

## High Museum of Art

### ***Girl with a Pearl Earring: Dutch Paintings from the Mauritshuis***

#### An Acoustiguide Kids Tour

1. Introduction - Paulus Potter, *Cattle in a Meadow*, 1652,
2. Salomon van Ruysdael, *View of a Lake with Sailing Ships*, c.1650-1651 Jan van Goyen, *View of the Rhine near Hochelten* , 1653
3. Abraham van Beveren, *Banquet Still Life*. After 155
4. Rachel Ruysch, *Vase of Flowers*, 1700
5. Jan Steen, “*As the Old Sing, So Twitter the Young*”, c.1665
6. Gerrit van Honthorst, *The Violin Player*, 1626
7. Jan Steen, ‘*The Sick Girl*’, c.1660-1662
8. Adriaen van Ostade, *The Violinist*, 1673
9. Govert Flinck, *Girl by a High Chair*, 1640 [With a mention to Frans Hals, *Portrait of Aletta Hanemans (1606-1653)*, 1625 & Frans Hals, *Portrait of Jacob Olycan (1596-1638)*, 1625]
10. Rembrandt, *Portrait of an Elderly Man*, 1667
11. Rembrandt, ‘*Tronie*’ of a Man with a Feathered Beret, c.1635
12. Gerard ter Borch, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1668
13. Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c.1665

## 1. INTRODUCTION/ CATTLE IN A MEADOW

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Helloooo, and Welcome to....

*The Search for the Dutch Details!*

I'm Dame Artemesia Breckenridge, world famous art detective! And with me is my young detective in training, Easel...Say hello, Easel.

**EASEL:**

Hello Easel.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

No no, Easel. Just say hello.

**EASEL:**

Just kidding. Hello all.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Easel is a bit of a jokester, so I think I'll need your help today. You see the High Museum...

**EASEL:**

Uh, excuse me, Dame Breckenridge but you remind me a lot of an aunt of mine. Would you mind if I just called you Aunty? Maybe Aunty Arty?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Charming my dear boy. Aunty Arty it is. Now do let me go...

The High Museum has hired us to investigate a rumor that important details are missing from some of the Dutch paintings in this exhibit... Including the famous earring worn by the Girl with the Pearl Earring.

Easel and I, and now **you...are...Dutch Detail Detectives!**

All the paintings we're investigating were painted in the 1600s in the Netherlands, a country that some people call Holland.

**EASEL:**

The 1600s? That was a long time before the United States became a country, right?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Correct Easel. I think there may be hope for you yet.

Now let's get the investigation started with this picture right in front of us...

**EASEL:**

Oh cows! I like cows. Here cow!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I wouldn't get too close, Easel... those are *steers*. See their horns?

Paulus Potter painted this painting.

**EASEL:**

Hey listen. I bet I can say that three times fast!

PaulusPotterpaintedthispaintingPaulusPotterpainted.... (fails) Oh poop.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Good try Easel my boy. Let's hope you do better looking for details.

Paulus Potter loved to paint animals. His wife said he was always taking long walks through the farmland with his sketchpad. In this painting, besides the steers he put in five other animals. Can **you** find them before Easel does?

**EASEL:**

Um....er....ah....mmmm...

Oh I seem them! Five pigs over on the right.

There a momma and three piglets. And it looks like another pig scratching himself on the tree.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Hmm, it seems that all the animals are here that are supposed to be here. But there's supposed to be a person in the painting too, and my report says that the person may be missing. So I need you, and Easel, to look closely again. See any people?

**EASEL:**

Nope. No way. Just animals.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Hmm. Are you sure about that? Look closer, way in the background. I see a woman carrying two buckets that hang from a wooden bar across her shoulders called a yoke. I hope you all found her too.

**EASEL:**

Oh well, I guess the yoke's on me! Haha. Oh wait, no, the yoke's on her. Now I'm confused.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Forget the yoke, Easel and look for the most important detail in the painting. It's the artist's signature. If his signature is missing, someone else might try to take credit for the painting. Let's all look for his signature now.

**EASEL:**

Got it! On the barn on the right. I see his name and the date too, 1652.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excellent work! I hope **you** got it too. All seems to be in order here, so let's find the next painting.

All you have to do is find a painting with a picture of a magnifying glass and the number "2". When you find it, press "2" on your *H A T* and then press the "Play" button.

