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## THE ENGAGEMENT OF CAREL FABRITIUS'S *GOLDFINCH* OF 1654 WITH THE DUTCH WINDOW, A SIGNIFICANT SITE OF NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL EXCHANGE

Linda Stone-Ferrier

This article posits that Carel Fabritius's illusionistic painting *The Goldfinch*, 1654, cleverly traded on the experience of a passerby standing on an actual neighborhood street before a household window. In daily discourse, the window functioned as a significant site of neighborhood social exchange and social control, which official neighborhood regulations mandated. I suggest that Fabritius's panel engaged the window's prominent role in two possible ways. First, the trompe l'oeil painting may have been affixed to the inner jamb of an actual street-side window, where goldfinches frequently perched in both paintings and in contemporary households. Second, at another point in time, *The Goldfinch* appears to have functioned as a hinged protective shutter attached to an interior painting of possibly a domestic scene. Together with the encased picture, Fabritius's panel would have hung on a household wall. In such a capacity, *The Goldfinch* would have evoked the viewer's inquisitiveness, as if he or she were a passerby on a neighborhood street before an actual domestic window with an alternatively open and closed shutter. 10.5092/jhna.2016.8.1.5. DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2015.8.1.5



Fig. 1 Carel Fabritius, *The Goldfinch*, 1654, oil on panel, 33.5 x 22.8 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 605 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: Mauritshuis, The Hague)

- 1 Carel Fabritius's novel and stunning little painting *The Goldfinch* (33.5 x 22.8 cm), prominently signed and dated 1654 on the lower right, has been beloved by admirers but has defied interpretive consensus among scholars (fig. 1). The panel presumably had high value in its own time, as indicated by seventeenth-century notarized appraisals of inventories. These make clear that paintings by Fabritius, an esteemed contemporary of Johannes Vermeer in Delft, enjoyed impres-

sive regard<sup>1</sup>

- 2 Fabritius's picture depicts a close view of a "deceptively lifelike"<sup>2</sup> goldfinch, a popular domestic pet.<sup>3</sup> The bird perches beside its characteristic hinged feeding box on one of two semicircular parallel bars to which it is loosely chained. The bars in turn are affixed to a plaster surface. The illusionistic textured brushwork in Fabritius's painting, which significantly informs my interpretation, reveals the many colors of the goldfinch's feathers, including characteristic red on his head and a thickly applied, bright yellow streak on his wing. Highlights on the edges of the semicircular rods and on the goldfinch's feet enhance further the three-dimensional quality of the picture. The bird, the feeding box, and the rods cast a strong shadow to the right on the plaster, which also intensifies the illusionistic effect.
- 3 Such trompe l'oeil craftsmanship was extolled by Walter Liedtke, who observed, "it seems characteristic of Fabritius to raise the stakes, going beyond the imitation of solid forms and textures (although they are wonderfully described in *The Goldfinch*) to suggest the behavior of light and an actual movement—a twitching response—of the bird. In a manner less coy than that of Vermeer's girl with a pearl earring the goldfinch seems to suddenly turn and look at us."<sup>4</sup>
- 4 Notably, the viewer returns the goldfinch's uncanny watch as if from just below the bird and box—a position implied by the painting's perspective.<sup>5</sup> I suggest that the bird's engagement, and the upward sight line of the viewer's inferred returned gaze, place the observer illusionistically in a meaningful spatial relationship to the goldfinch. Specifically, I propose that the implied angle of view informs the bird's slightly elevated location, as if in a window, and seen from the neighborhood street just below.
- 5 My analysis of Fabritius's *Goldfinch* bases itself on new observations and arguments that are situated within the broader contexts of the window as both a popular seventeenth-century Dutch pictorial motif and an actual physical site of significant neighborhood social exchange. I contend that Fabritius painted the illusion of the goldfinch, its perch, and feeding box against the interior plaster surface of a deep window jamb. As such, the imagery conforms to pictorial convention and actual social practice.
- 6 Fabritius's *Goldfinch* offers a trompe l'oeil variation on seventeenth-century Dutch genre and still-life paintings, which consistently depicted goldfinches within prominent window-settings. However, he omitted characteristic details of the conventional site, which results in a tight focus and intimate scale. Such changes increase the viewer's proximity to, and engagement with, the little bird. Fabritius's novel conception of the illusionistic goldfinch underscores the experimental nature of his imagery.
- 7 Subsequent to his 2003 restoration of *The Goldfinch*, Jørgen Wadum described the various physical modifications and painted additions/changes, which Fabritius (presumably) made to the picture.<sup>6</sup> Like the unusual tight focus on the little goldfinch itself, the physical changes to the panel also suggest the experimental or exploratory nature of the painter's artistic endeavor. Wadum observed that the picture's unusual thickness (8–10 mm), compared with its small scale, indicates that the panel may have been cut from a larger board. The remnant of a "wooden pin" in

Fabritius's painting indicates that the original plank had consisted of two wooden boards attached with glue and dowels. In the earliest state of *The Goldfinch*, an approximately two-centimeter-wide black border surrounded the little bird, its feeding box, top perch, and the plaster background. At that point, the unframed painting may or may not have been on display; subsequently Fabritius hammered a gilded frame onto the panel. A greenish line of apparently oxidized copper from such gilding appears under the upper paint layer. X-rays reveal that the frame was attached to the panel with ten nails spaced equidistantly around the perimeter. Since none of the nails extended to the back of the panel, the painting was not affixed to a backing, as scholars have previously proposed.

- 8 At a later time, Fabritius removed the gilded frame and extended the white paint of the plaster background to the panel's right edge. He left visible a narrow band of dark underlayer along the left, top, and bottom edges, retouched his signature, and added the goldfinch's lower perch. Eventually, white paint was extended to all four edges of the panel, which, according to Ariane van Suchtelen, "seems to suggest that at some time the panel was displayed without a frame." On the verso of the panel at top center and just below, ten holes, including four for nails, reference two different methods or constructions employed to suspend the painting. Van Suchtelen observed: "remarkably enough, [the methods or constructions were] attached to the panel itself." In response to the changes in the painted imagery and the panel itself, scholars have proposed various seventeenth-century presentations and functions for *The Goldfinch*.<sup>7</sup>
- 9 Departing from, and in other respects building upon such analyses, I argue that the painted changes made to Fabritius's picture and the panel's varying unframed and framed states were consistent with the bird's illusory presentation in a window context. I propose two possible variations on such a display of the painting, which I will introduce here and discuss more fully below. First, the panel may have been affixed to the inner jamb of an *actual* street-side window. With its relatively heightened trompe l'oeil engagement, Fabritius's painting would have surprised and delighted a viewer/passersby on the neighborhood street and impressed him/her with the artist's tour-de-force craftsmanship.<sup>8</sup>
- 10 Second, at another point in time, *The Goldfinch* may have functioned as a protective shutter attached to an interior painting with hinges on one of the two vertical sides of the gilded frame. Fabritius's panel would have closed over the inner painting and then opened again to reveal the interior picture. As such, *The Goldfinch*, hinged to the enclosed painting, most likely hung with other pictures on an interior wall of a home, rather than inside an actual window jamb.
- 11 Fabritius's panel as a protective shutter would have engaged the curiosity of the viewer to uncover the inner picture--often a domestic scene--through rotation of *The Goldfinch* on its hinges to the side. As a result, the panel's painted front (recto) would face the wall. The oak back of Fabritius's panel (verso) would face the viewer to the side of the newly revealed interior picture. The plain back of the oak panel would suggest the wooden appearance and position of an actual shutter, opened and adjacent to a window. When Fabritius's panel/shutter closed anew over the interior painting, the viewer would again encounter the illusionistic goldfinch, perch, and feeding box (recto), as if affixed to the interior of a window jamb, where one would have expected to see the bird. I contend the process would have evoked in the viewer an inquisitiveness similar to that of

a passerby on a neighborhood street before an actual domestic window, where an open shutter revealed, and a closed shutter blocked, the real household interior within. The panel's physical function as a shutter, on the one hand, and its illusionistic painted imagery, on the other, engaged the Dutch window in independent but complementary ways.

## Windows and the Neighborhood

- 12 In the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands, the window was both a popular pictorial motif and an actual neighborhood site of significant social exchange. Many mid-seventeenth-century Dutch paintings with close outdoor views of illusionistic open windows or window-niches--with or without goldfinches--manifest the considerable appeal of the window as a prominent pictorial feature.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 2 Samuel van Hoogstraten, *A Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House* (detail: interior right), 1655–60, oil and egg on wood, 58 x 88 x 60.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, London, inv. no. NG 3832.D7 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: © National Gallery of Art, London/Art Resource, NY)



Fig. 3 Carel Fabritius, *A View of Delft with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall*, 1652, oil on canvas, 15.4 x 31.6 cm. National Gallery of Art, London, presented by the National Art Collections Fund, 1922, inv. no. NG3714 (artwork in the public domain)

- 13 Mid-seventeenth-century perspective boxes, such as Samuel van Hoogstraten's *A Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House*, 1655–60 (fig. 2), exemplify further the contemporary interest in illusionistic views into a domestic interior.<sup>10</sup> The gaze into a perspective box requires a small peephole, which affords a view akin to that of an open window, so that the optical illusion of interior, three-dimensional space materializes. Fabritius's *A View of Delft, with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall*, 1652, a scene painted presumably for the interior of a perspective box,<sup>11</sup> manifests his own strong interest in such illusionistic craftsmanship (fig. 3). Mid-seventeenth-century Dutch writers on art as well as wealthy collectors held in high esteem both the paintings of open windows/window-niches and the perspective boxes.<sup>12</sup> *The Goldfinch*'s illusory engagement of the window may be understood in the context of such mid-century tour-de-force artistry.
- 14 In addition to its appeal as a pictorial motif, the window played a significant role in daily neighborhood discourse. Open windows afforded opportunities for the casual social exchange integral to seventeenth-century Dutch neighborhoods, which occupied the liminal space between home and city, while intersecting them both. The physical constituent parts of a neighborhood included only one or two streets—or part of one side of a canal or of a long street—all with their

adjacent alleys.<sup>13</sup> Neighborhoods, each with its own colorful name,<sup>14</sup> required all residents regardless of socioeconomic position, religion, profession or trade, nationality, citizenship, or immigration status to belong to their respective long-standing neighborhood organizations (*gebuyrten*).<sup>15</sup> Through numerous neighborhood regulations (*buurtbrieven*), such communities sought the shared goals of friendship, brotherhood, and unity, as well as individual and communal honor.<sup>16</sup>

