



HANS ULRICH FRANK

(Kaufbeuren, c. 1590/95 - Augsburg, 1675)

Pyramus and Thisbe

pen and black ink, brown wash, heightened with white gouache

151 mm (round)

Provenance:

Herbert List (1903-1975)

Private collection, Germany

Hans Ulrich Frank is known primarily for his series of etchings depicting the Thirty Years' War, although he was no less active as a painter, draughtsman, designer of goldsmith work and, according to official documentation, an organist. The present drawing narrates an episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IV. 55-166) and is a typical example of Frank's draughtsmanship. The ill-fated Thisbe discovers the dead body of her lover, Pyramus, and, grief-stricken, she turns her lover's sword on herself to join him in death. To the left the fateful lion whose blood-stained visage first drove Pyramus to suicide is seen carrying Thisbe's bloody cloak.

The composition is derived from an engraving by Crispijn van de Passe the Elder (Hollstein Dutch 1569) after a design by Maerten de Vos, which is currently in the Royal Collection, Windsor. Frank has skilfully reworked de Passe's rectangular engraving into a circular composition allowing Pyramus to occupy a more central position, his body curved in harmony with the drawing's rounded proportions. To the left of Thisbe, the city and secondary tree have been removed, as has much of the thicket to the right, focusing the viewer's attention onto the two central protagonists.

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