**EASEL:**

My hat?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Yes, H A T, the *High Art Transponder* that you're holding in your hand. Every time we get to a painting with a magnifying glass and a number all you have to do is enter that number and press "Play." I'll meet you at number 2!

## 2. VIEW OF A LAKE WITH SAILING SHIPS

**EASEL:**

This painting reminds me of a good joke. What do clouds wear under their clothes?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I beg your pardon? Another feeble attempt at humor I presume? All right, what do clouds wear under their clothes?

**EASEL:**

Thunderwear! But seriously, what's up with this painting? It's mostly just clouds. And a few boats I guess.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well, there's a good reason for all those clouds. The land in Holland is very, very flat. So when you look across the countryside, what do you see? Lots of sky.

So, Dutch painters became very good at painting clouds. But what we're looking for now is a windmill.

**EASEL:**

Why a windmill?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Holland was filled with windmills back then and it still is today. It's sort of the symbol of the country. So if there's no windmill in this painting it's a major problem. Let's all look for it now.

**EASEL:**

I see boats and sails and water. Oh there it is on the other side of the lake, on the left side of the painting. Got it. So what else might be missing?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

There's supposed to be a fisherman wearing a reddish jacket. But everything is so dark I'm not sure he's here.

**EASEL:**

Yes he is! Look in the rowboat on the left. There are three fishermen and one has a red jacket. Hey, by the way, speaking of red, if you threw a red shoe into this lake, do you know what it would become?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I'm afraid to ask. What would it become?

**EASEL:**

Wet!

**AUNTY ARTY:**  
Onward please to the next painting!

### 3. VIEW OF THE RHINE NEAR HOCHELTEN

**EASEL:**

Whoa, I think somebody needed to get this artist a new set of paints. Everything looks the same color.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Very perceptive Easel. At first he painted with many colors but when he got older he started to paint like this. But that's not what we're looking for here. First, try to find two horses. Should be pretty easy... but I'll give you a moment.

**EASEL:**

I see them! They're pulling a wagon. But they're on a boat! What's up with that?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excellent Easel! I'll make an art detective of you yet!  
The horses are on a ferry that's going to take them to a town across the Rhine River. You can see it across the river on the right.

**EASEL:**

I see it, up on a hill where the church steeple is. Ok, I'm hot now. What other details might be missing from this painting?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well...believe it or not, there's supposed to be another windmill. Let's all look for it now.  
See if you can find it before Easel does.

**EASEL:**

Oh my gosh, it's so small!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Yes it is. If you haven't found it yet, look at the horse and wagon and then look straight up and across the river.

**EASEL:**

Anything else? I need the practice.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

All right, my list says...check to be sure there's a child, a dog, and man making soup!  
Go ahead I'll wait while you look.

**EASEL:**

Hmm let's see. A child, a dog, and a man making soup. They're not on the boat with the horse.

Oh I see them! They're all in the lower left of the painting. I can almost smell that soup. Uh, by the way, is lunch served on this tour? I'm starving

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Funny you should ask my boy, the next stop is a banquet. So let's move on to find the next painting.

#### 4. BANQUET STILL LIFE

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well Easel, you wanted food! Is this banquet table enough for you?

**EASEL:**

Hah! I guess *this* joke's on me. I can't eat the painting, but it looks delicious. There's so much, that things are spilling right off the table! On the left I see a silver platter with huge hunks of meat, on the right a platter with a giant crab, and so many different fruits, I can't name them all. I see peaches and grapes near the crab, a lemon unpeeling in the middle, four apricots on the left. There's too much to see all at once!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Too much...is exactly right! Dutch painters did a lot of banquet paintings during the Dutch Golden Age. But often they put something in the painting that might seem a bit strange. Anyone see a watch in the painting?

**EASEL:**

Hmm. Oh there it is, a pocket watch on the left corner of the table! But...why a watch?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It's just a little reminder that even though you may be wealthy and successful, time is ticking away, and nobody lives forever.

**EASEL:**

Well that's a cheery thought! Anything else we should search for?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

As a matter of fact yes. Somewhere in the painting the artist put a portrait of himself! So let's all investigate and see if it's here.

**EASEL:**

I give up. Do you see it?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I didn't at first but now I do. Look at the big silver pitcher. On its shiny side is a reflection of the artist standing at his easel and painting! He has a hat on. See him?

**EASEL:**

Wow, I do now.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Good... well, it's time to move along. Take your High Art Transponder and find the next painting please.

