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MICHAEL SWEERTS

Brussels 1618 – 1664 Goa

Self-Portrait with Fur Cap.

Oil on Paper, laid down on Panel,
45 x 38.8 cm



Provenance: Private Estate, Florida;
Private Collection, Ohio, purchased c. 1993;
Aspire Auctions, Cleveland, 28 May 2004, lot 12 as attributed to Michael
Sweerts, possible *Self-portrait wearing a red turban*;
Ivan Lindsay, London;
Where acquired by the present owner.

The present picture, hitherto unpublished, is proposed as an important addition to the oeuvre of the Brussels-born Flemish artist Michael Sweerts (1618-1664), most probably executed in the last years of his life.

The use of paper and restricted palette on earth pigments as cheap, readily available and easily transportable materials are strongly encouraging to the proposition, particularly in the late period of his life. The sitter's age would fit with Sweerts's age at the time, in the mid to late 40s. The composition and typology draw from the *tronies* of the mid 1650s and therefore fit into the artistic repertoire of the painter. The painting shows typical pictorial features characteristic of Sweerts's oeuvre, such as the bust-length format against the dark monochrome background, executed with a limited colour range and with few accentuated highlights in lead white. Most convincing are the strikingly similar protruding watery eyes gazing to the side and the focussed modelling of the flesh tones. Lastly, the physical resemblance of the sitter has much in common with Sweerts's informal self-portraits and thereby suggests this is an exciting addition to the handful of known self-portraits by the artist. All in all, these summarised factors strengthen the attribution of the present portrait to Michael Sweerts, probably in ca. 1662/1664 and that it consequently represents a rare insight in to the last years of his life.

[Information extracted from Sonja Vilsmeier's essay on this painting, 10. November 2021]