- 15 Neighbors had an obligation to stay aware of daily events and gossip because the neighborhood's honor depended upon the unsullied reputation of its individual residents.<sup>17</sup> To such ends, neighborhood regulations wielded what historians and sociologists call "social control" over many aspects of the lives of residents—male and female.<sup>18</sup> Besides being a physical place, a neighborhood constituted "a social network" and "safety net," which were contingent upon reciprocity and a community of solidarity.<sup>19</sup>
- 16 Administrators elected by residents oversaw *gebuyrten* meetings, upheld order and quiet, mediated among neighbors, and enforced the binding regulations, which did not warrant the intervention of civic authorities.<sup>20</sup> Neighborhoods had as important a function as other social networks, such as family, church, guilds, civic guards, and so on.<sup>21</sup> However, the larger districts determined by the city for the organization of the civic guards, fire fighting, and tax assessment lacked the inclusiveness and social fluidity offered to all, including women and immigrants, which characterized neighborhoods.<sup>22</sup>
- 17 *Buurtbrieven* repeatedly addressed the goals of friendship, brotherhood, and unity that verbal and nonverbal neighborhood communication could foster, as well as the all-too-often negative consequences that neighborhood interactions could foment. Given the multitude of neighborhood residents of various geographical origins, religious persuasions, professional training, social aspirations, and idiosyncratic peccadillos, conversation and gossip invigorated friendships. But they also spurred antagonisms through accusations, and the subsequent alignments created among those sympathetic to one side or another. Virtually all residents—rich, middle-class, and the less fortunate—were vulnerable at any given time to another's scrutiny.<sup>23</sup>
- 18 Colorful evidence of typical sixteenth- and seventeenth-century verbal exchanges and gossip generated in Dutch neighborhoods can be found in numerous *gebuyrten* petitions and legal documents.<sup>24</sup> These repeatedly reference both the positive outcomes and unfortunate consequences of neighbors' serious and frivolous actions and interactions, shared celebrations, use of innuendo, and fights and complaints about a myriad of perceived offenses. Residents witnessed, espied, or learned through gossip about such actions. Petitions and legal documents also repeatedly attest to the influence of neighbors' accounts and their testimonials regarding the character of protagonists and antagonists.
- 19 Due to the extremely crowded conditions in seventeenth-century Dutch cities, one did not have to look far or strain hard to eavesdrop on neighbors' news, their conflicts, or their deviations from *gebuyrten* regulations. Open windows, in particular, facilitated and invited gossip, glimpses, and glances that passed easily between home and street. They offered a significant opportunity to collect and gauge all kinds of news—from the petty to the scandalous.



Fig. 4 Nicolaes Maes, *The Maidservant*, ca. 1659, oil on panel, 57.3 x 41.6 cm. Dordrechts Museum (on loan from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam), inv. no. NK3045 (artwork in the public domain)

- 20 Seventeenth-century writers commented on such access, which open windows made available. In his exposition on Dutch architecture, which was probably written between 1594 and 1605, Simon Stevin (1548–1620), a Flemish engineer who had lived in Holland since 1581, remarked that “[illuminated places in front of the houses facing the street] are good for a man who does not want his wife or daughters to sit on display in the windows and be visited by those who pass by along the street.”<sup>25</sup> In his perspective box, Samuel van Hoogstraten depicts just such a young woman in a domestic interior seated by a window through which a male passerby on the street peers in at her (see fig. 2). In Nicolaes Maes’s *The Maidservant*, ca. 1659, a woman leans out of an open window and chats with a female neighbor on the street (fig. 4).
- 21 The Dutch moralist Jacob Cats (1577–1660) also remarked on the common practice of women who position themselves at street-facing domestic windows and admonished that they should not dally or be idle beside a window or an open doorway.<sup>26</sup> Clearly the popular practice of pe-rusal and gossip at open windows did not abate. In 1720, a resident of Medemblik in northern Holland observed that the neighbors “these days are always at their doors and windows,” and it was difficult not to encounter each other.<sup>27</sup> Such pronouncements attest to the actual widespread practice of those who peered out open windows at passersby on the neighborhood street and, in turn, passersby who peered into domestic windows—a practice upon which neighborhood social control depended.

### Past Scholarship

- 22 Previous interpretive studies of the artistic craftsmanship and subject matter of *The Goldfinch* have reached varied conclusions, but they have not recognized the little bird’s conventional placement within a window setting. Some studies, for example, liken the painting’s illusionism and subject to that of a few Dutch paintings that depict dead or nondescript live birds.<sup>28</sup> In the cited comparative pictures, however, the pictorial and physical contexts, and the engagement of the viewer, differ significantly from that of *The Goldfinch*.
- 23 Other scholars have compared the possible meaning of the goldfinch on Fabritius’s little panel to that of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings of any type of bird and/or their cages, which they

have interpreted in a range of moralizing ways. Seventeenth-century Dutch images of birdcages have been understood as symbols of domesticity.<sup>29</sup> Depictions of closed birdcages have been likened to virtuous women busy in their homes rather than engaged in inappropriate activities, including spreading gossip in the neighborhood.<sup>30</sup> Some scholars have concluded that images of a tethered tame or trained bird offer a “pedagogical metaphor.”<sup>31</sup> Depictions of a bird, especially a partridge,<sup>32</sup> out of its cage have been understood as a symbol of uncontrolled love or loss of virginity. Pictures of a man’s offer of a bird to a woman<sup>33</sup> have been interpreted as a metaphor for licentiousness because the gesture plays on the word “birding” (*vogelen*) in Dutch, which connotes sexual activity.<sup>34</sup> *The Goldfinch*, however, lacks any pictorial or contextual elements that would liken it to such pictures, which scholars have argued embody various moralizing meanings.

- 24 Other studies have provided more focused analyses of Fabritius’s goldfinch as a specific species. M. M. Tóth-Ubbens’s examination of *The Goldfinch*, for example, contextualized the depiction of the bird, in part, through reference to ornithological scholarship.<sup>35</sup> The iconography of *The Goldfinch* has also been cited in a study of European devotional imagery.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the little bird on Fabritius’s panel has been likened to emblematic images of the goldfinch, which celebrate the bird’s ingenuity and adroitness in learning to pull on a cord to access water or food.<sup>37</sup>
- 25 Such comparisons of Fabritius’s *Goldfinch* to other depictions of an unidentifiable bird, a birdcage, or a goldfinch, in particular, do not do justice to the novelty, experimentation, and illusionism inherent in the little painting, which exemplifies the kind of unusual artistic achievement for which the artist has been praised. Although Walter Liedtke speculated in only general terms that the painting might have been part of “a construction physically (if not conceptually) similar to a design of a perspective box” or some other “ensemble,” he extolled Fabritius’s exceptional achievement. Liedtke concluded: “Like Vermeer, Fabritius had a knack for seeming to do what had never been done before (as scholars have noted) by doing several things that had been done before all at once.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Goldfinches in Windows: Paintings and Social Practice**

- 26 Mid-seventeenth-century Dutch paintings of a goldfinch, its characteristic house/cage, perch, and feeding box, or some combination of these, include window/window-niche genre scenes by the Leiden artist Gerrit Dou; his Leiden follower Domenicus van Tol; and Dou’s pupil Matthijs Naiveu, who worked in Leiden and Amsterdam (figs. 5–8).<sup>39</sup> They also include still lifes with goldfinches perched within a window surround by the German artist Abraham Mignon, who painted in Utrecht in 1664 (fig. 9). Unlike the still-life paintings, the window/window-niche genre paintings typically include the goldfinch’s characteristic step- or scroll-gable house,<sup>40</sup> which contrasts with depictions of simple wooden or metal birdcages for indeterminate species. The design of the goldfinch’s house/cage derived from a style of domestic architecture built in the Northern Netherlands in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>41</sup>
- 27 All of the genre paintings with goldfinches depict a frontal view of an open window/window-niche, as if seen from a neighborhood street.<sup>42</sup> In Dou’s *Young Girl at the Window*, 1662 (fig. 5), the chained goldfinch stands on its perch, beside its feeding box and little house/cage. A vertical board affixed to an outdoor wall and set flush against the frame of the open window supports them. In the other examples of such genre pictures, the goldfinch’s house/cage, perch, and feeding





Fig. 5 Gerrit Dou, *Young Girl at the Window*, 1662, oil on panel, 38 x 29 cm. Galleria Sabauda, Turin, inv. no. 377 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 6 Gerrit Dou, *A Girl with a Basket of Fruit at a Window*, 1657, oil on panel, 37.5 x 29.1 cm. The James A. De Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Great Britain, inv. no. 2573 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 7 Gerrit Dou, *Woman at a Window with a Copper Bowl of Apples and a Cock Pheasant*, 1663, oil on panel, 38.5 x 27.7 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, inv. no. 34 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 8 Matthijs Naiveu, *Boy and Girl Blowing Soap Bubbles*, ca. 1700, oil on canvas, 49.6 x 41.6 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Museum purchase with funds donated by contribution, inv. no. 89.506 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

box appear in three-quarter or profile view within the window jamb. Examples of such pictures include Dou's *A Girl with a Basket of Fruit at a Window*, 1657 (fig. 6; see right jamb) and *Woman at a Window with a Copper Bowl of Apples and a Cock Pheasant*, 1663 (fig. 7; see left jamb); and Matthijs Naiveu's *Boy and Girl Blowing Soap Bubbles*, ca. 1700 (fig. 8; see upper-left jamb), painted when the artist worked in Amsterdam.<sup>43</sup>

- 28 The still-life paintings by Abraham Mignon that depict a goldfinch in a window surround, such as *Still Life with Fruit and a Goldfinch*, 1660–79 (fig. 9), provide a close, slightly upward angled



Fig. 9 Abraham Mignon, *Still Life with Fruit and a Goldfinch*, 1660-79, oil on canvas, 78 x 67 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-266 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

sight line originating from within a domestic interior.<sup>44</sup> The plaster surface of the interior of the window jamb in Mignon's painting supports the bird's perch and feeding box without the characteristic house/cage seen in the genre paintings with goldfinches. The almost frontal angle of the little bird, perch, and feeding box in Mignon's painting approximates that seen in Fabritius's *Goldfinch*.

