

KLAAS MULLER

FLEMISH SCHOOL 17TH CEN

Satyr

This expressive drawing depicts the head of a satyr, a mythological creature from classical antiquity often associated with Dionysus, the god of wine, revelry, and ecstasy. The artist has rendered the satyr's features with lively lines and bold shading, giving the face a raw, almost animalistic energy. The wild hair—interwoven with curling forms and possibly grapevines—amplifies the untamed nature of the figure.

Unlike the heroic or idealized characters of mythology, the satyr embodies instinct, desire, and playful mischief. His gaze—partially obscured, partially suggestive—evokes a sense of ambiguity: is he a witness, a tempter, or a mocker?

In the 17th century, head studies like this were popular among artists as exercises in expression and character. They often served as preparatory sketches for larger compositions, but could also circulate as standalone works in collectors' albums.

This drawing fits within that tradition: compact, powerful, and evocative—a moment of mythological imagination captured in line and tone.

Black Pencil, 264 x 196mm



Artist description:

After the Siege of Antwerp (1584–1585), the Southern Provinces of the Netherlands ("Flanders") remained under Spanish rule and were separated from the independent Dutch Republic. Although many artists fled the religious wars and moved from the Southern Netherlands to the Dutch Republic (Dutch Golden Age), Flemish Baroque painting flourished, especially in the Antwerp school, during the seventeenth century under Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, and Jacob Jordaens.