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## TAKENAKA, Tetsuya. The Reception History of Johannes Vermeer, Focusing on Japan from the 1920s to 1950

In contemporary Japan, Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) is widely acknowledged as the preeminent Dutch painter of the seventeenth century. However, it is not known when Vermeer's works began to be recognized in Japan, or how much information about his life, style, paintings, and the whereabouts of his works was grasped. Early on, Ishii Hakutei (1882–1958) visited the Netherlands in 1912 and wrote about Vermeer's *View of Delft* and *Girl with a Pearl Earring* at the Mauritshuis Museum, as well as *The Milkmaid*, *The Love Letter*, and *Woman Reading a Letter* at the Rijksmuseum. His comments were published in the December 1912 issue of *Bijutsu Shinpo* and the 1913 issue of *Oshu Bijutsu Henro*. Also found in this early period were discussions of Vermeer's artistic endeavors based on travelogues and articles by Japanese Western-style painters, which were published in art magazines. References to Vermeer gradually began to appear in specialized art books, general art books, and newspapers. This paper examines period commentaries to investigate how Vermeer was received in Japan from the 1920s to 1950.

In the first section, the circumstances of the appreciation of Vermeer's paintings abroad and their spread to Japan are analyzed through a review in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and the letters of Marcel Proust. These describe the experience of viewing Vermeer's paintings at the *Exposition Hollandaise* at the Jeu de Paume Paris, in 1921. This exhibition borrowed three paintings by Vermeer from museums in the Netherlands. Next, I introduce Ishii's essay on Vermeer published in the *Chuo Bijutsu* in 1923, after he had visited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and descriptions of Vermeer in *Sekai Bijutsu Zenshu* of 1928, including four illustrations of his work.

In the second section, a 1938 article from the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* is examined. It reported the *Meesterwerken Uit Vier Eeuwen, 1400–1800* exhibition at the Boijmans Museum in Rotterdam. That exhibition displayed the *Supper at Emmaus*, now regarded as a fake, but then considered a genuine Vermeer. An article in *Asahi Graph* in 1931 and an essay in *Bijutsu* in 1934 with Vermeer's name in the title, are also considered. By comparing these pieces with the exhibition catalog and an article published on the same day in the *Haagsche Courant*, I infer that information about this exhibition spread to Japan at the same time as it spread in the Netherlands.

The third section demonstrates that interest in seventeenth-century Dutch art increased during the 1940s. This contention is supported by examining exhibits at *Oranda Bunka Tenrankai* in 1940, an essay in its catalog, and the inclusion of illustrated essays of seventeenth-century Dutch art in *Seikatsu Bijutsu*. In addition, I discuss two illustrations not featured in any Vermeer catalog of the period, but introduced in *Shin Bijutsu* in 1942. The fact that *Girl with a Pearl Earring* appeared on the cover of the publication *Hikari* in 1946 indicates that Vermeer had gained widespread recognition.

Describing Vermeer's reception history in Japan from the 1920s to 1950 reveals that the general public was starting to recognize the importance of the seventeenth-century Dutch painter. Additionally, it clarifies that the history of artistic interaction between the Netherlands and Japan has developed through sharing the process of creating modern art history in Japan from its earliest stages.

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