



JOSEPH-AUGUSTIN FONTAN

(fl. 1879 - d. after 1924)

Head study of a north African man

signed and dated lower left: *A. Fontan. 1891*

black chalk on brown paper

170 x 155 mm

Although the present drawing was surely made from life, it is unclear whether Joseph-Augustin Fontan ever undertook an artistic expedition to North Africa like his son-in-law Ferdinand Willaert, or whether the anonymous sitter in question is a studio model. The drawing optimises chalk's tonal range to explore light and shadow, illuminating the man's strong facial features with an impressive dimensionality. The tight shading, enclosed within confident outer lines, and the absence of background serve to further elevate the man's profile.

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