

Sofonisba Anguissola (c.1535-1625) was the first successful woman painter in European history. She was prolific, inventive, and daring. Then, much of her oeuvre was attributed to men, from El Greco to Coello to Titian. *LADY IN ERMINE* portrays the day when Sofonisba realizes her calling for portraiture and envisions the masterpiece she will render, one day, capturing the soul of Philip II of Spain, the foreign ruler who invaded her country. The day begins in church. Sofonisba remains behind in an empty church, obsessing on the face of the Madonna. We see her ingenious mind racing before us, until the moment she is interrupted by her father, calling her home for the king's impending march. When Sofonisba locks eyes with the king, she sees through him, as only a portraitist can, to the deep recesses of his soul: the soul of a penitent, for all the death and destruction brought on by Philip II against the indigenous peoples of South America, homosexuals, Protestants, and Muslims.