Van Veen and his contemporaries, on whose amorous scenes of daily life (often featuring Amor in the role of burgher), as has recently been argued, the canon of Dutch genre painting, comprising scenes of trade, commerce, festivity, courtship, and domesticity, seems largely to have been based. This helps to explain why the theme of love underlies so many of the descriptive episodes that typify this pictorial genus, and further, why the attention they direct toward issues of manufacture, not least the manner in which they have been painted, goes hand in hand with questions concerning the artifice of love, its devices and stratagems.

Precisely because the imagery of love is bound up with the topic of pictorial artifice, this imagery, more often than not, functions reflexively to make the beholder mindful of the form and function, manner and meaning of the pictorial or sculptural image qua image he is beholding. Between 1400 and 1700, many artists produced reflexive images of this kind, that appraise love by examining the pictorial or sculptural image, and conversely, appraise the pictorial or sculptural image by examining love.