

BAROQUE





Inspiration of St. Matthew (1602)

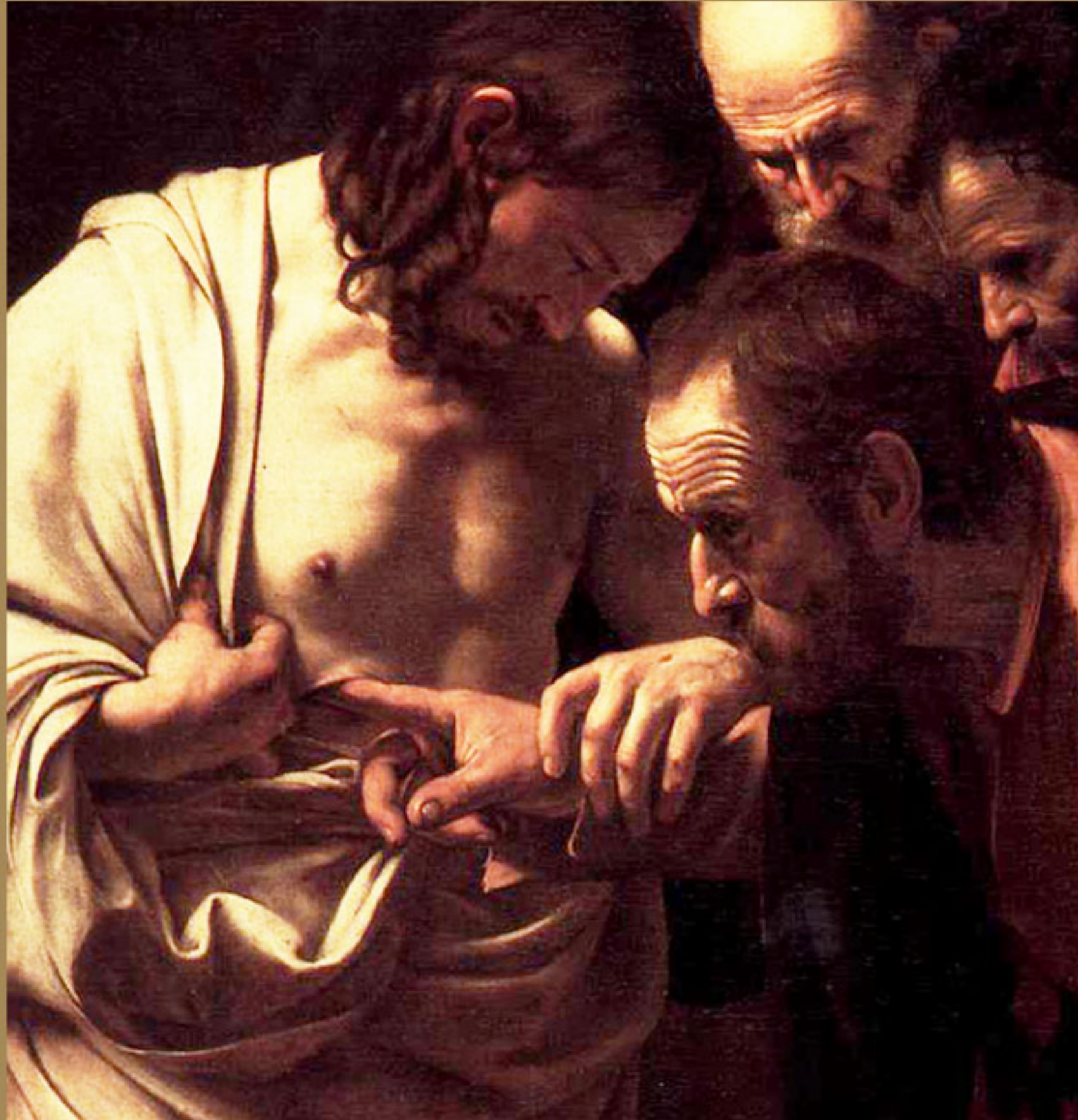
This is an imaginative depiction of St. Matthew writing his book of the Gospel. The Angel counts on his fingers, in the traditional scholastic fashion, the arguments that the saint should take note of and write down. A whirlwind of drapery envelops the angel. The saint balances on his bench, in precarious equilibrium, like a modern schoolboy; but this time the unorthodox elements do not seem to have raised particular objections.