- 29 Seventeenth-century documentary sources confirm that these depictions conform to the reality of how such birds were displayed. An actual pet goldfinch and its cage traditionally occupied the domestic front room (*voorhuis*), which faced the street. In his travel journal from 1640, Peter Mundy reported that the Dutch *voorhuis* housed "Costly Fine cages with birds": "Furniture and Ornaments off their dwellings very Costly and Curious, Full off pleasure and home contentment, as Ritche Cupboards, Cabinetts, etts., Imagery, porcelaine, Costly Fine cages with birds, etts.; all these commonly in any house of indifferent quality."<sup>45</sup> The 1662 description of the estate of Johan Chrisosthomus de Backer in a sale in The Hague listed among his many possessions in the *voorhuis* "six birdcages, a goldfinch's cage among them."<sup>46</sup> The Hague document that describes a goldfinch's cage in a *voorhuis* and the Leiden, Amsterdam, and Utrecht artists who depicted goldfinches in *voorhuis* windows attest to the geographically widespread adoption of the bird's characteristic display.
- 30 In paintings, the position of the goldfinch within a window jamb contrasts significantly with seventeenth-century Dutch depictions of unidentifiable birds. They appear in plain wooden or metal cages and in a range of household locations. Simple wooden birdcages sometimes hang just inside the jamb of an open window/window-niche in paintings with either an outdoor or an indoor point of view, as in Dou's *Woman at a Window with a Copper Bowl of Apples and a Cock Pheasant*, 1663 (see fig. 7). However, they also sometimes hang on an interior wall<sup>47</sup> or are attached to an interior column.<sup>48</sup> Metal birdcages hang from the ceiling in some paintings of domestic interiors, such as in Dou's *Lady at Her Toilet*, 1667 (see fig. 15). Such diverse placement of unidentifiable birdcages in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings throws into even higher relief the conventional display of the goldfinch.

## Fabritius' Illusionistic Goldfinch within a Window Jamb

- 31 Akin to Dutch paintings that include a goldfinch, Fabritius's illusory imagery also situates his little bird inside a deep window jamb. I further suggest that the oak panel itself in an unframed state (before the addition of the gilded frame or after its removal) may have been affixed to the inside of an *actual* window jamb. In such a display, *The Goldfinch's* final and unframed state—in which the painted background extends to all four edges of the panel<sup>49</sup>—would have created the most persuasive illusion of continuous space between the painted plaster within the picture and the plaster surface of the actual window jamb.



Fig. 10 Mock-up that clarifies the larger spatial/architectural context for the implied site of Fabritius's goldfinch and perch. Left side: detail in reverse from Jan Havicksz. Steen, *Adolf and Catharina Croeser*, known as *The Burgher of Delft and His Daughter*, 1655, oil on canvas, 82.5 x 68.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-4981 (artwork in the public domain). Right side: detail from Pieter de Hooch, *A Mother Delousing Her Child's Hair*, known as *A Mother's Duty*, ca. 1658–60, oil on canvas, 52.5 x 61 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-149 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 11 Mock-up that clarifies the larger spatial/architectural context for the implied site of Fabritius's goldfinch and perch. Detail from Jan Havicksz. Steen, *The Merry Family*, 1668, oil on canvas, 110.5 x 141 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-229 (artwork in the public domain)

- 32 Fabritius offers a close frontal view of the goldfinch as if seen, I argue, from *within* a window surround. In order to illustrate the little bird's illusionistically implied site within the painting, as well as the physical location of the panel itself within an actual window, I superimposed the composition of Fabritius's painting on the inside surface of a sketched window jamb (fig. 10). Details of a characteristic neighborhood street and a domestic interior flank the hypothetical window jamb. I adapted those details from paintings by Jan Steen and Pieter de Hooch, but only for illustrative purposes.
- 33 My second mock-up provides another example of the sort of deep plaster window jamb in which I contend Fabritius illusionistically situated his goldfinch, perch, and feeding box in the painting itself.<sup>50</sup> The mock-up also shows the possible display of the actual painting within a real window jamb (fig. 11). I superimposed the painting's composition on the interior surface of a window jamb in a detail from a second Jan Steen painting. Unlike figure 10, however, figure 11 lacks the frontal, close view of Fabritius's little bird. In the detail from Steen's painting in figure 11, the

young boy, who leans in at a window from the street, references well the easy social exchange afforded neighbors and residents through open domestic windows where pet goldfinches were conventionally displayed.

- 34 In particular, I propose that the implied plaster surface of a window's deep *left* jamb supports the perch of Fabritius's little bird. The strong contrast of bright light on the left side of the painting and the dark shadow cast on the right characterizes well the natural light/shadow interplay on the interior surface of an actual *left* jamb, perpendicular to a window front (see figs. 1, 10–11). The illuminated plaster on the left of Fabritius's painting describes that part of a left jamb, which would be closest to the bright natural light source and the street. The deep shadow cast on the right by the goldfinch, perch, and feeding box describes the innermost part of a left jamb, which would be closest to the relatively dimly lit domestic interior.



Fig. 12 Carel Fabritius, *Portrait of Abraham de Potter* (1592–1650), Amsterdam Silk Merchant, 1649, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 57 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-1591 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

- 35 Fabritius's illusionistic painting signals the site of a plaster window jamb in still additional ways. I suggest that the artist's signature and the picture's date in gray paint,<sup>51</sup> inscribed on the background plaster, simulate the type of short inscriptions, notably sometimes in (gray) pencil, which one actually encountered on outdoor seventeenth-century Dutch surfaces. Such locations included windows, significantly, as well as walls, houses, doors, and so on. I contend that the artist's similarly inscribed gray signature and date on an outdoor plaster wall in the background of other of his paintings, which predate *The Goldfinch*, underscore his earlier purposeful and witty simulation of this cultural practice. Those pictures include *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1647–48,<sup>52</sup> *Portrait of Abraham de Potter* (1592–1650), *Amsterdam Silk Merchant*, 1649 (fig. 12)<sup>53</sup> and *A View of Delft, with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall*, 1652 (see fig. 3). With his signature, Fabritius identifies himself as the artist of the painting and simultaneously contributes to the imagery's impressive trompe l'oeil quality. He cleverly blurs the line between his identity as the creator of the picture and an illusory identity as passerby who has written graffiti on the plaster wall below the little bird.
- 36 The widespread popularity of such casual writing on windows and other outdoor surfaces can be illuminated by numerous relevant examples published in 1682 (and later reprinted) in a book by Jeroen Jeroense (a pseudonym for Hieronymus Sweerts, 1627–1696) entitled *Koddige en ernstige*

*opschriften, op luyffens, wagens, glazen, uithangborden, en andere taferelen. van langerhand by een gezamelt en uytgeschreven door een liefhebber derzelve (Comical and Serious Inscriptions on Awnings, Carts, Windows, Signboards, and Other Boards. Gradually collected and written down by a lover of the same).*<sup>54</sup> In a notebook, the author recorded graffiti seen in several Dutch cities on an array of outdoor surfaces. The inscriptions range from respectable short posts to biting comments and jokes.

- 37 Many of the physical locations of the written words transcribed by Sweerts closely approximate the implied plaster window-jamb in Fabritius's painting with his signature and date. Sweerts mentioned numerous instances of writing on windows, such as "on a leather buyer's window"<sup>55</sup> and "in the Hague on a window on Geest Street."<sup>56</sup> In some examples of inscriptions on windows he specified the location as that of a house: "in Deventer at the house of a cooper"<sup>57</sup> and "in the house of a legal scholar."<sup>58</sup> Sweerts also noted writing "against the wall of a house,"<sup>59</sup> "inscription in front of a house,"<sup>60</sup> and "a neighbor wrote beside his door."<sup>61</sup> Significantly, Sweerts also commented that some of the inscriptions had been written in pencil, which, I argue, the gray color of Fabritius's signature and date on the plaster surface in his painting simulates. Sweerts recorded, for example, "written on a wall with pencil"<sup>62</sup> and "on the wall of 'The Role' written with a pencil."<sup>63</sup>
- 38 Often Sweerts identified the profession of a particular house's occupant and the city in which such inscriptions appeared. Such information reveals the broad socioeconomic spectrum of the households and the widespread cultural familiarity with such writing. The inscribed gray letters and numbers on the plaster in *The Goldfinch* could have reminded a viewer of the casual writing and markings on windows, doors, and walls of houses occupied by a range of middle-class artisans and tradesmen. Sweerts provided numerous examples: "in front of a bird seller's house";<sup>64</sup> "notified on a baker's door";<sup>65</sup> "in front of the house of a grain merchant";<sup>66</sup> "in front of a tobacco seller's door";<sup>67</sup> "on the wall next to a fireworks maker";<sup>68</sup> and "above the door where a cupper lived."<sup>69</sup>
- 39 Many of the comments recorded by Sweerts appeared on sites in Fabritius's hometown of Delft, which attests to the artist's certain familiarity with the custom. Sweerts observed writing, for example, on a window "in Delft in the Red Mill, by the Hague's Gate";<sup>70</sup> "in front of a painter's house in Delft";<sup>71</sup> "in front of a house in Delft, on the market";<sup>72</sup> "in front of a tobacco-seller's shop in Delft";<sup>73</sup> and "pasted in front of a grocer's door in Delft."<sup>74</sup>
- 40 Pre-dating Fabritius's *Goldfinch* by nine years, Rembrandt's painting *Girl at a Window* of 1645 provides a revealing precedent for the placement of a trompe l'oeil painting in an actual window to fool passersby on a neighborhood street (fig. 13). Rembrandt may have introduced Fabritius to the idea of a window as a trompe l'oeil setting when, between 1641 and 1643, the younger artist lived in Amsterdam and purportedly studied with the master.<sup>75</sup> Both artists chose subjects for their trompe l'oeil paintings—a half-length girl and a goldfinch—that passersby typically would have seen at an actual domestic window. The success of the illusion in the two paintings depended both on their subjects, which were appropriate for a window setting, and the imagery's trompe l'oeil effects.<sup>76</sup>



