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1984 Pops: 68, 69 repro., 71, 76, 96, 99, 103.
1985 NGA: 420, repro.
1985 Brentjens: 54–58, repro.
1986 Aillaud, Blankert, and Montias: 200–201, cat. b3, repro.
1988 Wheelock: 214–245, repros. 9–22, 9–23, 9–24.
1989 Montias: 265–266.
1995 Wheelock: 119–127, color repro.

Attributed to Johannes Vermeer

1942.9.98 (694)

Girl with a Flute

probably 1665/1670
Oil on oak, 20 x 17.8 (7⅞ x 7)
Widener Collection

Technical Notes: The support is a single, vertically grained oak panel with beveled edges on the back. Dendrochronology gives a tree felling date in the early 1650s.[1] The panel has a slight convex warp, a small check in the top edge at the right, and small gouges, rubs, and splinters on the back from nails and handling. A thin, smooth, white chalk ground was applied overall, followed by a coarse-textured gray ground. A reddish brown dead coloring exists under most areas of the painting and is incorporated into the design in the tapestry.[2]

Full-bodied paint is applied thinly, forming a rough surface texture in lighter passages. Still-wet paint in the proper right cheek and chin were textured with a fingertip, then glazed translucently. The x-radiograph (fig. 1) shows extensive design modifications: the proper left shoulder was lowered and the neck opening moved to the viewer's left; the collar on this side may have been damaged or scraped down before being reworked in a richer, creamy white. The earring was painted over the second collar. These adjustments preceded the completion of the background tapestry. The proper left sleeve was longer, making the cuff closer to the wrist. Probably at the same time, the fur trim was added to

Fig. 1. X-radiograph of 1942.9.98

Fig. 2. Infrared reflectogram of 1942.9.98

the front of the jacket, covering the lower part of the neck opening. An infrared reflectogram (fig. 2) suggests that changes may also have occurred by the shape of the hat and contour of the arm on the figure's proper right side. In many areas of the whites, particularly in the proper left collar and cuff, a distinctive wrinkling is present, disturbing the surface. Small, irregularly shaped losses over much of the surface may have resulted from abrasion to similar wrinkles that occurred during old restorations. The blue of the jacket has a lumpy texture with unusual traction crackle.

Disfiguring, coarse retouching covers the numerous small losses. The painting is in restoration.

Provenance: Possibly Pieter Claesz. van Ruijven [1624–1674], Delft; possibly by inheritance to his wife, Maria de Knuijt [d. 1681], Delft; possibly by inheritance to her daughter, Magdalena van Ruijven [1655–1682], Delft; possibly by inheritance to her husband, Jacobus Abrahamsz. Dissius [1653–1695], Delft;[3] (sale, Amsterdam, 16 May 1696, probably no. 39 or 40).[4] Possibly the van Son family; Jan Mahie van Boxtel en Liempde and his wife, Geertruida van Boxtel en Liempde [née van Son, d. 1876], 's-Hertogenbosch; purchased from the estate by their daughter, Jaqueline Gertrude Marie de Grez [Dowager de Grez, née Mahie van Boxtel en Liempde, d. 1917], Brussels, wife of Jonkheer Jan de Grez [d. 1910]; sold 1911 to (Antiquar Jonas, Paris). August Janssen, Amsterdam. (Jacques Goudstikker, Amsterdam, by 1919); purchased jointly April 1921 by (M. Knoedler & Co., New York, and Frederick Muller & Co., Amsterdam); sold February 1923 to Joseph E. Widener; inheritance from Estate of Peter A. B. Widener by gift through power of appointment of Joseph E. Widener, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, after purchase by funds of the Estate.

Exhibited: Mauritshuis, The Hague, 1907; *La Collection Goudstikker d'Amsterdam*, Pulchri Studio. The Hague, 1919, no. 131.