Caravaggio- A painter of genius, Caravaggio is considered to be the greatest religious painter of the Protestant North. He was named after his birthplace near Milan. He broke from the Mannerist style of painting and introduced a new solidity and weightlessness to his subjects. He painted religious subjects who looked like real people- as though off the streets of Rome.





The Incredulity of St. Thomas (1601)



According to St. John's Gospel, Thomas missed one of Christ's appearances to the Apostles after His resurrection. He therefore announced that, unless he could thrust his hand into Christ's side, he would not believe what he had been told. A week later Christ appeared, asked Thomas to reach out his hands to touch Him and said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

This drama of disbelief seems to have touched Caravaggio personally in *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*. Few of his paintings are physically so shocking - Thomas pushes curiosity to its limits before he will say, "My Lord and my God." The classical composition carefully unites the four heads in the quest for truth. Christ's head is largely in shadow, as He is the person who is the least knowable.

The Entombment (1602)

This painting is probably Caravaggio's most monumental. The figures are humble, subjected to grief and lamentation as they bury the dead Christ.

The realism with which Caravaggio treated even religious subjects was unprecedented and sometimes viewed as scandalous.

Chiaroscuro: When beginning a painting, the artist would paint the entire canvas black; perhaps block in where the flesh would be with white. The painter then tried to reconcile the darkness with the light, making the figures appear to emerge from the darkness.



Judith Beheading Holofernes (1612)

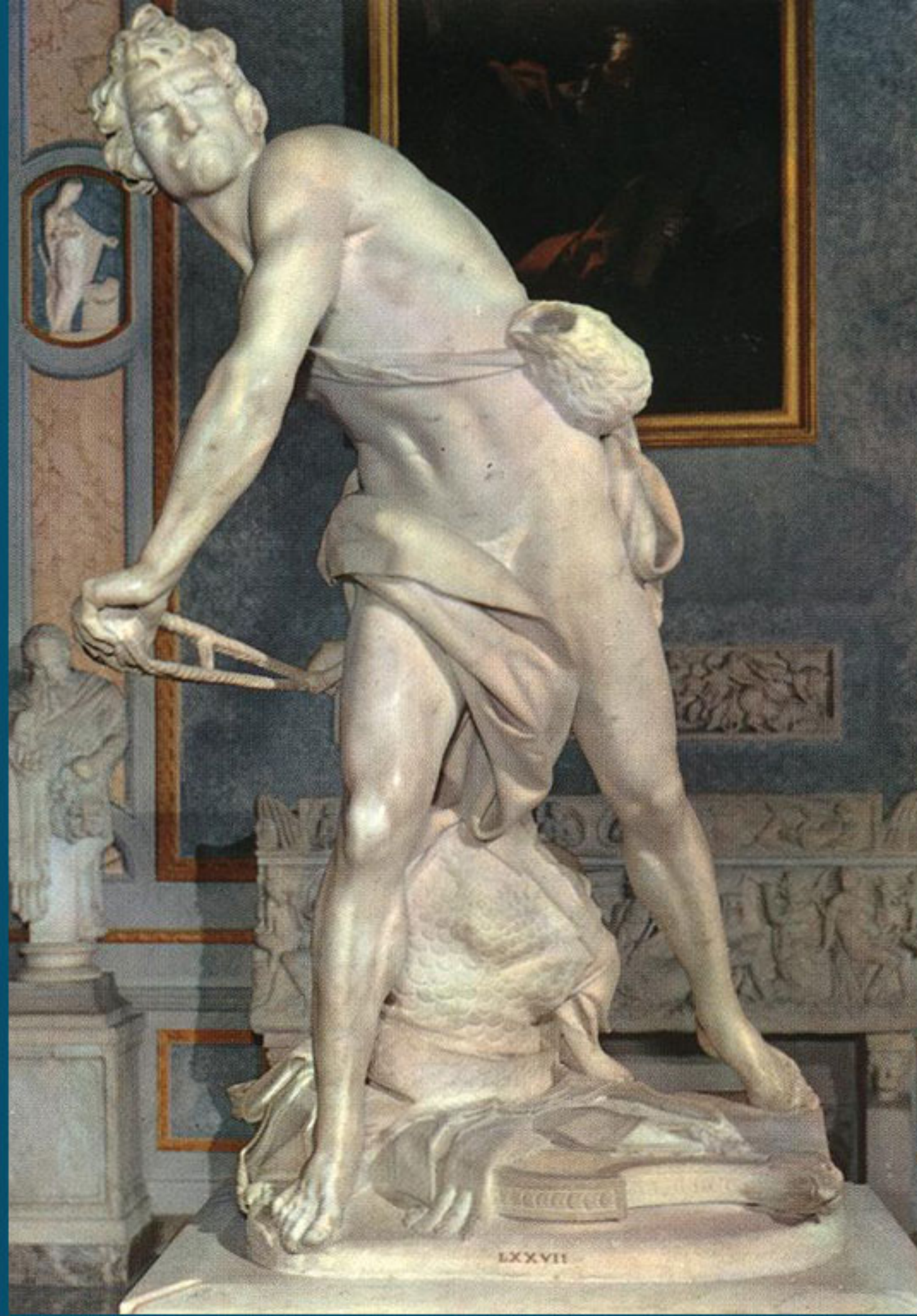
Artemisia Gentileschi was the most important woman painter of Early Modern Europe by virtue of the excellence of her work, the originality of her treatment of traditional subjects, and the number of her paintings that have survived. She was both praised and disdained by critics of her time, recognized as having genius, yet seen as monstrous because she was a woman exercising a creative talent thought to be exclusively male. Judith was a Jewish widow of noble rank in Bethulia, a town besieged by the army of the Assyrian general Holofernes. She approached his tent as an emissary and captivated him with her beauty. He ordered a feast with much wine. After he passed out in his tent, Judith and her maid Abra saw their opportunity. Judith decapitated Holofernes with his sword and smuggled his head back to Bethulia. On seeing her trophy, the townsfolk routed the leaderless Assyrians. The story is an allegory picturing Judith as Judaism in triumph over its pagan enemy.



