

CANDLELIGHT IN PAINTING

LIGHTING THE PRE-ELECTRIC HOME

Before gas or electric lighting were invented, the greatest light source indoors usually came from the fixed fire in the grate. Home activities revolved around the hearth, with candlelight or oil lamps providing dim (but mobile) light around the home. Move an arm's length from the candle, however, and you couldn't read, draw or mend.

INDUSTRY LIGHTS THE WAY—FROM GAS TO ELECTRIC

Despite significant advances benefitting the rich (such as a much brighter oil lamp with a circular wick developed by Ami Argand in 1780), real change in lighting our streets and homes only came when lighting technology began to develop on an industrial scale: first as gas lighting at the end of the 18th century and then as electric lighting from the mid-19th century onwards.



<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/everyday-wonders/electric-lighting-home>



Leonardo da Vinci, Virgin and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist, c.1500 CE

The fine art term **chiaroscuro** comes from the combination of Italian words that roughly translate to light and dark.

"light-dark"; chiaro meaning bright or clear and scuro meaning dark or obscure.

The term describes the striking use of the light and shade contrast in painting, drawing or print

The first Renaissance master to develop existing shading techniques to achieve a true chiaroscuro effect was Leonardo da Vinci. Da Vinci brought life and volume to his drawings, starting with the darks on colored paper, then moving toward the lighter tones, and finally adding the highlights, usually with white gouache or chalk.

Use one light source

Choose an environment which is dark toned or shade/in darkness



St. Peter in prison by [Rembrandt](#), 1631



Rembrandt

circa 1629

A Writing Philosopher by Candlelight

oil on copper



Peter Paul Rubens

Old Woman and Boy with Candles

Oil on Panel.1616-1617



Petrus van Schendel

Reading by Candlelight 1870



John Singer Sargent
Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose, 1885-6.



Van Gogh skilfully captured the bluish shadows and reflected light on the polished wood of the chair. These were created by the gas lighting (a gas lamp can be seen in the background)

<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/s0048V1962#details>

Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), GAUGUINS CHAIR
Arles, November 1888



Peter Ilsted

Woman Reading. 1907

Margaret Ithell Colquhoun
Watercolour titled 'No. 7 (self portrait) Candle-light' 1927 -30





Gerhard Richter. Candle. 1983.

Oil on Canvas. 95cm x 90cm