## 5. VASE WITH FLOWERS

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Ahhhh. Can you smell this painting? I almost can. The artist is the most famous woman painter of the Dutch Golden Age. Her name is Rachel Ruysch.

**EASEL:**

Why did she paint flowers?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Two reasons. One is that her father was a professor of botany...the study of plants. And the other reason is that flowers were a big business in the Dutch Golden Age. Especially tulips, because they came to Holland all the way from Turkey. So tulips were the most expensive. Do you know what else Ruysch liked to paint? I'll give you a hint. There's one on the table.

**EASEL:**

Whoa! Looks like a big bug! On the right. She liked to paint bugs?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

A better word is insects my boy, and she knew that wherever there are flowers there are insects. The insect on the table is a beetle, and in her paintings you might also see butterflies, wasps, moths, and bees. So I think we should all look and see if we can find any other insects in this painting.

Ready? Begin.

**EASEL:**

I see one. Looks like a bee hiding inside the pink flower on the right.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Ah yes, that's called a pink cabbage rose. Lovely. So I'll report this to the High Museum. Beetle and bumblebee found.

**EASEL:**

You know I *do* see tulips.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I'm sure, you do... there are a lot of flowers in the painting.

**EASEL:**

Not in the painting... Right there between your nose and your chin! Get it? Two lips?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Ha! Now that one I like! Let's see if the next painting inspires you too.



## 6. "AS THE OLD SING, SO TWITTER THE YOUNG"

**EASEL:**

Wow, this looks wild! Kind of reminds me of birthday parties at my crazy Uncle Bert's house. Is it a family?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It is! Three generations of a family celebrating the baptism of the child in the woman's arms. The grandfather is on the left, goofing around wearing a hat that new Dutch fathers usually wore.

**EASEL:**

Who's the happy guy on the right side? He looks like he's teaching that boy to smoke a pipe.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well I have two answers to that question. First, he's the boy's father, and father of the boy playing the bagpipes. Second... he's the artist, Jan Steen, and he put himself in the painting.

**EASEL:**

Well, if you ask me, teaching kids to smoke doesn't sound like such a good idea. Next thing you know he'll give the kid a glass of wine!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

That could happen too, but that's the point of the painting, which is titled "As the Old Sing, So Twitter the Young"

**EASEL:**

Twitter? They could Tweet in the Dutch Golden Age?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

No, no. Not that Twitter. To twitter here means to play, like a musical instrument.

**EASEL:**

Huh? I don't get it.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well, the title is an old Dutch proverb, or saying, that's supposed to be written somewhere in the painting. It might be missing. So let's all look for the writing now.

**EASEL:**

The old lady has something written on the piece of paper she's holding! But it's in Dutch.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

That's the grandmother. Fortunately, I can read Dutch. Yes, that's it... "As the Old Sing, So Twitter the Young." Basically, it means that whatever adults do, children will imitate, so set a good example for your kids. Jan Steen liked to paint pictures that were fun **and** had a message too.

**EASEL:**

I get it. That reminds me of another saying... you know, the one about the painting that had to go to jail.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

But why would a painting have to go to jail?

**EASEL:**

Because it was framed.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

That joke is a crime. Why don't we just walk on to the next painting.

## 7. THE VIOLIN PLAYER

**EASEL:**

Hey Aunty Arty, I found her! The girl with a pearl earring! You said at the beginning that we were looking for her *and* her earring, right? Plus, she must be important because the Museum has her name all over the place...  
But wait a second... I don't remember you saying anything about a violin?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well, my young detective, I must admit she *IS* wearing a pearl earring, but she's not *THE* Girl with a Pearl Earring I told you about. She's actually called The Violin Player.

**EASEL:**

Oh well... So, tell me about her and what I should be looking for.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

*I* have an idea... This time why don't *you* tell *me* about her. After all, a good detective must be able to look closely and pick up clues to solve a mystery. Use your powers of observation.

**EASEL:**

Well...look at her colorful clothes and that headdress of feathers. I don't think she dressed like this every day. *I* think it's a costume.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Interesting idea. Notice anything else?

**EASEL:**

Wait a second. Look at her hands. They look kind of red and raw... I think she does something besides just playing the violin.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excellent... you're on a roll.

**EASEL:**

Hmmm, and the way she's *holding* the violin and the bow... that doesn't look like the people I've seen playing the violin...

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Ah, well I can explain that... during her time, musicians held the violin differently than they do now... and they played differently. It was almost like today's pop music!