Bernini pits himself against the masterpieces of Donatello and Michelangelo with this sculpture of the David.

The other sculptures of David show him in tranquility with the head of Goliath or the sling-shot as attribute. Bernini, on the other hand, represents David in action, in the very moment of shooting.

Bernini was 25 when he completed this piece. He ranks as the greatest sculptor in the 17th century.



DAVID (1623)



Bernini began this sculpture at the age of 24. It was housed in a Cardinal's villa.

He intended the viewer to see Apollo first, from the back, and then the fleeing nymph Daphne in the process of metamorphosis. She is captured mid-transformation, becoming a tree to escape.

Engraved on the base is the line: "Those who love to pursue fleeting forms of pleasure, in the end find only leaves and bitter berries."



APOLLO & DAPHNE

(1622)



Christ in the Carpenter's Shop (1645)

Georges de la Tour, renowned and admired in his own day, was to remain in the shadows of oblivion after his death in 1652, and for three hundred years. It was not until 1915 that art historians, through long and patient work, resurrected one of the greatest French painters of the 17th century. His sparse forms and bare design all verges on the simplistic.



Diego Velazquez

Velazquez was a great figure in Spain's golden age of the arts. At the age of 24 he was appointed a royal painter. Most of his works are royal portraits. All of his work is known for its dignity and beautiful technique.

Las Meninas (1656)

This stunning group portrait shows the Infanta Margarita, daughter of the Spanish king and queen. She stands with her maids of honor, the court dwarfs in the foreground on the right. Margarita, with her pale face and luminous hair, is the focal point of the painting. She was only four or five when this portrait was painted, and already she has a knowing stare. The royal couple appears in the mirror in the background, and Velazquez himself stands as the painter to the left.



The Night Watch (1642)

This huge painting earned its name because of its dark varnish. It was originally named *The Militia Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch*. It is a lively and dramatic scene. The little girl in the background, illuminated by a shaft of light, is that company's mascot. She carries its emblems- chicken claws, a pistol, and a company goblet.

Rembrandt was a Dutch painter, draftsman, and etcher of the 17th century: a giant in the history of art. His paintings are characterized by luxuriant brushwork, rich color, and a mastery of chiaroscuro. His free brushwork was not constrained to any style, most known for his tension between light and dark. Truly a master storyteller with a single image, so viewers, we feel closer to Rembrandt.