THE GIRL WITH A FLUTE, the only painting on panel attributed to Vermeer other than the *Girl with the Red Hat* (1937.1.53), is a work whose attribution has frequently been brought into question.[5] Partially because of their wood supports and similarly small scale, and partially because of subject matter, these two works have frequently been cited as companion pieces and accepted or rejected together. They may even have been considered companion pieces in the Dissius sale in Amsterdam in 1696.[6] Slight differences in the size of the panels, in the compositional arrangement of the figures, and in the quality of execution have led me to argue in previous publications that the paintings are not companion pieces and that the attribution of the *Girl with a Flute* to Vermeer could not be maintained.[7] Subsequently, I have concluded that removing the *Girl with a Flute* from Vermeer's oeuvre was too extreme given the complex issues surrounding the nature of the image in its current condition. Until more technical analysis can be undertaken, the most appropriate desig-

Attributed to Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Flute*, 1942.9.98

nation for this work would seem to be "Attributed to Johannes Vermeer."[8]

A number of factors point to seventeenth-century origins for the *Girl with a Flute*, and, indeed, relate the work intimately with Vermeer's other paintings. Technically, dendrochronological examination of the panel has determined a felling date in the early 1650s.[9] A paint sample taken from a yellow highlight on the girl's left sleeve, moreover, indicates the use of seventeenth-century pigments characteristic of Vermeer's paintings: natural ultramarine, azurite, and lead-tin yellow.[10] Stylistically, the jacket worn by the girl is comparable to jackets seen in other works from the late 1650s to the mid-1660s, for example, the *Woman Holding a Balance* (1942.9.97) and *The Concert* in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Other artists, particularly Gerard ter Borch (q.v.), Gabriel Metsu (q.v.), and Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635–1681), also depict women in similar costumes.

One unusual aspect of the girl's wardrobe is the hat she wears. No exact equivalent exists in any other painting of the period, although similar wide-brimmed hats are frequently found in Dutch prints and drawings of working-class women.[11] This hat, however, has an oriental character that may relate to a vogue for oriental dress apparent in the latter decades of the seventeenth century.[12] Chinese hats were generally constructed of woven bamboo. This one appears to have been modified by the addition of a gray, white, and black material covering, presumably to enhance its appearance.[13] Indeed this strange hat actually reinforces the argument that the origins of this painting are seventeenth century. It would be extremely unlikely for an artist of a later period to include such a hat in a painting that purported to be a Vermeer.

The *Girl with a Flute* and the *Girl with the Red Hat* are so close in concept that one must assume that they were conceived at approximately the same time, most likely in the mid-to-late 1660s. In each painting the young women look toward the viewer with expectant expressions, their eyes alert, their mouths half open. Each wears an exotic hat, sits in a chair with lion finials, and leans on one arm. Behind each of them hangs a tapestry of which only a fragment is visible. In each picture, light entering from the left, an unusual feature in Vermeer paintings, strikes the girl's left cheek, nose, and chin.

The manner in which optical effects of color are exploited in the two works is also comparable, and, in both instances, characteristic of Vermeer. In each painting, he shaded the face by pulling a thin green glaze over the flesh tones, a technique he developed more extensively in his later works. Colored highlights are a distinctive characteristic of Vermeer's style, and in the *Girl with a Flute* he accented the mouth with a turquoise green highlight in a manner comparable to the pink highlight he applied to the mouth of the *Girl with the Red Hat*. The actual color of the highlight is similar to the green accent in the eye of the *Girl with the Red Hat*. Finally, the sunlit blue jackets worn by the two girls are similarly animated by numerous yellow highlights.

Despite the many stylistic and technical similarities between these paintings, the differences in quality are surprisingly great. The *Girl with a Flute* is a much less successful composition. Whereas the pose of the girl in *Girl with the Red Hat*, as she turns and rests her arm over the back of her chair, subtly integrates suggestions of movement and stability, the frontal pose of the girl in *Girl with a Flute* is flat and immobile. Her hat, left shoulder, and right hand are awkwardly cut by the edge of the panel.[14] The flute, actually recorder, that she holds is curiously undefined and seems inaccurately rendered.[15]

Aside from being a less successful composition, the handling of the paint in the *Girl with a Flute* is less assured than in the *Girl with the Red Hat*. The integration of tones and color in the *Girl with a Flute* also lacks the cohesiveness characteristic of Vermeer. Flesh tones in the girl's face are not modulated with the same degree of refinement. Transitions between the shadow of the eye and the sunlit cheek, between the shaded and unshaded portions of the chin, and the areas between the nose and mouth are abrupt.[16] The girl's ill-proportioned hand is painted with a thick impasto. The thumbnail, for example, is indicated by a uniformly dense paint whereas during the mid-1660s Vermeer generally accents only a portion of a nail with a light highlight. Finally, the necklace the girl wears lacks the vibrancy of those he normally depicts. The uniformly thin, dark band has none of the modulations of accent and tone that Vermeer delighted in rendering.

