



Vermeer **The Complete Works** **Renzo Villa**

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- Jan Veermer is one of the great masters of seventeenth-century Dutch painting. And yet his figure remains indistinct, entrusted to a few securely-attributed works and even scarcer biographical information

Biographical information about Jan Vermeer is scarce. Little is known about his birth – he was baptized on 31 October 1632 in the protestant church in Delft – and training. When he died in 1676 – during a period of grave financial crisis in the country – he left his wife and children little money and numerous debts. His work, which fell into oblivion for nearly two centuries, was not rediscovered until the end of the nineteenth century. This triggered, among other things, a sizeable production of forged paintings that were considered to be authentic. This volume traces the profile of this enigmatic and original artist, following his story through the few extant established sources and offering a complete view of his work. His oil paintings, which often depict middle-class men and women intent on their work, captivate us still today with their masterful photographic rendering and the brilliance and quality of the colours used: in spite of its prohibitive cost, Vermeer never gave up his use of the ultramarine blue obtained from lapis lazuli, a pigment that conferred his paintings a tonality and purity that remain unmistakable.