Fig. 13 Rembrandt van Rijn, *Girl at a Window*, 1645, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 66.2 cm. Dulwich Picture Gallery, inv. no. DPG163 (artwork in the public domain)

- 41 In his 1708 *Coeurs de Peinture*,<sup>77</sup> Roger De Piles (1635-1709), a French art theorist and painter who owned Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window*,<sup>78</sup> recounted the story of the painter's trompe l'oeil ruse, which has relevance for my interpretation of *The Goldfinch*.

On one day ... Rembrandt amused himself by painting the portrait of his servant girl. He wanted to arrange it in front of the window, to fool the eyes of the passerby who would think that she herself was really to be found there. He succeeded, as the optical illusion was only discovered several days later. As one can imagine of Rembrandt, it was neither the beautiful design nor the nobility of expression that caused the effect. When I stayed in Holland, I was curious to see the portrait. The beautiful brushstrokes and strength made a great impression on me; I bought it; and at present it has an important place in my study.<sup>79</sup>

To test De Piles' claim about the success of Rembrandt's trompe l'oeil display, in the late 1990s Michael Roscam Abbing placed a copy of the painting in a street-facing window of Rembrandt's house. He observed that "the effect is not pronounced when standing in front of the painting, *but if looked at from an angle, especially from the left, the illusion of reality is stronger*. The painting could have been placed somewhere inside Rembrandt's house in such a way that passersby or visitors could have seen it, and *if hung on a wall at right angles to the observer it is possible that the girl would not have been recognized as a painting for some time*"<sup>80</sup> (emphasis mine). I propose that in a similar fashion, the trompe l'oeil illusionism of *The Goldfinch* would have been heightened by its position attached to the inside left jamb of an actual window and thereby seen at an angle by a viewer/passersby.

- 42 In his praise of Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window*, de Piles observed that the painting's imitative qualities "call the viewer into conversation."<sup>81</sup> He contrasted the effect to that of Italian Renaissance paintings, which stir the viewer's intellect, spirit, or both.<sup>82</sup> Svetlana Alpers concluded that de Piles's wording—"call the viewer into conversation"—references color's "link with imitation and its powerful appeal to the eyes."<sup>83</sup> However, I suggest that his language also significantly captures the specific engagement fostered by the domestic window setting in which Rembrandt's painting

was on view.<sup>84</sup>

- 43 Fabritius's *Goldfinch*, I contend, would have similarly "called the viewer into conversation" by virtue of the painting's imitative qualities and physical attachment to the inside of an actual window jamb. Rembrandt and, I propose, Fabritius purposely placed their illusionistic ruses within a street-facing domestic window, a significant site of neighborhood social exchange, where passersby would have been literally and figuratively called into conversation.

### **Fabritius' Panel as a Hinged Shutter**

- 44 In the most recent analysis of *The Goldfinch* after Wadum's 2003 restoration, Ariane van Suchtelen concluded that at one time the panel, when framed, likely served as a hinged, protective door or shutter over an interior picture. She stated: "It is precisely the trompe-l'oeil nature of Fabritius's *Goldfinch* and the assumption that this unique representation probably had a meaning within the context of a larger construction—a meaning we have meanwhile lost sight of—which make it likely that it once functioned as the door of an encased painting."<sup>85</sup> She surmised that as a protective door or shutter, *The Goldfinch*'s "hinges could have been fixed to the frame,"<sup>86</sup> which had been nailed to Fabritius's panel. The hinges would also have attached to the enclosed painting's frame or its case, which would have allowed Fabritius's panel to open and close over the interior picture.
- 45 Seventeenth-century Dutch household inventories describe a hinged protective panel over an interior painting as a *kasge*,<sup>87</sup> *casje*,<sup>88</sup> *kasgen*,<sup>89</sup> *kastje*<sup>90</sup> or *kasies* (plural).<sup>91</sup> Art historians have translated those terms as shutter; door; or, cases or boxes with doors. Ingvar Bergström described such constructions as "cupboards hanging on the wall to protect [paintings] from dust and also, presumably, from strong light."<sup>92</sup> At the point in time when *The Goldfinch* may have functioned as a hinged, protective panel over an interior painting, the resulting "cupboard" would have hung on an interior domestic wall along with other paintings in a household collection.
- 46 Documents from the seventeenth century mention such protective shutters painted by Fabritius and support the argument that *The Goldfinch* may have functioned at one time in the same way. Two records reference a *kasge* or *casje* by Carel Fabritius: the last testament of Gerrit Jansz. Treurniet in Delft from 1661 includes "the small piece by Fabritius, being a little case,"<sup>93</sup> and the inventory of Aernout Eelbrecht in Leiden from 1683 records "a little case by Fabritius."<sup>94</sup>
- 47 Like other protective paintings hinged to an interior picture, Fabritius's panel, itself, would have mimicked an actual wooden shutter hinged to the casing of a real domestic window, which could allow or block a neighbor's view into a household. The illusionistic painting of Fabritius's little bird would have contributed to the fiction of a window frame, which the hinged panel shuttered when closed.
- 48 One- and two-panel wooden shutters hinged to window frames appeared frequently on seventeenth-century Dutch houses, which attests to their visually familiar and culturally well-embedded functions. As an anonymous Utrecht student observed on June 19 (29), 1699, "shutters . . . are always withoutside of the windows."<sup>95</sup> Domestic shutters took the form of either one hinged panel the same size as the window it covered, or two panels hinged on each side of the frame, each half

the width of the window, which they shielded when closed. Depictions of a single-panel hinged shutter can be seen in many seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, including Nicolaes Maes's *Girl at a Window*, 1650-60 (fig. 14). Two-panel shutters appear in Nicolaes Maes's *The Maidservant*, ca. 1659 (see fig. 4). In each of these examples, a female figure, seen from a street view, leans out of the window beside the open shutter(s).

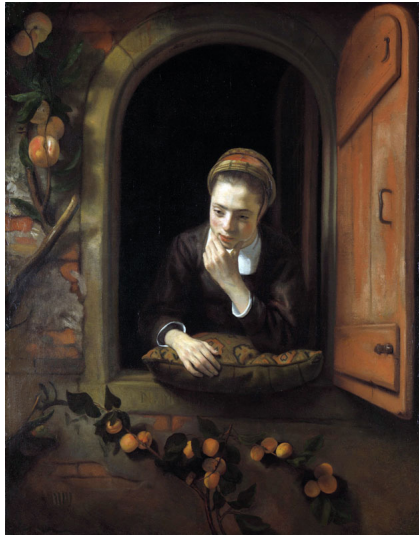


Fig. 14 Nicolaes Maes, *Girl at a Window*, 1650-60, oil on canvas, 123 x 96 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-245 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)



Fig. 15 Gerrit Dou, *Lady at Her Toilet*, 1667, oil on panel, 75.5 x 58 cm. Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. no. 1186 (OK) (artwork in the public domain)

- 49 The presumed function of Fabritius's *Goldfinch* as a *kasge* or *casje* would thus have tapped into the familiarity of neighborhood social exchange, which actual closed shutters on domestic windows blocked and open shutters facilitated. Similar to a closed shutter on a house, a closed panel over an interior painting protected the contents but also prevented the viewer's engagement with the covered scene, often of a domestic interior. At the same time, curiosity would engage the viewer to uncover the interior picture by evoking his/her similar inquisitiveness as a passerby on a neighborhood street before an actual domestic window. Conversely, like an open shutter on a real window frame that afforded visual and verbal exchange between house dweller and neighbor, an open shutter attached with hinges to a painting's frame invited a viewer's engagement with the interior picture.
- 50 Significantly, documents reveal that several hinged panels shuttered paintings of domestic scenes. Such interior pictures with household views include, for example, Gerrit Dou's<sup>96</sup> *The Wine Cellar*, ca. 1660,<sup>97</sup> and *Lady at Her Toilet*, 1667 (fig. 15),<sup>98</sup> as well as Johannes Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance*, ca. 1664.<sup>99</sup> I argue that the specific scenarios depicted in such enclosed paintings of domestic interiors provide precisely the type of fertile subjects worthy of the curiosity and engagement of the viewer as neighbor.
- 51 In Dou's *Wine Cellar*, for example, a young man and a maidservant in the foreground of an intimate candle-lit interior catch each other's flirtatious and furtive attention. The subject has been identified as young love with its attendant pitfalls signaled by various admonitory details.<sup>100</sup> Al-



ways mindful of official neighborhood strictures to uphold individual and communal honor, the viewer as neighbor might judge the young lovers' behavior. Alternatively, the viewer may remind him/herself of the ever-present potential for gossip; self-congratulate his/her own abstinence from such youthful indiscretion; be amused by such human frailty; delight voyeuristically in such titillating behavior, and so on.

