**Art Appreciation**

--A Girl with a Pearl Earring

"A Girl with a Pearl Earring" is an oil painting completed in 1665 by the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer in the 17th century.

Firstly, the overall view, It depicts a European girl wearing an exotic dress,an oriental turban, and what was thought to be a very large pearl as an earring. And it seems that the girl is gazing at the viewers. But in recent years, some people doubt about the material of the earring and argued that it looks more like polished tin than pearl because of the specular reflection, the shape and the large size of the earring. If we look close to the earrings, it really seems to have a metallic luster. But whether this statement is correct or not is in doubt and maybe can be proved. It depends on your own perspectives.

Then, The usage of the color in this painting is Vermeer's consistent style. The beautiful girl wears a brown coat or dress, with a white collar, a headscraf with lemon yellow and blue color. Vermeer likes blue and Lemon yellow specially. In this painting, Lemon yellow appears as a small part of the girl's headscarf, and it is attached to the blue. Yellow and blue turbans, brown clothes, still the usual three primary colors, only the red component is slightly reduced. The yellow and blue areas of the headscarf don't account for a large proportion of the picture, especially the extremely high-key color of lemon yellow and the color of the clothes that account for a large proportion unified the color system, so that the picture is not become delicate and fragile, which looks very harmonious and quiet. Besides, dark backgrounds were widely used in portraiture to enhance the three-dimensional effect of the figure. In this painting, the silhouette of the girl is perfectly displayed against the dark background, which gives us vivid feeling of the beautiful girl.

Furthermore, the expression of the girl is another major part worthy of appreciation. The temperament of the girl in the painting is extraordinary. It seems that the girl is gazing at us with her bright eyes and which reveals some kind of implicit, melancholy and seemingly sad expression. Her lips are slightly open, which depicts her eagerness and cessation of words dynamically. Otherwise, the young girl's half smile are enlivened with two small white dots on either side of her mouth, echoing the highlights in her eyes. The whole painting gives us a sense of calmness and tranquility.

What’s more, the usage of the light in this painting is also excellent. In this painting, Vermeer used sparkling pearl earrings to combine the girl's bright eyes, delicate lips, white shirt, and the dark space behind the ears, to form a living whole. At the same time, Vermeer used a lot of subtle changes in diffused light to express the texture and shape of the painting. He ingeniously used his paints to capture the effect of light falling across her features, turban, and brown coat. He evoked the delicacy of her skin with a soft contour for her check. What's more, he indicated the reflected light from the white color in the pearl earring, but also, and more subtly, in the shadows on her left cheek. Finally, he painted the shaded portion of the blue turban by covering a black under-pamt with freely applied glazes of natural ultramarine.

Finally, there are some other fancies about this painting. The girl's enigmatic expression coupled with the mystery of her identity has led some to compare her to the equivocal subject in Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. Unlike the Mona Lisa, however, Girl with a Pearl Earring is not a portrait but a tronie, a Dutch term for a character or type of person. "Tronie" means "face" in Old Dutch. It is usually a person's head or shoulder-length bust, emphasizing the person's expression or exotic headwear. The difference between Tronie and portrait painting is that it is not as formal as a portrait, the characters can be fictitious, and there is no background and decoration except for the profile. Nowadays, many people are speculating the identity of the girl, but almost no conclusion, which left unlimited space for future generations.