

# KLAAS MULLER

S E B A S T I A A N V R A N C X

## **The Blind Leading The Blind (The Parable of the Blind)**

We know that Rubens had a version of the Parable of the Blind by Sebastiaen Vranckx in his personal collection (from the “Spécification”, the auction catalogue compiled after Rubens' death in 1640, under inventory number 255: *Vne petite piece de Sebastien Francq ou les aueugles menent l'un l'autre, sur fond de bois*).

Vranckx seems to have painted this subject several times (Vander Auwera 2004). Another version, also from a Brussels collection, was exhibited in the Rubens House (K. Belkin and F. Healy, *Een huis vol Kunst, Rubens als verzamelaar*, Rubens House, 2004, pp. 185-187, cat. no. 35.). Vranckx's painting is also depicted in Jan I Brueghel's “Allegory of the Face” (Prado, Madrid).

The parable of the blind men (Matthew 15:14, Luke 6:39) is a religious theme, but it also has a very worldly and even humorous connotation. Ultimately, it is the dog that causes the accident: the animal is the only one with sight, and because it is thirsty, it pulls the blind men into the water. The blind men symbolise ignorance but also gullibility.

The theme was already depicted in the 16th century by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples), but here Vranckx has designed a composition entirely of his own.

We are grateful to Dr. Joos Vander Auwera for confirming the work as an original Sebastiaen Vranckx

Oil on panel, 57 x 42 cm

Marked with the Guild mark of Antwerp and a Panel makers mark on the back

