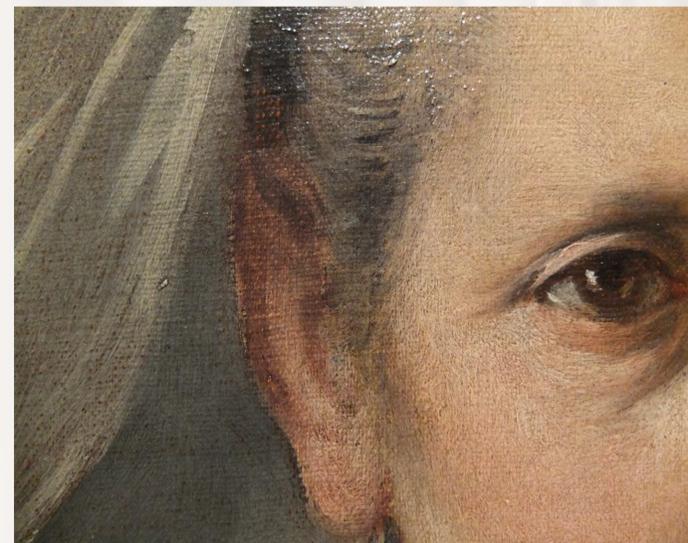
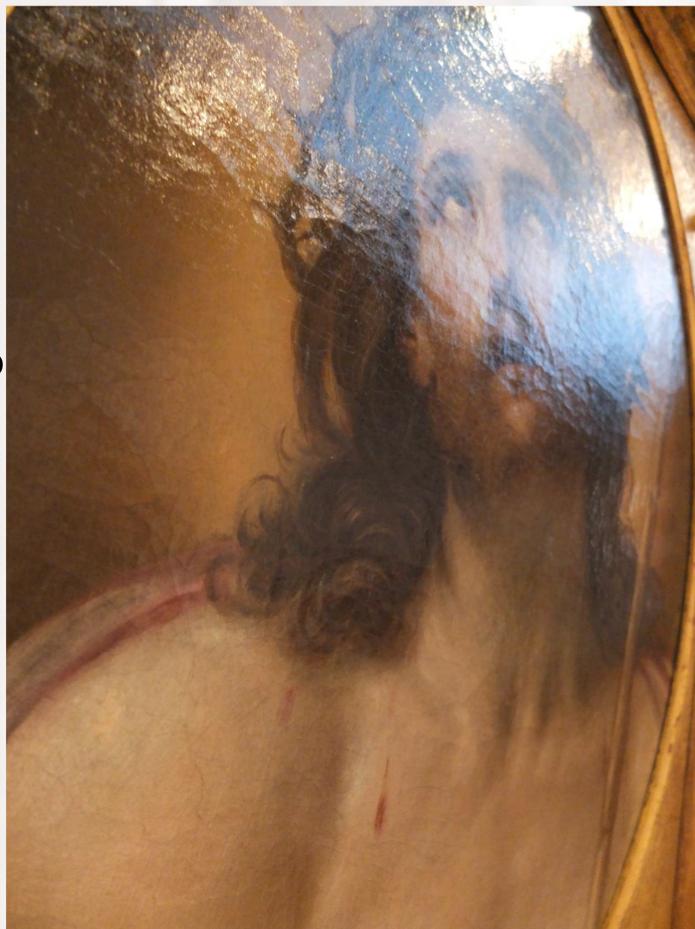


# Guido Reni: Painting Techniques and Studio Practice

My research is centred upon the studio practices of the seventeenth century Bolognese artist, Guido Reni. It focuses mainly on Reni's easel paintings, and the materials and practices involved with their production, though examples of fresco painting are to be included where relevant to the overall research objective.



It is my belief that technique and process are of equal historical importance to the content of a work of art. In the words of Cennino d'Andrea Cennini in his *Il Libro Dell'Arte*, "[Painting] justly deserves to be enthroned next to theory, and to be crowned with poetry" – that is to say, the physical act of painting is of equal importance to the theory or poetry which exists alongside it.

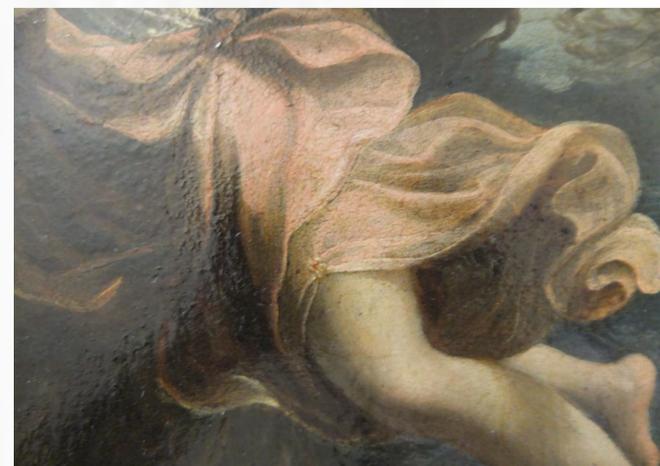


Reni's style and painting technique changed drastically during the course of his career. Sources describe Reni's painting technique as a mystery, saying that he hid his practices from the outside world – Gian Pietro Bellori in his *Life of Guido Reni* (1672) says that Reni painted beneath a cloak, "banishing every mechanical act".



Reni is an interesting character in terms of attribution – that is, it is often difficult to positively attribute Reni paintings, mostly due to the vast number of copies in existence. Reni not only made copies of his own work, but also made a habit of retouching paintings created by pupils and assistants.

Students in Reni's studio are said to have created "non-official" copies in secret. Issues of unapproved copying are cited by Malvasia as the reason for Guido's secrecy whilst working – he was forced to transport unfinished paintings to outside spaces in an effort to prevent them being copied, and painted in a separate room to his students, with only a select few allowed to work alongside him.



My work draws upon scientific analysis collected by painting conservators, scholarly literature on Reni's work and direct observation of his works. It seeks to fuse this multitude of sources to create an overview of Reni's workshop practices. This research seeks to create a middle ground between academy and museum, to create a crossover between the scientific analysis of conservators and academic art-historical writing. It also assesses paintings in the context of written materials.