So, if you add that to what you said about her clothes and hands...

**EASEL:**

Annnnd, she looks really happy... I think she's going to a party to play the violin and

dance!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I think that's an excellent deduction, my boy! Are you ready to move on to the next painting?

**EASEL:**

Just as soon as *you* deduce the answer to this riddle:  
How is a violin like a vampire?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Here we go again. How *is* a violin like a vampire?

**EASEL:**

They both sleep in cases.

Ok, *now* we can move on.

## 8. THE SICK GIRL

**EASEL:**

Uh-oh. This looks like a sad painting. Is this girl sick?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well the title of the painting is The Sick Girl. But many people in Holland of the 1600s thought this was funny... including the artist who painted it, Jan Steen. Remember him? He painted the family with the boy smoking the pipe.

**EASEL:**

I want to hear all about this, but first tell me what might be missing that we should look for.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Cupid. Do you know who Cupid is? A little naked angel with a bow and arrow. He's the symbol for people falling in love and you see him a lot on Valentine Cards.

**EASEL:**

Ok, we'll look around for Cupid while you explain. I know you think my jokes are bad, but this guy Steen's sense of humor sounds weird. What is she sick with?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Ah, my boy, the love illness. Or more precisely the *lack* of love illness. Some doctors thought that if a young woman wasn't feeling well, it was because she needed to fall in love and get married. And that would solve everything. Most people thought that was ridiculous and made fun of the idea.

**EASEL:**

Found Cupid! He's a statue standing up on the fireplace mantel.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Very good, I can check him off the list of missing details. When people saw Cupid in the painting they'd think "Ah, she just needs to get shot by one of his love arrows and she'll be cured."

**EASEL:**

I don't know if this is on your list, Aunty Arty, but I see something that might be missing.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

What's that, Easel?

**EASEL:**

Hah, my turn to ask the questions! It's something that usually comes in pairs, but I *think* I only see one here. I'll give you a couple of seconds to look.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Hmmm, well there only seems to be one slipper. But... if you look closely you can the other one peeking out from under the girl's skirt

**EASEL:**

Oh, darn.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

But it does make me wonder why she's not wearing it.

**EASEL:**

I bet that dog on the pillow had something to do with! Did you know I had a dog once? It could tell time!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I find that hard to believe, Easel.

**EASEL:**

He could... He was a watchdog!  
On to the next painting!

## 9. THE VIOLINIST

**EASEL:**

Hey another fiddle player. Cool! What's this place where he's playing?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It's a country tavern... kind of like a restaurant. And that jug hanging above the door is like a sign telling people they have food and drinks there. The fiddler is probably a traveling musician playing for tips.

**EASEL:**

Since you read Dutch, what's the white paper near the door say?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It's a notice for a cattle auction. Lots of farmers around here.

**EASEL:**

So what might be missing from this painting? I'm really getting good at this!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

My notes say to check for three things that might be missing. First, two beehives. Second, two white clay pipes. And third, the shoe missing from the girl sitting on the bench. I think we all have our work cut out for us, so let's look.

**EASEL:**

Ok, the pipes are lying on the shelf above the little girl's head. And I think I see two beehives in the shadows behind the fiddler. Can't tell if there are any bees though. The shoe? I think that's definitely missing. You better tell the High.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I think you may be right. I'll make a note of that for the museum.  
Girl's right shoe missing. There.  
By the way Easel, have you ever heard of a Dutch door?

**EASEL:**

I've heard of it, but I don't know what it is.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Well you're looking at one. A Dutch door has two parts and you can open just the top or just the bottom or both halves together.

**EASEL:**

Hey do you know what happens when you just open the bottom of the Dutch door?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Really? Another attempt at humor? Ok, what happens when you just open the bottom

of the Dutch door?

**EASEL:**

That dog runs inside!

Race you to the next painting!

**10. GIRL BY A HIGH CHAIR, [WITH MENTION OF PORTRAIT OF ALETTA HANEMANS & PORTRAIT OF JACOB OLYCAN]**

**EASEL:**

Wow look at the bling bling on this little girl! It *is* a little girl isn't it? Her face looks so serious...maybe she's a small woman?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

No, it is a little girl and she's unhappy because she had to stand still a long time next to her high chair while the artist sketched her. What was that word you used? Bling? What does it mean?

