

# KLAAS MULLER

V I C T O R W O L F V O E T

## Diana and Actaeon

Wolfvoet was a follower of Rubens (it is unlikely that he was active as an apprentice or collaborator in Rubens' studio) who would remain strongly influenced by the master throughout his life. Moreover (as his extensive inventory shows), he was in possession of several original oil sketches by the master.

Besides numerous copies and pastiches, mostly on copper, he also designed compositions of his own, such as our painting.

The myth of Diana and Actaeon can be found in Ovid's Metamorphoses. It was quite a popular theme in the 16th and 17th centuries: the tale recounts the unfortunate fate of a young hunter named Actaeon, who was a grandson of Cadmus, and his encounter with chaste Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana, goddess of the hunt. The latter is nude and enjoying a bath in a spring with help from her escort of nymphs when the mortal man unwittingly stumbles upon the scene. The nymphs scream in surprise and attempt to cover Diana, who, in a fit of embarrassed fury, splashes water upon Actaeon.

He is transformed into a deer with a dappled hide and long antlers, robbed of his ability to speak, and thereafter promptly flees in fear. It is not long, however, before his own hounds track him down and kill him, failing to recognize their master.

Oil on Copper, 26,5 x 40 cm

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