



"Biblia Sacra (Susannae pulchritudo)" Surrealist
Lithograph by Salvador Dalí

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LU654314742122



Details

Salvador Dalí, a leading figure of the surrealist movement, deeply marked twentieth-century art with his audacity and singularity. Among his works is "Susannae Pulchritudo," a lithograph with remarkable mystical force, signed and dated 1965 in the right margin. It should be noted that "Pulchritudo" is derived from the Latin adjective "pulcher," meaning "beautiful." The translation of the title could be "The Very Beautiful Suzanne."

The work tells the story of Suzanne, a young woman observed while bathing, who rejects the dishonest proposals of two old men. In revenge, they accuse her of adultery and sentence her to death, but the prophet Daniel, still a teenager, intervenes and proves her innocence. This morally edifying story has dramatically succeeded in patristic literature and Christian iconography. Suzanne is seen as a symbol of marital virtue, refusing to yield her body to the desires of these lustful old men.

Dalí depicts her nude, from behind, standing with a long white sheet cascading down. Her slender figure and suggestive legs emanate a sense of strength and mystery, reinforced by a face that remains hidden, protecting virtue and signifying the sacredness of her femininity. Concurrently, two masculine forms, resembling skeletal old men, arrest attention with their intense expressiveness rendered by their kneeling position, embodying remorse and supplication. This juxtaposition of the living and the cadaverous evokes a celestial and haunting plea. The presence of white gives Suzanne an angelic quality, while the cast shadow of the old men evokes the inevitability of mortality and the guilt that persists beyond life. This chromatic interaction illustrates an opposition between purity and decadence.

This lithograph is part of the edition of *Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ* published by Rizzoli-Mediolani between 1967 and 1969. The



history of this work is fascinating in many ways. Following a friendship established years earlier, Dr. Giuseppe Albaretto, a wealthy collector, commissioned Salvador Dalí to paint a series of religious-themed paintings. The project involved illustrating a selection of passages from the Vulgate, or Volgata, the definitive Latin version of the Bible. The passages selected for Dalí were intended not only to create a unique and priceless series of masterpieces but also to provide Dalí with an opportunity to draw closer to and reposition himself to faith. This allowed him to meditate on his close relationship with God and to alleviate the strong emotional domination exercised by his wife, Gala. The result was astonishing. Between 1963 and 1964, Dalí created 105 works comprising watercolors and gouaches, applying metallic inks, drawn with pencil and pen.

"Susannae Pulchritudo" is one of these masterpieces.

REFERENCE NUMBER: LU654314742122

PERIOD: Mid-20th Century

CONDITION: Excellent

MEASUREMENTS: Height: 26" Width: 21" Depth: 1.5"

COUNT: 1

MATERIAL: Lithograph

CREATOR: Salvador Dalí