**EASEL:**

Flashy jewelry, you know, like all the gold she's wearing. A gold necklace, a gold bracelet...and what's on that gold chain hanging down low?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It's a jingling bell, kind of like a baby's rattle today. It's made of gold and it has a rock crystal at its end. The crystal was supposed to protect her. A bell like this shows that her parents were very wealthy.

**EASEL:**

Speaking of parents, *they* seem to be missing from the painting! Or maybe that's them in the big portraits on either side of her?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Nice try my young sleuth, but they are not her parents. They *are* a married couple though, and many people in the Dutch Golden Age had their portraits painted after they got married.

**EASEL:**

Did they always dress like that and stand like that? They look pretty stiff to me. He looks like he has a belly ache and is holding his tummy.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

They put on their finest clothes for the portrait, including what's called a white ruff around their necks. And they posed the way most Dutch people posed, with one arm bent and one arm hanging down.

**EASEL:**

That's funny... Maybe *you* try standing like that while I try another riddle on Aunty Arty.

What's red and smells like blue paint?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I give up. What's red and smells like blue paint?

**EASEL:**

Red paint.

OK, onward to another portrait!

## 11. PORTRAIT OF AN ELDERLY MAN

**EASEL:**

Hey does this guy have earbuds hanging around his neck? I wonder what he was listening to.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Think about it, Easel, he lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century!

**EASEL:**

Then what is it?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

You know what, you can ask him yourself! Thanks to the H A T in your hand. Using the High Art Transponder, we can travel back in time and have a chat. I'll activate it now....

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excuse me sir, could we ask you a few questions?

**MAN:**

As long as I don't have to get up. My friend Rembrandt said I could sit down while he painted my portrait. We were having a glass of wine one day and all of a sudden he said "That's how I want to paint you!"

**EASEL:**

Oh, you're fine the way you are. I like the way you look, sitting down with your hat a little crooked, and your shirt open at the neck. You look more like a photograph than a painting.

**MAN:**

A photo-what? Never heard of it. I just wanted to be comfortable. Do you what I'm wearing on my feet?

Slippers!

Say, did you see that man and his wife ? Boy, do they look stiff! I didn't want to be remembered like that, and Rembrandt didn't want to paint me like that. You **do** know Rembrandt don't you? He's one of the most famous artists in history!

He's painted hundreds and hundreds of pictures and made more than 2,000 drawings! And one thing he was known for was paintings like this one of me... just regular everyday people!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Yes, yes of course, he's one of the best known artists of all time.

**MAN:**

You know, he once told me his parents wanted him to become a minister... lucky for us, he decided he wanted to be a painter when he was only 15 years old.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Lucky indeed! We'll let you get back to your, ah, sitting. And thank you for speaking with us.

**MAN:**

Oh you're welcome. Actually, I think I'll go for a shave now. I'm lookin' a bit scruffy, even for me.

**EASEL:**

Well that was cool, doing some time travel investigation. Can we do that again?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Maybe. But first we have to find the next painting.

## 12. TRONIE OF A MAN WITH A FEATHERED BERET

**EASEL:**

Whoa! I want to talk to this guy with the wild hat. Can we use *our* H A T again, the Transponder?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Not with this painting, because he's not a real person.

**EASEL:**

Say what? I can see him. He's got a red mustache. And that hat... it looks like he's wearing a bird on his head! What do you mean he's not a real person?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Your powers of observation are improving all the time my boy. But he's a Tronie. Sometimes, instead of painting real people, Dutch artists painted people they imagined and dressed them any way they wanted to. It was a way to practice and improve their skills. That way they could try out different facial expressions, different poses, different clothes and objects.

**EASEL:**

Well I still think he's pretty cool looking. Look at that fancy earring. Kind of looks like a fish to me. And what's that metal thing around his neck?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

It's called a gorget, and soldiers wore it. So Rembrandt made this Tronie part soldier, part fancy gentleman.

**EASEL:**

Wait a minute, Rembrandt painted this?! Wow. It's so different from the old man portrait we saw. Are you sure Rembrandt painted this one too?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I certainly am! While not all artists sign their work, we're in luck because Rembrandt signed *this* one. You know, Rembrandt signed different paintings in different ways and sometimes he only used his initials. Why don't you look for his signature on this one?

**EASEL:**

I found a name in the shadow on the wall to the right. It's spelled R-E-M-B-R-A-N-D-T. And then there's a couple of extra letters. Is Rembrandt spelled right?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Of course, it is. By the way, the extra letters stand for a Latin word that means "he made it."

