

This spectacular panel shows an unidentified man in exotic garb. He wears an extravagant velvet beret with an ostrich feather beautifully outlined against the monochrome background. He looks out at us with a haughty, almost arrogant expression, as if disturbed by our sudden appearance. He sports a golden, horn-shape earring of a kind not usually worn by 17th-century men, further underscoring his flamboyant appearance.

His dark cloak is decorated with a *gorget*, a metal collar traditionally worn by soldiers, and magnificent gold embroideries that echo the rich golds and ochres of the man's complexion.

On the right side of the painting, in the shaded background, you'll see the artist's signature. Starting in the early 1630s, Rembrandt began to sign his name in full rather than using his traditional monogram RHL, which stands for 'Rembrandt son of Harmen of Leiden.' In the past, the signature and therefore the authenticity of the panel have been doubted. However, conservation studies have shown that it was inscribed with the same gray pigment that Rembrandt used in the painting, clear evidence that he himself had created this marvelous picture.

116. REMBRANDT (STUDIO COPY), PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT WITH A GORGET, AFTER C.1629

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

This is a self portrait of Rembrandt painted as a 23-year-old man. And, although there are some questions about whether this was painted by Rembrandt himself, or whether it was painted by studio assistants later in Rembrandt's career, based on a painting that he had made as a young man we can really detect something of Rembrandt's personality, how he saw himself at that moment in time.

There's a wonderful cascade of hair coming across his forehead, which is picked up by the light. I also love the slightly arched eyebrows and //furrowed forehead. They indicate a kind of curiosity and a brightness. Here is a person, who was interested and curious, and perhaps also had a tremendous sense of humor.

Then you see these wonderful red lips, which for me at least, hint at the sensuous side of Rembrandt, the artist who loved life, who loved people, and who really loved to live the good life.

As a young man, he would have been of military draft age. And so he presents himself as a soldier. He's wearing a *gorget*, which was a piece of armor, and I love the rivets in the armor, which just catch the light and you get a sense of texture. You get a sense of the metal of the *gorget*, contrasting with the cloth collar, and then this incredible hair that just sort of cascades and... it floats.

So really it's a painting about a young artist who knows he has tremendous talent. And of course we know that he would go on to be one of the greatest artists who ever lived.

117. JOHANNES VERMEER, GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING, C.1665

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Johannes Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is one of the best-known and most beloved paintings in the world. Created around 1665 in the artist's Delft studio, it has been called the 'Dutch Mona Lisa' for the subtle mystery that surrounds Vermeer's youthful sitter.

She gazes out at us with sparkling grey eyes, slightly parted lips, and an expression both sensuous and thoughtful. Her unusually large pearl earring and yellow and blue turban further underscore her enigmatic appearance.

Curator David Brenneman recalls that the canvas left a lasting impression on him when he first saw it as an undergraduate student.

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

I still remember walking into the gallery, which contained the *Girl With the Pearl Earring*, and I immediately zoomed in on the painting. I walked across the gallery absolutely just flabbergasted by how beautiful the painting was. I wondered how a human being could make something so perfect. And from that day on this painting has always held a special place in my memory. I don't know how many art historical careers it launched, but it launched mine.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Julia Forbes is equally smitten with Vermeer's masterpiece.

JULIA FORBES:

One of the things that I find particularly enchanting about the *Girl With the Pearl Earring* is the costume that Vermeer has given to her. He's made a very specific choice here to try to do something that is exotic. She is certainly not wearing anything typical of a young woman in Holland.

The way he's used color, at first glance, you might think, well, I'm just seeing blue and yellow. But the longer you look at it and try to really stare at the blue, or really stare at the yellow, you realize how many different colors are there in order to create the light, and the shadow, and make it all feel so incredibly real, like you almost feel like you could reach out and touch that fabric. And by contrasting it against that dark black background, I think the blues and the yellows are even more vivid, even more vibrant.

DAVID BRENNEMAN:

And then the other thing that's just really extraordinary is the way that the light strikes all of the surfaces. These incredible white highlights in her irises, or the shadow of the nose, And then the incredible pearl earring. It's reflecting the light so perfectly.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO:

Perhaps the most important aspect of the portrait to my eye is the unerring sense of balance and proportion. The head, the position of the eyes, the nose, the mouth, the ear – all are in harmony achieved through technical perfection. The definition of a masterpiece.

I hope you have enjoyed *Girl with a Pearl Earring: Dutch Painting from the Mauritshuis*. Many people have worked to bring this amazing selection of Dutch masterpieces to the High Museum.

Girl with a Pearl Earring: Dutch Paintings from the Mauritshuis is organized by the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague. Generous support for this exhibition is provided by the Sara Giles Moore Foundation, Sharon and Chip Shirley, The Friends of the *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Thank you again for visiting the High Museum of Art and we hope that return soon.