Comparisons of the lion finials in the *Girl with a Flute* and the *Girl with the Red Hat* also point out the relatively unrefined brushwork of the former (fig. 3 and see fig. 1 in 1937.1.53). Whereas the lion finial in the *Girl with the Red Hat* is modeled wet into wet by subtle variations in the weight and thickness of the strokes, the finial in the *Girl with a Flute* does not have the same degree of articulation. The essential vocabulary of thin diffused strokes superimposed by opaque highlights is the same, but the lines necessary to create a sense of volume and form are less successfully integrated.[17]

Finally, although in both instances the girls' blue

jackets are animated with diffused yellow highlights, the quality of the execution is not as high. In the *Girl with the Red Hat* the diffused highlights are grouped with a certain optical logic. To heighten the blue color on her shoulder, for example, Vermeer first highlighted the area with light blue strokes and then superimposed a sequence of yellow strokes over the blues. He painted the ridges of the highlighted folds with opaque yellow strokes. The jacket of the *Girl with a Flute* is painted in a similar technique, but the logic of the groupings of the highlights and the surety of the execution are both lacking. The colors are not as fresh and the strokes are not as fluid as those in the *Girl with the Red Hat*.

Despite such distinctions in quality it seems unadvisable to remove *Girl with a Flute* from Vermeer's oeuvre, for it is frequently misleading to judge attribution issues on specific comparisons to a single other painting, particularly when so little is known about the chronology of his works. Indeed, stylistic comparisons can be made with other paintings in Vermeer's oeuvre. The soft modeling of the yellow highlights on the blue jacket of the girl in this painting, for example, is similar to the character of the blue and yellow modeling edging the yellow material that hangs from the turban in *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* from the mid-1660s (Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 670). By the end of the 1660s, moreover, Vermeer begins to create more abrupt transitions in his modeling that are not unrelated to the way in which the face in this painting is handled.

Other complicating factors in trying to come to a determination about the attribution of this painting are that the surface of the painting is not in good condition (see Technical Notes) and the composition was extensively reworked in the seventeenth century. During the reworking the image was substantially altered. The patterns of folds of the collar on both shoulders were altered, the size of the left cuff reduced, and the contour of the right arm changed. Other changes include the addition of the fur trim on the front of the jacket and a reduction in the size of the hat (see Technical Notes). Finally, the girl's finger that rests on the recorder was also apparently added, a change that raises the question as to whether the flute was also added at that time. Without the added finger, the flute could not have been held.

It appears that when the painting was reworked, the initial composition was still at the blocking-in stage.[18] The change in the composition seems to have been made to alter the pose of the figure. By dropping the left shoulder and adjusting the position of the cuff, the woman's pose has been made more

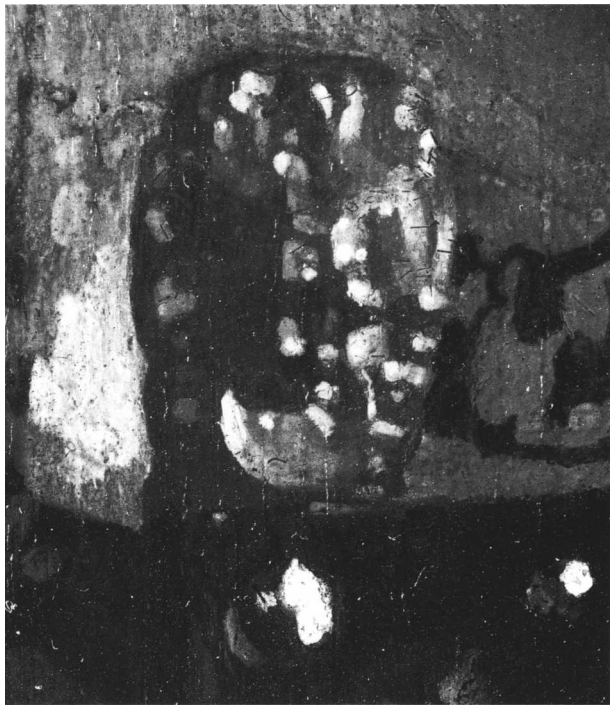

Fig. 3. Detail of lion-head finial in 1942.9.98

frontal. She no longer leans to such a degree on her left arm.