- 52 In Dou's *Lady at Her Toilet*, an elegantly dressed young woman accompanied by her maid preens before a mirror in her well-appointed room and invites a possible judgment about the perils of *vanitas* by the viewer as neighbor (fig. 15). The scene also implies an imminent seduction. The young woman sits beneath an empty birdcage with an open door, which conventionally symbolizes a loss of virginity.<sup>101</sup> She may await a male visitor, who would assume the empty seat (left) and enjoy the cooled wine (right).<sup>102</sup> *Lady at Her Toilet* engages the curiosity of the viewer in any number of ways that are akin to the experience of peering through an actual domestic window with an open shutter.



Fig. 16 Frans van Mieris, the Elder, *Young Woman at Her Dressing Table* (with opened frame), 1667, oil on panel, 27 x 22 cm. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, inv. no. 1741 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: bpk, Berlin/Hans-Peter Klut/ Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden /Art Resource, NY)

- 53 By the mid-eighteenth century, hinged glazed panels, which closely resemble transparent windows, protected numerous mid-seventeenth-century Dutch domestic scenes depicted in *fijnschilderijen* in the collection of Augustus III, elector of Saxony and king of Poland. Such paintings include *Young Woman at Her Dressing Table*, 1667, by Frans van Mieris, the Elder (fig. 16). The hinged windows with small locks and keys were attached to one of the vertical edges of the paintings' frames. They superseded (or augmented) the earlier mid-seventeenth-century Dutch use of protective, hinged wooden shutters. I suggest that the hinged, glazed panels also invite inquisitive looking, as if from a neighborhood street into a domestic interior.
- 54 A pair of transparent mullioned windows, hinged to the vertical edges of a finely crafted Dutch dollhouse, ca. 1686-ca. 1710, attest further to the popularity of such visual and physical interplay, which engaged the window motif (fig. 17). The miniature house appealed to the adult tastes of its wealthy owner Petronella Oortman. Such dollhouses for elite women testified to their socio-economic status. They also provided ritual play that reinforced deeply embedded cultural norms about the domestic roles of virtuous wives and mothers.<sup>103</sup> The windows of Petronella



Fig. 17 Anonymous, *Petronella Oortman's Dollhouse*, ca. 1686–1710, chest of oak, paint and tin, 255 x 190 x 78 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-NM-1010 (artwork in the public domain; photo credit: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Oortman's dollhouse close over and protect the interior rooms, which are furnished with exquisite miniatures of furniture, household goods, and figures. Yet when closed, the transparent windows also ensure a view into the dollhouse.<sup>104</sup> Together, the three variations of protective hinged panels—wooden shutters over mid-seventeenth-century Dutch paintings; windows over Augustus's seventeenth-century Dutch *fijnschilderijen*; and mullioned windows over an ornate late seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouse—attest to the long-lived evocation of a neighbor's viewing experience through a street-side window into an actual domestic interior.

- 55 Over time, the full range of changes to *The Goldfinch*, which Wadum's restoration revealed, suggest that Fabritius explored additional contexts for the painting's display, which might also have included or referenced a window setting. For example, at an intermediary stage, as we have seen, the white plaster background of the painting extended completely to the right edge of the panel, but the original black border remained visible on the top, left, and bottom edges.<sup>105</sup> The artist may have intended for the panel to have a frame or other device attached to only the top, left, and bottom edges for some now unknown purpose. Regardless of whether Fabritius displayed *The Goldfinch* in additional ways, the illusionistic painting of the little bird within a plaster window jamb found its inspiration in pictorial convention, contemporary social practice, and the significant role of the window in neighborhood social exchange.

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Linda Stone-Ferrier, professor in the Kress Foundation Department of Art History, University of Kansas, has published on seventeenth-century Dutch genre imagery, especially paintings by Gabriel Metsu, and on landscapes by Rembrandt and Jacob van Ruisdael. Her essay "An Assessment of Recent Scholarship on Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Imagery" will appear in the forthcoming *Ashgate Research Companion to Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century*. Her current book project examines the

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Brown, *Carel Fabritius: Complete Edition with a Catalogue Raisonné* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 64, 88n14, 146–58 (Appendix A). In his 1667 publication *Beschryvinge der Stad Delft (Description of the Town of Delft)*, Dirck van Bleyswijck recounted Fabritius's biography and praised his art: "Carel Fabritius, an outstanding and excellent painter, who was so quick and sure in the use of perspective as well as natural colors and in putting them on canvas that (in the judgment of many connoisseurs) he has never had his equal" (Carel Fabritius, een seer voortreflijk en uytnemend konstschilder die in matery van perspectiven als mede natuyrlijk colorenen ofte leggen van sijn verwe soo prompt en vast was dat [na 't oordeel van veele konst-kenders] noch noyt sijns gelijk heeft gehad). Dirck van Bleyswijck, *Beschrijvinge der stad Delft* (Delft: Arnold Bon, 1667), 2:852. Translation from Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 62–63, 159 (Appendix B).

<sup>2</sup> Ariane van Suchtelen, "The Goldfinch," in *Carel Fabritius 1622-1654: Young Master Painter*, exh. cat., Frederik J. Duparc (The Hague: Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis/Zwolle: Waanders

Publishers, 2004), 135, cat. 11.

<sup>3</sup> The Dutch words for a goldfinch are *distelvink* (thistle finch) and *putter* (water-drawer). The latter term refers to the fact that a goldfinch can be taught to open its own feeding box and draw its drinking water by lowering a small bucket on a chain into a container of water below and then retrieve the bucket. M. M. Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” in *Miscellanea I.Q. van Regteren Altena* 16/V/1969 (Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema, 1969), 155, 157.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Liedtke, Michiel C. Plomp, and Axel Rüger, *Vermeer and the Delft School*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art//New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 262.

<sup>5</sup> Jørgen Wadum, “‘Het Puttertje’ gerestaureerd en doorgelicht,” *Mauritshuis in Focus* 17, no. 2 (2004), 28. Ariane van Suchtelen added: “The depiction’s low viewpoint seems to indicate that the subject was viewed from below and that the panel was thus intended to be placed high up on the wall.” Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 137.

<sup>6</sup> For the information discussed in this and the following paragraph, see Wadum, “‘Het Puttertje,’” 26–28; and Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 136, 139nn14, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Fabritius’s *Goldfinch* could not have functioned as a traditionally framed painting because of the panel’s atypical thickness and the lack of a beveled back edge to mount in a frame. Liedtke, Plomp, and Rüger, *Vermeer and Delft School*, 260. In 1950, Kjell Boström proposed that the painting may have been a door for a furniture cabinet or an interior wall niche. Kjell Boström, “De oorspronkelijke bestemming van C. Fabritius’s *Putterje*,” *Oud Holland* 65 (1950): 82–83. Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 47, 127. However, Ariane van Suchtelen disputed such ideas because the scene’s “plastered wall would be a very strange choice for the background.” Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 137. In 1966, A. B. de Vries suggested that the picture probably functioned as a little door of a “painting case” (*schilderijen kast* or *kasgen*). A. B. de Vries and Magdi Tóth-Ubbens, *In het licht van Vermeer: Vijf eeuwen schilderkunst*, exh. cat. (The Hague: Mauritshuis, 1966), n. p., cat. 22. In 1970, M. L. Wurfain proposed the painting might have functioned as a shop sign for Cornelis de Putter, a shoemaker, wine- and bookseller in The Hague. The goldfinch (*putter*) on a sign for the wine shop may have alluded to the proprietor’s name and also referenced his wares since *putten* in Dutch means “pitching water or wine.” M. L. Wurfain, “Hoe was het *Putterje* gebeeckt?,” in *Opstellen voor H. van de Waal: Aangeboden door leerlingen en medewerkers, 3 maart 1970*, ed. J. Bolten, C. H. A. Broos, and L. D. Couprie, *Leidse kunsthistorische reeks* (Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema/Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1970), 155–61. Alternatively in 1981, Christopher Brown posited that Fabritius’s patron, Abraham de Potter (also spelled *de Putter*), might have commissioned the painting. See fig. 12 of this study; Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 127. Some scholars have dismissed the possibility that the painting functioned as a shop sign, which typically exhibited the shop owner’s name rather than the artist’s signature. Also Fabritius would not have signed the panel so conspicuously. Liedtke, Plomp, and Rüger, *Vermeer and Delft School*, 260. Further, the painting would not have manifested such fine artistic technique. Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 127. In 1987, Ben Broos proposed that *The Goldfinch* might have been affixed at the bottom to a physical element, perhaps a panel protruding at a ninety-degree angle, which may have depicted illusionistically the bird’s little pail attached to a line. Ben Broos, *Meesterwerken in het Mauritshuis* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1987), 136. See note 3 above. In 1996, Mariët Westermann suggested without further elaboration that “Fabritius may well have embedded the small panel in a fake window, cabinet opening or wall to create a *trompe-l’oeil* effect.” Mariët Westermann, *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic 1585–1718* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 88. Without providing detail, Walter Liedtke speculated in 2001 that the painting may have been

part of “a construction physically (if not conceptually) similar to a design of a perspective box” or some other “ensemble.” Liedtke, Plomp, and Rüger, *Vermeer and Delft School*, 262. In 2004, based on Jørgen Wadum’s 2003 restoration of the painting, Ariane van Suchtelen agreed with A. B. de Vries’s 1966 conclusion that *The Goldfinch* probably functioned as a little door of a “painting case.” Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 136, 139nn13–15, 17–18.

<sup>8</sup> I am writing a book-length study on the seventeenth-century Dutch neighborhood in art and culture.

