

## Carel Fabritius

Carel Fabritius was born in the year 1622 in Middenbeemster, where he is thought to have spent a while working as a carpenter. In the early 1640s he studied at Rembrandt's studio in Amsterdam along with his brother Barent Fabritius. In the early 1650s he moved to Delft but only joined the Delft painters' guild in 1652. He died young, caught in the explosion of the Delft gunpowder magazine on October 12, 1654, which destroyed a quarter of the city along with his studio and many of his paintings. Only about a dozen paintings have survived.

Of all Rembrandt's pupils, Fabritius was the only one to develop his own artistic style. A typical Rembrandt portrait would have a plain dark background with the subject defined by spotlighting. In contrast, Fabritius' portraits have light-coloured, textured backgrounds and delicately lit subjects. Moving away from the Renaissance focus on iconography, Fabritius became interested in the technical aspects of painting. He used cool colour harmonies and a lighter control of colour to create shape in a luminarist style of painting.

Fabritius was also interested in perspectival effects, as can be seen in the exaggerated perspective of *A View in Delft*, with a Musical Instrument Seller's Stall (1652). He also showed excellent control of a heavily loaded brush, as in *The Goldfinch* (1654). All these qualities appear in the work of Delft's most famous painters, Vermeer and de Hooch; it is likely that Fabritius was a strong influence on them. Carel Fabritius only managed to paint about 15 paintings in his very short career.

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