



The Martyrdom of Saint Catherine

Date

1750s

Primary Maker

Giacinto Diana

Medium

Oil on canvas

Description

Giacinto Diana's oil sketch is a preparatory study for his 1758 altarpiece of the Martyrdom of St. Catherine of Alexandria, one of a series of paintings commissioned for the Neapolitan church of San Raffaele, Pozzuoli. The composition depicts the virgin saint kneeling as she gazes heavenward, prior to her torture and eventual martyrdom on the orders of the Roman Emperor Maximinus, seated high above the tumultuous scene in the foreground, in the

shadows of background to the right. On the upper portion of the painting, a multitude of acrobatic angels welcomes the soul of the martyred saint, represented as a ghostly figure rising to heaven. The elegantly posed figures, grand architectural elements, warm tonality, and bright illumination are characteristic of Diana's early work. A prolific painter of religious altarpieces, ceiling designs, and frescoes, Giacinto Diana was also an influential professor at the Accademia del Disegno in Naples.

Dimensions

Overall: 47 1/4 x 34 1/4 in. (120 x 87 cm) Framed: 54 x 42 x 2 1/2 in. (137.2 x 106.7 x 6.4 cm)