<sup>9</sup> The type of painting of an open window or window-niche has been referenced as a “window-niche piece” (*vensternisstuk*), “window-niche” (*vensternis*), or “niche piece” (*nisstuk*). Otto Naumann, *Frans van Mieris*, Aetas Aurea: Monographs on Dutch and Flemish Painting (Doornspijk: Davaco Publishers, 1981), 1:38n16, 58n46. Ronni Baer concluded that although the stone window frame with ledge seen in many of Gerrit Dou’s pictures is “neither a true window (which is often to be observed in the left-hand wall of the room depicted) nor a true niche (except in rare instances), it nevertheless alludes to these two forms.” Ronni Baer, with contributions by Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. and Annetje Boersma, *Gerrit Dou 1613-1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat., ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art/New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 40–41. Martha Hollander invoked the seventeenth-century Dutch term *doorsien* (view through) for Dou’s window-niche paintings. Martha Hollander, *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 8, 13, 18, 43, 50, 203n3.

<sup>10</sup> See also the unattributed *Perspective Box of a Dutch Interior*, 1663, oil paint, glass mirror and walnut, 42.0 x 30.3 x 28.2 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, General Membership Fund, inv. no. 35.101.A; see museum website.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Liedtke, “*The View in Delft* by Carel Fabritius,” *Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976): 61–73.

<sup>12</sup> Angela Ho called the window-niche in Dou’s paintings, which was one of his signature motifs, “a positive marketing ploy” of self-reflexive craftsmanship that appealed to collectors, who valued such illusionistic deceptions. Angela Ho, “Gerrit Dou’s Niche Pictures: Pictorial Repetition as Marketing Strategy,” *Athanos* 25 (2007): 59, 64. Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writings of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Herman Roodenburg, “‘Freundschaft,’ ‘Bruderlichkeit’ und ‘Einigkeit’: Städtische Nachbarschaften im Westen der Republik,” *Ausbreitung bürgerlicher Kultur in den Niederlanden und Nordwestdeutschland*, ed. P. H. T. Dekker, P. Post, and H. Siuts, Beiträge zur Volkskultur in Nordwestdeutschland 74 (Münster: T. Coppenrath Verlag, 1991), 13. Herman Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie van de vroegmoderne stad: de ‘gebuyrten’ in Leiden en Den Haag,” in *Cultuur en maatschappij in Nederland 1500–1850: Een historisch-antropologisch perspectief*, ed. Peter te Boekhorst, Peter Burke, and Willem Frijhoff (Meppel: Boom/Heerlen: Open Universiteit, 1992), 224, 232. Gabrielle Dorren, “Communities within the Community: Aspects of Neighbourhood in Seventeenth-Century Haarlem,” *Urban History* 25, part 2 (August 1998): 180. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0963926800000791>

<sup>14</sup> Roodenburg, “Freundshaft,” 14, 16. Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 221, 228, 229, 234–35, 239. Llewellyn Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur: Doorkijkjes in het Utrechtse buurtleven van de vroege middeleeuwen tot in de zeventiende eeuw,” *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 112 (1997): 336. Dorren, “Communities,” 180, 183. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18352/bmg-n-lchr.4507>

<sup>15</sup> Roodenburg, “Freundschaft,” 15. Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 224. Catherina Lis and

Hugo Soly, "Neighborhood Social Change in Western European Cities," *International Review of Social History* 38 (1993): 5, 7. Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur," 349, 357, 359. Dorren, "Communities," 177. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020859000111757>

<sup>16</sup> Roodenburg, "Freundschaft," 11–13, 16, 18. Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie," 233, 239.

<sup>17</sup> Roodenburg, "Freundschaft," 18. Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie," 221, 239–40, 243. Dorren, "Communities," 183. Carl A. Hoffman, "Social Control and the Neighborhood in European Cities," in *Social Control in Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 318.

<sup>18</sup> Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie," 232. Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur," 346–49. Hoffman, "Social Control," 309–27. Pieter Spierenburg, "Social Control and History: An Introduction," in *Social Control in Europe* (see note 17 above), 1–22.

<sup>19</sup> Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur," 340. Historians, sociologists, and social psychologists employ the terms "social control" and "social networks" referenced in this paragraph. Scholars speak of early modern neighborhoods in terms of the "theory of social control," "social consciousness and collective identity," and "social exchange." Lis and Soly, "Neighborhood Social Change," 3, 8–9, 11–12, 15, 30. Spierenburg, "Social Control," 2–3, 5ff.

<sup>20</sup> Roodenburg, "Freundschaft," 13–14. Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie," 224, 233–34. Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur," 340–42, 348.

<sup>21</sup> Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur," 346.

<sup>22</sup> Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie," 222–24.

<sup>23</sup> Lis and Soly, "Neighborhood Social Change," 15–16.

<sup>24</sup> Dutch city archives hold extensive documentation of such neighborhood social exchange. See, for example, Dorren, "Communities"; Bogaers, "Geleund over de onderdeur"; Lis and Soly, "Neighborhood Social Change"; Roodenburg, "Freundschaft"; and Roodenburg, "Naar een etnografie."

<sup>25</sup> "[lichtplaetsen ghemaect voor de huysen na de straet toe] goet voor mans die niet en begeeren dat hun Vrouwe, of Dochters voor den veinsters ten thoon sitten, en besocht worden vande ghene die langhs de strate voorbygaen"; Simon Stevin, "Vande oirdeningh der Steden & Byvough der Stedenoordening, vande oirdening der deelen eens hvis met 't gheene daer ancleeft," in *Materiae politicae: Burgherlicke stoffen*, ed. H. Stevin (Leiden: Adryaen Rosenboom, 1649), 56. Translation from Heidi de Mare, "The Domestic Boundary as Ritual Area in Seventeenth-Century Holland," in *Urban Rituals in Italy and The Netherlands: Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture and Urban Environment*, ed. Heidi de Mare and Anna Vos (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp B.V., 1993), 109, 129n2.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, "Yes, door and window, above all, / They do quite a bit of harm as well, / (...) Thou, if you want to be of good praise, / Stay at home, that is the (virgin) maiden's court." (Ja deur en venster, boven dat, / Die schaden vry al mede wat, / (...), Gy, wilje zijn van goeden lof, / Blijf t'huys, dat is het maegden-hof.); Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken van den Heere Jacob Cats* (Amsterdam: J. Ratelband . . ., 1712), 1:251. I am grateful to Dr. Allard Jongman, University of Kansas, for his assistance with the translation of the Cats excerpt. See also Heidi de Mare, "Het huis en de regels van het denken: Een cultuurhistorisch onderzoek naar het werk van Simon Stevin, Jacob Cats en Pieter de Hoogh," PhD diss. (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, 2003), 347, 838n23. Elsewhere Heidi de Mare paraphrased Cats's admonitions: "[The married woman] guards the house . . . by watching over people's comings and goings. The housewife must therefore keep a watchful eye, and can never leave her post . . . Furthermore, she may not loiter at the window or in the

doorway.” De Mare, “The Domestic Boundary,” 110, 129n3.

<sup>27</sup> “altos aan haer deuren en vensters tegenwoordigh”; National Archives, The Hague, Court of Holland, 3.03.01.04, I A 17/1 (G). Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw: Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Hes historische herdrukken (Utrecht: HES, 1985), 66.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Cornelis Lelienbergh’s *Still Life of Finches*, 1654, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 41.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. no. W1902-1-19; see museum website. Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Wayne Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting: Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 183.

<sup>30</sup> Jacob Cats, *Spiegel vanden ouden ende nieuwen tijdt* (The Hague: Isaac Burchoorn, 1632), 1:69. Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 290n45. See, for example, Gabriel Metsu’s *A Woman Seated in a Window*, ca. 1661, oil on panel, 27.6 x 22.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; see museum website.

<sup>31</sup> Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 233–34, 298n66.

<sup>32</sup> Eddy de Jongh, “Erotica in vogelperspectief: De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse genrevoorstellingen,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 3, no. 1 (1968-1969): 29n14, 35n33, 40. See, for example, Frans van Mieris the Elder, *A Woman with a Bird in a Small Coffin*, 1676, oil on panel, 16.5 x 13.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-182; see museum website.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Gabriel Metsu, *An Old Man Selling Poultry and Game*, 1662, oil on panel, 61.5 x 45.5 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, inv. no. 1733; see Adriaan E. Waiboer, et al., *Gabriel Metsu: Rediscovered Master of the Dutch Golden Age*, exh. cat. (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland/Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum/Washington, D.C.: National Gallery/New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 74, 83, figs. 54 and 64.

<sup>34</sup> Eddy de Jongh’s discussions of *An Old Man Selling Poultry and Game* focused on the elderly man, his female customer, and the bird that he offers her. De Jongh concluded that Metsu’s painting alludes to the erotic titillation and moral warnings inherent in the double meaning of “birding.” De Jongh, “Erotica in vogelperspectief,” 22–35. Eddy de Jongh, *Tot lering en vermaak: Betekenissen van Hollandse genrevoorstellingen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1976), 167–68.

<sup>35</sup> J. A. Bierens de Haan, “Der Stieglitz als Schöpfer,” *Journal für Ornithologie* 81, no. 1 (January 1933). Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 155. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF01932163>

<sup>36</sup> Herbert Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art*, The Bollingen Series (Washington, D.C.: Pantheon Books, 1946), 56.

<sup>37</sup> In Joannes Sambucus’s *Emblemata* (Antwerp: Christ. Plantyn, 1566), a father provides his son a lesson in initiative and skill as they watch a goldfinch pull up a cord attached to a small vessel to access water from a glass below. Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 156–57.

<sup>38</sup> Liedtke, *Vermeer and the Delft School*, 262.

<sup>39</sup> Previous scholars have compared Fabritius’s goldfinch to the isolated detail of its counterpart in window/window-niche genre paintings, but they have not addressed the consistent placement of the little bird’s house/cage beside—or most often within—the jamb of the window/window-niche. Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken, naar een vogeltje” 157–58.