Although the reasons for the extensive reworking of this painting are not known, they may relate to damages in the original design layer. As is evident in the x-radiograph, quite defined losses exist under the white collar on the girl's left shoulder (fig. 1). Other losses exist below her left eye, between her nose and mouth, and on her cuffs and right hand. Just why these losses occurred is not known. Perhaps the initial design was scraped down,[19] or some inherent problem of adhesion existed between the paint layers and the ground. That this latter explanation might account for some of the problem is suggested by the peculiar alligatoring that occurs in the paint on the woman's cuff and in the thin blues of her jacket.

It is conceivable that the alterations were made by someone other than Vermeer, perhaps to prepare the work for sale. However, Vermeer is not known to have had students or other close followers. Technical evidence, moreover, seems to discount the possibility that the alterations were made significantly after the initial composition was blocked in. The paint characteristics on the surface reflect those of the underlying layer.

The complex issues surrounding the attribution of this little painting can be summarized as follows:

the general character, appearance, and even painting techniques found in the *Girl with a Flute* relate closely to Vermeer's work, specifically to the *Girl with the Red Hat*, but the quality of execution does not appear to be of the same high level expected from this master; while it seems probable that the painting was executed in the mid-1660s, the image was extensively revised, perhaps after portions of the first composition were scraped down by the artist; finally, the unsatisfactory condition of the painting, as a result of abrasion and overpaint, is not only detrimental to the appearance of the image but also complicates any interpretation of the work's stylistic characteristics. It seems appropriate to indicate the uncertainty surrounding the attribution by designating this work: "Attributed to Vermeer."

Notes

1. Joseph Bauch and Peter Klein of the Universität Hamburg gave earliest possible felling dates of 1653 and 1651, respectively. See reports in the conservation files: Bauch, 29 November 1977; and Klein, 29 September 1987.

2. Kühn 1968, 194, analyzed the pigments. More information, however, will be forthcoming after the 1995 restoration is completed. Robert L. Feller, Carnegie Mellon University, found chalk with perhaps a trace of yellow ocher in the ground. His report, dated 12 July 1974, is available in the Scientific Research department, NGA.

3. The 1683 inventory of goods accruing to Jacob Dissius after the death of his wife Magdalena van Ruijven lists twenty paintings by Vermeer. For the complete transactions between her husband Jacob Dissius and his father Abraham Dissius following her death, see Montias 1989, 246–257, 359–360, docs. 417, 420.

4. For this sale see Montias 1989, 363–364, doc. 439.

5. The attribution of this painting to Vermeer was first rejected by Swillens 1950, 64–65. Blankert 1975, 108–110, 168, considered the work to be a nineteenth-century imitation. He restated this view in Blankert 1978, 172, and again in Aillaud, Blankert, and Montias 1986, 200–201. A similar opinion is held by Brentjens 1985, 54–58. Wheelock 1977b argued for the seventeenth-century origin of the painting, placing the work in the circle of Vermeer. He expanded upon this theory in Wheelock 1978, 242–257, and in Wheelock 1981, 156. Montias 1989, 265, note 2, proposed that "the painting was begun by Vermeer and finished after his death by an inferior painter, perhaps by Jan Coelenbier, who bought paintings from Vermeer's widow soon after his death." Liedtke in The Hague 1990, 43, on the other hand, defends the attribution to Vermeer. In the forthcoming exhibition catalogue *Johannes Vermeer*, organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and Mauritshuis, The Hague, the attribution of this painting as "Circle of Vermeer" reflects the divergent opinions of the National Gallery of Art and the Mauritshuis.

6. The *Girl with a Flute* measures 20 by 17.8 cm. The *Girl with the Red Hat* measures 23.2 by 18.1 cm. Montias 1989, 363–364, doc. 339. Items 38, 39, and 40 are described as "a tronie in antique dress, uncommonly artful"; "Another ditto Vermeer"; and "A pendant of the same." The unusual costumes in the *Girl with the Red Hat* and the *Girl with a Flute* may well have been seen as depicting "antique dress" by the compiler of the catalogue.

