

Susanna and the elders



Date of creation. 1610

Dimensions: 170 x 119 cm

Where is it: Graf von Schönborn collection, Pommersfelden, Germany

"Susanna and the Elders" was studied and discussed among critics, because they doubted the possibility that the painting was drawn by Artemisia Gentileschi. Referring to the date of implementation, 1610, the woman had to have barely seventeen, and according to sources, the father, Orazio Gentileschi, put it on display to show the exalted daughter's talent.

Critics have long believed that "Susanna and the Elders" was the work of Orazio, and that the girl's signature was been given only in order to make the young Artemisia know. After long discussions, now they think that the painting is an Artemisia Gentileschi's work, but they also believe that the father helped her.

The scene in the painting is taken from the Old Testament, in particular from the Book of Daniel, the story tells that Susanna, a chaste woman, was founded by two older men, who knew her husband, while she was in the bath tub; the two men, seeing Susanna naked, forced her to satisfy their sexual demands, threatening that they, otherwise, would have gone to report her husband Daniel to have found her with a lover. Susanna refused and, even if the two men went to tell Daniel the lie, he later was able to find out the truth.

The composition painted by Artemisia shows the moment of the story while the two men are plotting against Susanna and she, frightened and disgusted, tries to get away from the bad men There aren't other elements that can distract the viewer's attention, but only the three main characters, arranged in pyramid

position.

The reproduction of one of the men is very interesting: the highest one in the "pyramid" doesn't seem to be an "old man"; according to studies, he could be Agostino Tassi, a painter who worked in the seventeenth century and, according to proves, was accused of violence against Artemisia in February 1612.



Unlike other works of Artemisia Gentileschi in which we see a strong influence of Caravaggio's paintings, this picture seems different: in fact there isn't the clear-dark effect that highlights the characters traditionally present in Caravaggio and other Artemisia paintings.

The reaction of Susanna is very real: the arms of the woman, accompanied by her expression of disdain, represent the way she tries to get away from the two men. The colors are very clear: in particular Susanna's body stands out, in stark contrast to the balustrade, decorated and made of a very light brown / gray. Among other shades stands out the bright red of the coat of one of the old men and very dark brown robe of the probable Agostino Tassi.