<sup>40</sup> Some of the characteristics of the goldfinch’s gable house/cage can also be seen in earlier depictions of it, such as the miniature of Pope Cornelius and Bishop Cyprian by the Master of



Catharine van Cleves, ca. 1445, in a manuscript now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; see Eberhard König, “Ms. M. 917, p. 247, Pope Cornelius and Bishop Cyprian, head miniature for their common suffrage,” in *The Hours of Catharine of Cleves: Devotion, Demons and Daily Life in the Fifteenth Century*, exh. cat., ed. Rob Dücker and Ruud Priem (New York: Abrams, 2009), 378–79, cat. 118.

<sup>41</sup> As M. M. Tóth-Ubbens has observed, a goldfinch lived in the same type of house as its owner. Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 158. Two later extant goldfinch cages, one undated and one from the nineteenth century, also take the form of miniature houses although in somewhat different styles. They manifest their enduring conception as Dutch domestic architecture (goldfinch cages, 80 x 36 x 19 cm and 64 x 47 x 20.5 cm, Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde “Het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum,” Arnhem). Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 159, 349, figs. 15 and 16.

<sup>42</sup> Gerrit Dou’s *Kitchen Scene*, ca. 1645, offers the earliest example of such paintings and one which predates Fabritius’s panel by about nine years. The view through the foreground open window-niche into the interior space reveals the distinctive cage attached to the middle-ground wall immediately beside the second window (oil on panel, 41.5 x 30.5 cm, Royal Danish Kunstkammer 1793, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, inv. no. KMS 1966; see museum website). Fabritius’s suggestive conception of the goldfinch’s placement within a window jamb did not depend on having seen Dou’s earlier painting from ca. 1645. Rather, the setting for Fabritius’s goldfinch appears to have been embedded in already familiar pictorial conventions.

<sup>43</sup> See also, After Dou, *Woman in a Window-niche with a Birdcage*, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Gemeentearchief, Tilburg, The Netherlands, inv. no. 5-02; see RKD (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie) #118144; After Dou, *Woman at the Window*, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, Musée Magnin, Dijon, France, Réunion des Musées Nationaux; see Art Resource, New York (ART343454); and Domenicus van Tol, *Pipe Smoking Man*, medium and dimensions unknown, formerly Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, coll. Carstanjen; see Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 346–47, fig. 8.

<sup>44</sup> In at least four other paintings, Abraham Mignon also depicted a goldfinch and its house/cage attached to the jamb of a niche (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. no. A 580; Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse, inv. no. SK-A-266; Gemäldegalerie, Alte Meister, Kassel, Germany, inv.no. GK 445; and one in a private collection); see Magdalena Kraemer-Noble, *Abraham Mignon 1640–1679: Catalogue Raisonné* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2007), 120–21, 122–23, 140–41, 260–61, cats. 37, 38, 47, and 105.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Mundy, *Travels in Europe, 1639-1647*, vol. 4 of *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, ed. Richard Carnac Temple (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1925), 70–71.

<sup>46</sup> “Ses vogelkoyties, daer een pitterskoytie onder”; Fr. D. O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche kunstgeschiedenis. verzameling van meerendeels onuitgegeven berichten en mededeelingen*, vol. 5 (Rotterdam: W. J. van Hengel & Eeltjes, 1882-83), 295. Tóth-Ubbens, “Kijken naar een vogeltje,” 157n20.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Quiringh Gerritsz. van Brekelenkam, *The Tailor’s Workshop*, 1661, oil on canvas, 66 x 53 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-112; see museum website.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Gerrit Dou, *Man Interrupted at His Reading*, ca. 1635, oil on panel, 24 x 22.5 cm, Sudley Castle Trustees, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, Walter Morrison Collection; see Baer, *Gerrit Dou*, 71.

<sup>49</sup> See note 6 above.

<sup>50</sup> I thank Lisa Cloar for her digital realization of my two mock-ups.

<sup>51</sup> Both Wadum and van Suchtelen noted that Fabritius painted his signature in gray. Wadum, “Het Putterje,” 28. Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 135.

<sup>52</sup> Oil on panel, 65 x 49 cm, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; see Duparc, *Carel Fabritius* (see note 2 above), 112.

<sup>53</sup> The *Portrait of Abraham de Potter* includes the sitter’s inscribed name and age in addition to Fabritius’s name and the painting’s date: *Abraham de potter / Æ .56 / C. fabritius 1649. fe*. An illusionistic nail protrudes from the wall between the inscribed lines.

<sup>54</sup> The friend of literary luminaries and painters, Sweerts lived in Amsterdam and wrote, published, and sold numerous books, including *The Ten Pleasures of Marriage (De tien vermakelijkheden van het huwelijk)* in 1683. Ton Broos, “Street-Smarts in the Age of Rembrandt: Examining a Collection of Seventeenth Century Witty Inscriptions,” *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* 28 (2007): 187–90.

<sup>55</sup> “Op een Leerkopers Venster”; Jeroen Jeroense (Hieronymus Sweerts), *Koddige en ernstige opschriften, op luyffens, wagens, glazen, uithangborden, en andere taferelen. van langerhand by een gezamelt en uytgeschreven door een liefhebber derzelve* (Amsterdam: Jeroen Jeroense, 1682), 1:98. I am grateful to Dr. Allard Jongman for his assistance with the translation of some of the excerpts from Sweerts’s publication.

<sup>56</sup> “In den Haag, op een Venster, op de Geest”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:32.

<sup>57</sup> “Te Deventer in’t huys van een Kuyper”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:90.

<sup>58</sup> “In ‘t huis van een Rechts-geleerde”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:47.

<sup>59</sup> “Tegen de Muur van ‘t huis”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:97.

<sup>60</sup> “Opschrift voor een Huis”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1, 121.

<sup>61</sup> “Een Buurman schreef naast zyn Deur”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 3:68.

<sup>62</sup> “Op een Muur met Potloot geschreven”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:61.

<sup>63</sup> “Op de Muur van de Rol met een Potloot geschreven”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:69.

<sup>64</sup> “Voor een Voge(?)-verkopers Huis”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:24.

<sup>65</sup> “Tegen een Bakkers deur aangeschreven”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:85.

<sup>66</sup> “Voor ‘t Huis van een Korenkoper”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:70.

<sup>67</sup> “Voor een Toebakverkopers deur”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:96.

<sup>68</sup> “Op de Muur by een Vuurwerk-maker”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 1:91.

<sup>69</sup> “Boven de deur daar een Kopster woonde”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 4:42.

<sup>70</sup> “Te Delft in de Roode Meulen, by de Haagse Poort”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:73.

<sup>71</sup> “Voor een Schilders Huis te Delft”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:30.

<sup>72</sup> “Voor een huis te Delft, aan de Markt”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:19.

<sup>73</sup> “Voor een Toebacks-winkel, te Delft”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:36.

<sup>74</sup> “Voor een Kruideniers Deur geplakt, te Delft”; Sweerts, *Koddige*, 2:71.

<sup>75</sup> In his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst*, Samuel van Hoogstraten referred to “Fabritius, my fellow pupil” (Fabritius, mijn medeleerling) in Rembrandt’s studio, which could not have been the case before 1642. Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (Rotterdam: François van Hoogstraeten, 1678), book 1, p. 11. Duparc, *Carel Fabritius*, 17, 74n26.

<sup>76</sup> Fabritius may also have known firsthand Rembrandt’s *Girl at a Window* and the picture’s trompe l’oeil display in the actual front window of the master’s home. The picture shares similarities of

subject matter, composition, and viewer engagement with the painting *A Girl with a Broom*, 1651, oil on canvas, 107.3 x 91.4 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; see museum website. The latter painting has been tentatively attributed to Fabritius or Rembrandt's workshop. If the attribution to Fabritius were secure, one may argue that Rembrandt's painting influenced Fabritius's choice of subject and its pictorial conception. Like *Girl at a Window*, *A Girl with a Broom* depicts a half-length figure who peers directly out at the viewer. The relaxed upper body and arms of each girl are supported by a window ledge in the former painting and by a low gate in the latter. Scholars have concluded that the artist of *A Girl with a Broom* began the painting in 1646/48, soon after the 1645 date of Rembrandt's picture.

<sup>77</sup> De Piles based his publication on his Académie lectures. Roger de Piles, *Coeurs de Peinture par Principes* (Paris: Jacques Estienne, 1708). Michiel Roscam Abbing, "On the Provenance of Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window*, Its First Owner, and an Intriguing Anecdote," in *Rembrandt van Rijn: "Girl at a Window,"* exh. cat., ed. Kate Bomford, Ann Sumner, and Giles Waterfield, *Paintings and Their Context 4* (Dulwich, England: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1993), 22.

<sup>78</sup> Roscam Abbing argued that the Dulwich painting was the Rembrandt picture owned by de Piles. Roscam Abbing, "On the Provenance," 19–21. Michiel Roscam Abbing, *Rembrandt Toont Sijn Konst: Bijdragen over Rembrandt-Dokumenten uit de Periode 1648–1756* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 1999), 101–9. Several previous identifications of de Piles's painting include, for example, *A Girl with a Broom* (see note 76 above), attributed to Fabritius or to Rembrandt's workshop, and Rembrandt's *The Kitchen Maid*, 1651, oil on canvas, 78 x 63 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; see museum website. Svetlana Alpers, *The Making of Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 165–66n15.

<sup>79</sup> "Rembrandt . . . se divertit un jour à faire le portrait de sa servante, pour l'exposer à une fenêtre & tromper les yeux des passans. Cela luy réussit; car on ne s'apperçut tot quelques jours après de la tromperie. Ce n'étoit, comme on peut bien se l'imaginer de Rembrandt, ny la beauté du dessein, ny la noblesse des expressions qui avoient produit cet effet. Etant in Hollande j'eus le curiosité de voir cette portrait que je trouvai d'un bonne pinceau & d'une grande force; je l'achetai, & il teint aujourd'hui une place considérable dans mons cabinet"; De Piles, *Coeurs de Peinture*, 10–11. Translation from Roscam Abbing, "On the Provenance," 22.