7. See Wheelock 1978, 242–257, and Wheelock 1981, 156, where the painting was designated "Circle of Vermeer."

8. The change in attribution to "Attributed to Johannes Vermeer" was made at the National Gallery of Art in 1983.

9. See Technical Notes.

10. Kühn 1968, 194. These pigments were prevalent in the seventeenth century but not at later dates. Natural ultramarine, one of Vermeer's favorite pigments, is produced from the semiprecious stone lapis lazuli. It was an expensive pigment, prized as much for its intrinsic value as for the luminosity of its blue hue. Around 1830 an artificial means of producing ultramarine was invented in France, which soon supplanted the more expensive natural ultramarine in artists' palettes. Azurite never disappeared as completely as did natural ultramarine from artists' palettes, but it is infrequently found after the seventeenth century. Lead-tin yellow, another pigment frequently found in Vermeer's paintings, gradually was replaced by Naples yellow toward the end of the seventeenth century. It seems to have been unknown from the mid-eighteenth century until it was rediscovered in 1940.

11. A. M. Louise E. Mulder-Erkelens, keeper of textiles, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, has suggested (letter in NGA curatorial files) that the hat may have been intended to suggest some "archaic or exotic characteristics." She related it to hats seen on gypsies and shepherdesses in works by Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651) and Karl van Mander (1548–1606). She also noted that artists often kept unusual headgear in their studios that could assist in giving chiaroscuro effects to the model's face. See Gudlaugsson 1938, 21. Similar wide-brimmed hats are frequently found in works by Rembrandt and his school. See Held 1969, 11–12.

12. See Slive 1957–1958, 32–39.

13. Thomas Lawton, formerly assistant director, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, has been most helpful in analyzing the nature of this hat.

14. There is no indication that the panel has been trimmed, as was first suggested by Martin 1907a and 1907b, who thought the painting to be a fragment. Not only has the back of the panel been beveled at some early date along all four edges, but also the paint along the edges does not appear fractured in a way that would suggest that it had been trimmed.

15. I am most grateful to Helen Hollis, formerly of the Division of Musical Instruments, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, for her observations on the nature of musical instruments in Vermeer's oeuvre and on the specific character of the "flute" in this painting. Although its fipple mouthpiece is correctly indicated by the double highlight, the air hole below the mouthpiece is placed off-line. As seen in the recorder hanging on the wall in a painting by Judith Leyster (q.v.), it should lie on an axis with the upper lip of the mouthpiece (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, inv. no. NM 1126). The finger holes seen below the girl's hand are turned even further off this axis, although such a placement would be allowable if the recorder were composed of two sections.

16. These abrupt transitions between areas are accentuated in the x-radiograph of the painting (fig. 1).

17. Microscopic examination of the chair finial reveals that the surface is filled with small particles of foreign matter imbedded in the paint. This foreign matter, whether it be dust, brush hairs, or wood splinters, is found throughout the paint. In only one other work by Vermeer have I noted similar foreign matter imbedded in the paint, *The Guitar*

Player (Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood, London, datable about 1672).

18. The thinness of the execution on the figure's proper right shoulder and arm is probably indicative of the level to which the painting was initially brought.

19. I am grateful to Melanie Gifford for suggesting this possible explanation.

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1913 Hale: 244, 264–265, 373, repro.
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1973 Fahy and Watson: 313–314, repro.
1973 Mistler: no. 28, color repro.
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1985 NGA: 421, repro.
1985 Brentjens: 54–58, repro.
1986 Aillaud, Blankert, and Montias: 200–201, no. B4, repro.
1989 Montias: 265.

Joachim Anthonisz. Wtewael

c. 1566–1638

Born in about 1566, this artist (whose surname is also recorded in such variant forms as Wttewael, Uytewael, Utenwael, and Wtenwael) was the son of Anthonis Jansz. Wtewael, an Utrecht glass painter. Van Mander records that Joachim worked for his father until the age of eighteen, when he began to study oil painting with the Utrecht artist Joos de Beer (d. 1591). Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651) was also a pupil of De Beer, whose works were influenced by both the Italianate Flemish and Fontainebleau schools of painting.

In 1586, after two years with De Beer, Wtewael traveled to Italy in the retinue of Charles de Bourgneuf de Cucé, bishop of Saint Malo. He worked for the bishop for the next four years—two of them in Padua and two in France—before returning to Utrecht. In 1592 he joined the city's Saddlers' Guild, because at that time Utrecht had no artists'