

IASONAS KAMPANIS

**THE TORMENT OF AN ARTIST
ON THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTHONY**



The Temptation of Saint Anthony
 Martin Schongauer, c. 1470–1475, engraving



The Torment of Saint Anthony
 attributed to Michelangelo, c. 1487–1488, oil and tempera on panel, 47 cm × 35 cm



Anthony the Great (AD 251 – 356) was a Christian monk from Egypt, also known as the Father of All Monks. When Anthony was about 20 years old, as reported by Athanasius of Alexandria, following the gospel exhortation in Matthew 19: 21, he left to live an ascetic life and faced a series of supernatural temptations during his pilgrimage to the desert.

The theme of the painting is based on a late episode of his life, where he was ambushed in mid-air by demons, while flying above the desert supported by angels. As Athanasius describes the event, though Anthony was in terrible pain, he responded to the demons:

“If there had been any power in you, it would have sufficed had one of you come, but since the Lord has made you weak, you attempt to terrify me by numbers: and a proof of your weakness is that you take the shapes of brute beasts. If you are able, and have received power against me, delay not to attack; but if you are unable, why trouble me in vain? For faith in our Lord is a seal and a wall of safety to us.”

About when he was 12 or 13 years old, around 1487-1488, Michelangelo painted his version of the Torment of Saint Anthony, an often-repeated religious subject in Western art, as a close copy of an engraving by Martin Schoengauer, made a bit more than a decade earlier. Michelangelo added a landscape below the figures, and altered the expression of the saint.

The Torment of an Artist on the Temptation of Saint Anthony, made during 2020-2021, began as a close copy of Michelangelo's version, a bit distorted in width and altering the way the saint is depicted. In front, a floating strawberry symbolizes temptation.

The painting was exhibited in May 2021 at KEIV project space in Athens, as part of the group exhibition *Against the Linear*, an artists-initiative curated by Konstantinos Lianos.

The Torment of an Artist on the Temptation of Saint Anthony
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acrylics and oil on canvas, wood, fabric
(diptych) 240 x 100 cm, 240 x 150 cm
2020-2021

installation view from the exhibition *Against the Linear* at KEIV project space in Athens, Greece (photo: Ioannis Kampanis)