<sup>80</sup> Roscam Abbing, "On the Provenance," 23. See Henk Snaterse's photograph of a copy of *Girl at a Window* placed in the front window of Rembrandt's house, in Roscam Abbing, *Rembrandt Toont Sijn Konst*, 110–11, figs. 31a-b, 32, 123–24.

<sup>81</sup> "La veritable Peinture est donc celle que nous appelle (pour ainsi dire) en nous suprenant: & ce n'est que par la force de l'effect qu'elle produit, que nous ne pouvons nous empêcher d'en approcher comme si elle avoit quelque chose à nous dire . . . Je conclus que la veritable Peinture, doit appeler son spectateur par la force & par la grand verité de son imitation, & que le spectateur surpris doit aller à elle comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu'elle represente"; De Piles, *Coeurs de Peinture*, 4, 6. "True painting, therefore, is such that not only surprises, but, as it were, calls to us; and has so powerful an effect, that we cannot help coming near it, as if it had something to tell us . . . On the whole, true painting, by the force and great truth of its imitation, ought, as I have observed, to call the spectator, to surprise him, and oblige him to approach it, as if he intended to converse with the figures"; Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting* (London: J. Osborn, at the Golden Ball, in Pater-Noster Row, 1743), 2–3. Svetlana Alpers, "Describe or Narrate? A Problem in Realistic Representation," *New Literary History* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 27. Alpers, *The Making of Rubens*, 79, 165n14.

<sup>82</sup> To offer a foil for Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window*, de Piles relayed the experience of a friend, who walked through the Vatican without noticing the Raphael frescoes because they did not "call the viewer into conversation." De Piles, *Coeurs de Peinture*, 14–17. Alpers, "Describe or Narrate?," 27.

<sup>83</sup> Alpers explained: "In his analysis it is the great colorists who call the viewer into conversation . . . De Piles is the first critic to link up in a positive and powerful way the two traditional aspects of color: 1.) its link with imitation and 2.) its powerful appeal to the eyes. In arguing imitation leads to a desired end of fooling the eyes and calling on the viewer, De Piles validated imitation in a new way by tying it to a desirable and newly defined end of art." Alpers, "Describe or Narrate?," 27–28.

<sup>84</sup> De Piles would have been familiar with the essential role of domestic windows in both Dutch and French neighborhood social exchange. See David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740–1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 29.

<sup>85</sup> Van Suchtelen, "The Goldfinch," 137.

<sup>86</sup> Van Suchtelen, "The Goldfinch," 137.

<sup>87</sup> See note 93 below.

<sup>88</sup> See note 94 below.

<sup>89</sup> Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 124.

<sup>90</sup> Annegret Laabs in *De Leidse fijnschilders uit Dresden*, exh. cat., Annegret Laabs and Christoph Schölzel (Dresden: Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen/Leiden: Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal/Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2001), 14.

<sup>91</sup> The 1683 inventory taken after the death of Jacob Dissius's wife, Magdalena van Ruijven, recorded that three paintings by Johannes Vermeer were in *kasies*, or what John Michael Montias translated as "cases or boxes." John Michael Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu: A Web of Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 253, 256, 359, doc. 417.

<sup>92</sup> Ingvar Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Christina Hedström and Gerald Taylor (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 182, 310n83.

<sup>93</sup> "Het stuckge van fabritius sijn [de] een kasge"; Notarial Archives (Notarieel Archief), notary C. van Vliet (no. 2029, act 27), Delft Municipal Archives (Gemeentearchief Delft). Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 154 (Appendix A, doc. no. 30). Transcription and translation from Duparc, *Carel Fabritius*, 55, 76n144.

<sup>94</sup> "Een casje van Fabritius"; Archives of the Orphans' Chamber (Weeskamerarchief) (inv. no. 1086 m), document now lost in the Leiden Municipal Archives (Gemeentearchief Leiden). Abraham Bredius, "Nieuwe gegevens omtrent de schilders Fabritius," *Oud Holland* 38 (1920): 129–37. Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, 157–58 (Appendix A, doc. no. 47). Duparc refers to the possibility that either Carel or Barent Fabritius may have been the attributed artist in the inventory. Duparc, *Carel Fabritius*, 55, 75n113, 76n145. Kjell Boström concluded that a *kas* described in the diminutive, that is, a *kasje* (or *kasge* and *casje*), had to have been a "little case" and not a perspective box. Kjell Boström, "Peep-show or Case?," *Kunsthistorische mededelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie* 4 (1949): 21. See also Boström (note 99 below).

<sup>95</sup> Anonymous Utrecht student, "Notes of several passages and observations in Holland, etc., part of France, Savoy, Piemont, Italy and Part of Germany, from June 1699 to July 1702," Huntingdon, England: County Record Office, 1699–1700, 1 in: Kees van Strien, *Touring the Low Countries: Accounts of British Travellers, 1660–1720* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 322.

<sup>96</sup> In 1665, the collector Johan de Bye exhibited for sale twenty-seven paintings by Dou. Twenty-two of the pictures had protective covers. Boström, "Peep-show or Case?," 21. Quentin Buvelot

described the protective panels over the paintings by Dou owned by de Bye as “special cases.” Quentin Buvelot, et al., *Frans van Mieris 1635-1681*, exh. cat., (The Hague: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis/Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art/Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2005), 21–22. Van Suchtelen referred to the “doors” by Dou. Van Suchtelen, “*The Goldfinch*,” 137, fig. 11c. Eric Jan Sluijter stated that the protective panel(s) of twenty-two of the twenty-seven pictures by Dou owned by de Bye were described as a “case” and two “of those” had doors. Six of the eleven paintings by Dou owned by another seventeenth-century collector, Franciscus de le Boe Sylvius, a medical professor in Leiden, had protective cases and five had protective doors with pictures on them. Eric Jan Sluijter, “All striving to adorne their houses with costly peeces’: Two Case Studies of Paintings in Wealthy Interiors,” in *Art and Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat., ed. Marlene Chambers and Mariët Westermann (Denver Art Museum/The Newark Museum/Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2001), 107–8, 229nn35, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Oil on panel, 30.5 x 25.4 cm, private collection, Switzerland; see Baer, *Gerrit Dou*, 49n111, 110–11. *Still Life with Candlestick and Clock*, ca. 1660, oil on panel, 43.5 x 35.7 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden; see Art Resource, New York (ART419476)—the shutter hinged to *The Wine Cellar*—depicted a frontal view of still-life objects in an illusionistic stone-wall niche.

<sup>98</sup> Franciscus de le Boe Sylvius owned Dou’s *Lady at Her Toilet*, which was described in the 1678 inventory of his nephew, Jean Rouyer, as “a woman whose hair is being done, with casement doors on which a nursing woman with candlelight” (een vrouwtie dat gekapt wordt, met openslaende deur en daerop een suygende vrouwtie bij de lamp). Translation from Eric Jan Sluijter, “Een stuck waerin een jufr. voor de spiegel van Gerrit Dou,” *Antiek* 23 (1988): 152. Baer, *Gerrit Dou*, 143n1. Sluijter, “All striving to adorne their houses,” 229n37.

<sup>99</sup> Oil on canvas, 40.3 x 35.6 cm, Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection; see museum website. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Johannes Vermeer*, exh. cat., (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art /The Hague: Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis/New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 141. Scholars assume that Vermeer’s *Woman Holding a Balance* was one of three paintings by the artist in cases or boxes (*kasies*) listed in a 1678 inventory of possessions inherited by Jacob Dissius. Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu*, 253, 256, 359, doc. 417. Wheelock, *Johannes Vermeer*, 145n16. The subsequent sale catalogue from 1696 of Dissius’s paintings included a picture by Vermeer, which was listed first and described in the following way: “A young lady weighing gold, in [a case or] a box by J. van der Meer of Delft, extraordinarily artful and vigorously painted” (Een Juffrouw die goud weegt, in een kasje van J. vander Meer van Delft, extraordinaer konstig en krachtig geschildert). Translation from Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu*, 256, 363, doc. 439. Kjell Boström argued that the protective panel described in the first entry in the Amsterdam sale from 1696 of Vermeer’s paintings had to have been a “little case” and not a perspective box, which the diminutive would not have appropriately referenced. Typically unwieldy in scale, a perspective box was described most often as a *perspectyfkas*. Further, if the *kasje* signified a perspective box, the term would have been mentioned first in the auction entry because contemporaries regarded the *perspectyfkas* so highly and as “wonderful” (*wonderlijk*). Boström, “Peep-show or Case?,” 21.

<sup>100</sup> According to Ronni Baer, the wine as “love’s nectar,” the mousetrap as “the symbol of love’s sweet slavery,” and “the milk jug, the cabbage and the candle, with their uterine and phallic shapes, reinforce the erotic undertone of the scene.” Baer, *Gerrit Dou*, 110.

<sup>101</sup> See note 32 above.

<sup>102</sup> Baer, *Gerrit Dou*, 128.

<sup>103</sup> Michelle Moseley-Christian, "Seventeenth Century *Pronk Poppenhuisen*: Domestic Space and the Ritual Function of Dutch Dollhouses for Women," *Home Cultures* 7, no. 3 (November 2010): 344. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/175174210X12785760502298>

<sup>104</sup> Originally, the other two extant seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouses also had hinged protective panels, although they are now missing from the one in Utrecht (ca. 1670–90, multimedia, 206.5 x 189 x 79 cm, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, inv. no. 5000; see museum website). When the two opaque panels close over the open side of the second of the two Amsterdam dollhouses (ca. 1676), a window in each provides a view into a room (multimedia, 200 x 150.5 x 56 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, BK-14656; see museum website). Moseley-Christian, "Seventeenth Century *Pronk Poppenhuisen*," 353, 356–57, fig. 7.

<sup>105</sup> See note 6 above.

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