The Girl with the Pearl Earring (1665) –

Against the dark background the girl turns to look at the viewer, a question in her look. The composition is so simple it is striking. The identity of the woman is a puzzle, much like the *Mona Lisa*.

Vermeer, a Dutch genre painter who lived and worked in Delft, created some of the most exquisite paintings in Western art. His works are rare of the 35 or 36 paintings generally attributed to him, most portray figures in interiors. All his works are admired for the sensitivity with which he rendered effects of light and color and for the poetic quality of his images. Unlike Rembrandt, Vermeer rarely painted the light sources straight on; he preferred more to have the light enter from the side, creating a side lit effect. The effect of light coming in the window is difficult to portray because the light is often intense and everything around it is in silhouette. Nonetheless, Vermeer's lighting creates dynamic diagonals.



The Art of Painting (1666)-

Vermeer painted this picture in his 30's. He never sold it. It is larger than most of his paintings and it is riddled with symbolism.



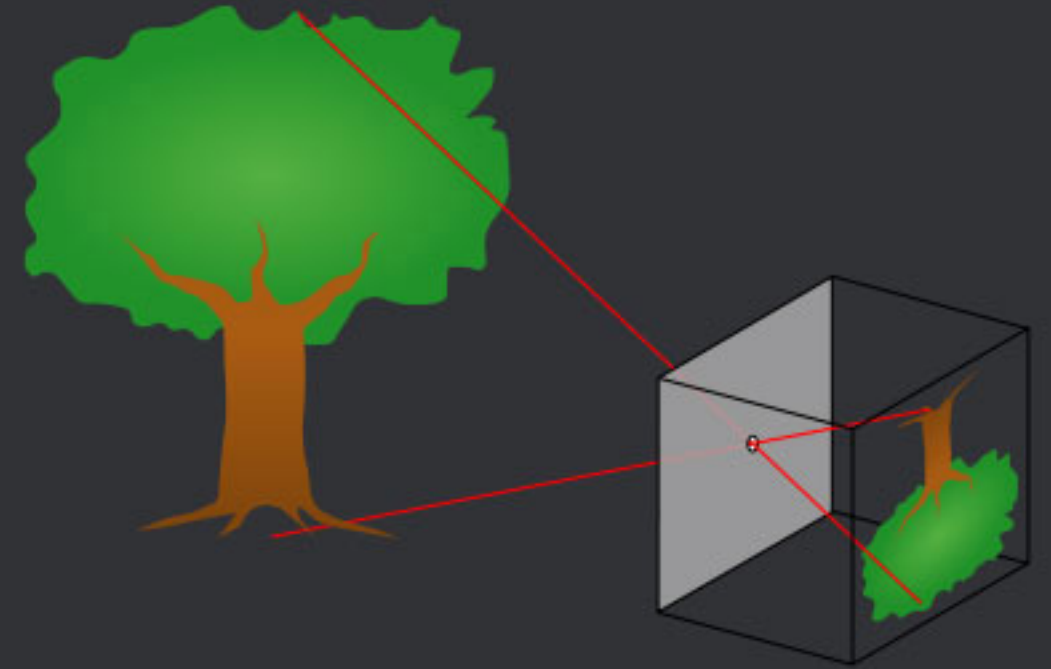
This painting is important when studying Vermeer's technique. He covered the canvas in grey to create a base color, and then added compositional elements with white chalk lines. The perspective and highlights suggest the use of a *camera obscura*.



Beads of Light- With the camera obscura, Vermeer explored the behavior of light, intentionally reproducing many of its effects, depicting reality as it is seen, not as it is. Notice the pinpoints of light on the woven stitches of the curtain.



Muse of History- This figure is Clio, the Muse of history. Her laurel crown symbolizes glory and honor. Her trumpet indicates fame, and her book is a symbol of history.



Camera obscura- Latin for "dark chamber," a camera obscura is a darkened booth or box with a pinhole. It allows an image of a brightly lit scene or subject to be projected on a screen. The scene can then be traced. Vermeer more than likely constructed a booth-type camera obscura in his studio.