

KLAAS MULLER

FLEMISH SCHOOL 17TH CEN

Self-Portrait of a Painter in his Studio

This intimate and atmospheric painting is a rare example of a self-portrait by a seventeenth-century Flemish artist, shown in the act of creation. Seated in his studio, the painter holds a palette and several brushes, absorbed in mixing colours or examining his work. His concentrated gaze and poised gesture suggest a moment of quiet introspection, captured with remarkable immediacy.

The setting is modest yet evocative: a wooden interior bathed in warm, subdued light, with an easel in the background bearing a partially completed canvas—possibly a devotional or allegorical scene. A ceramic jug placed beside the artist reinforces the domestic, workshop-like atmosphere. The composition is carefully balanced, with the painter's figure anchoring the scene and drawing the viewer into his world.

Stylistically, the work reflects the Flemish Baroque tradition, with its attention to texture, natural light, and psychological nuance. The artist's features are rendered with realism rather than idealisation, suggesting that the painting was made after life, not only as a professional statement but as a personal reflection. The sketchy treatment of the clothing and background further emphasises the focus on the face and gaze.

This self-portrait stands as a quiet homage to the painter's craft: not only a depiction of artistic labour, but a deeply personal image of the artist as observer, maker, and thinker.

Oil on Canvas, 49 x 38.8 cm



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.