**EASEL:**

Cool! And guess what? I have another paint joke! What happened when a ship carrying red paint collided with a ship carrying blue paint?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I am breathless with anticipation.

**EASEL:**

Both crews were marooned. Marooned, get it? When you mix red and blue....

**AUNTY ARTY:**

How... colorful.

Let's move on. Only two paintings left.

### 13. SELF PORTRAIT (*GERARD TER BORCH*)

**EASEL:**

Wait, don't tell me. I bet this is another *Tronie*, not a real person. Who would ever pose like this wearing that weird looking cape?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Oh, my dear Easel... I understand your reasoning, but actually this is a self-portrait... a painting the artist, Gerard Ter Borch, made of himself!

**EASEL:**

Well he may be a good painter, but why did he want people to see him standing like that forever?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excellent question, because the High Museum also wants us to investigate his pose. And the most important question... why does his cape have such an...um... interesting shape.

What do *you* think? What would make it look like that?

**EASEL:**

It looks to me like he's hiding something under there, but what could it be?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I think it's time to fire up the H A T and ask him!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Excuse me... Good day... Mr. Ter Borch? We were just admiring your self-portrait and my young friend here has a few questions.

**TER BORCH:**

Very well. But please be quick about it! I'm a *very* busy man.

**EASEL:**

Oh, is that why you're not smiling?

**TER BORCH:**

I am an important man in my city, so I need to look serious. *And* stylish. That's why I dress all in black. Except for the lace bib at my neck. It's imported from France and it is *all the rage*.

**EASEL:**

Uh, if you say so. And why do you stand with your feet like that? I know you're a painter but are you a dancer too?

**TER BORCH:**

No, no, silly boy. My feet show everyone how important I am. For your information, only *upper* class people are allowed to stand like this in a portrait.

**EASEL:**

OK, that's weird... but clear. Final question. What *is* that under your cape? It looks like you're smuggling basketballs under there!

**TER BORCH:**

Smuggling?! What insolence! I'm no pirate!!!

I'm standing with my hands on my hips so my elbows make the cape stick out. What are basketballs anyway?

**AUNTY ARTY:**

I don't think we need to go into that right now... Thank you for your time, Mr. Ter Borch.

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Bravo my boy! You found the truth about the cape and I can report our findings to The High Museum.

All right, according to my notes, the only painting left to find is the Girl with a Pearl Earring...**IF** she still has the pearl earring. We may have to search a while for her, so let's get going.

## 14. GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING

### EASEL:

Hello, hello, you there with the pearl earring. Can you hear me? Hey is this thing on? This Transponder doesn't seem to be working.

### AUNTY ARTY:

Well there's a very good reason for that. Can you guess what it is?

### EASEL:

Oh no. Don't tell me she's a Tronie! She's so beautiful. You sure we can't talk to her?

### AUNTY ARTY:

I'm afraid not. Yes, she's a Tronie, painted by Jan Vermeer, one of the most famous artists of the Dutch Golden Age.

### EASEL:

So Dutch women didn't dress like her back then? I guess the turban on her head should have tipped me off.

### AUNTY ARTY:

No, women didn't wear turbans in Holland. Vermeer was experimenting with the clothes and with the pose, having her look over her shoulder.

And the look on her face... What do *you* think she's thinking?

The expression on her face is one reason people can't stop looking at this painting, even 350 years after she was painted.

### EASEL:

I bet she's thinking...why are all these people looking at me?!

Hey, I see the pearl. But look close.

It's just a dab of white paint! Wow, Vermeer was a great artist. But does she have the other earring on too? I'm sure the High Museum wants to know. That's why I was trying to use the transponder.

### AUNTY ARTY:

Easel I am so proud of you! You are truly beginning to think like an art detective. But I'm afraid we don't know if she is wearing *both* earrings. Even though we detectives like to *solve* mysteries, that is one that we never will.

Well, that's the end of our work today and the end of your tour. Thank you for coming to the High Museum and assisting Easel and myself.

**EASEL:**

We couldn't have done it without you!

**AUNTY ARTY:**

Even though our job here is done, yours isn't. There are soooo many more details for you to find... here in the High Museum *and* everyday all around you! You just need to pay attention and look closely!

Now, don't forget to turn in your Transponder before you leave... That goes for you too, Easel.

**EASEL:**

Alright...

**AUNTY ARTY:**

And we hope you'll come back to the High Museum soon.