

For Immediate Release

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TURNER MASTERPIECE GOES ON PUBLIC VIEW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 30 YEARS AT CHRISTIE'S IN LONDON

**Important Old Master Pictures
6 April 2006, Christie's New York**

'Turner is...the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the system of nature, and...the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen...' (John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1843)

London – Christie's International Old Master Department announces that J.M.W. Turner's masterpiece *Giudecca, La Donna della Salute and San Giorgio*, to be offered in the sale of Important Old Master Pictures in New York on 6 April 2006, will go on public view in London for the first time in 30 years at Christie's from Monday 21 November. This exceptional painting is the finest work by the artist to come to the market in recent memory, and has been consigned for sale by the St Francis of Assisi Foundation, a New York State-incorporated not-for-profit institution. It is expected to realise in excess of \$15 million.

Richard Knight and Nicholas Hall, International Directors the Old Master Pictures Department, Christie's: *"Turner's place in the history of European painting can never be understated. His unique position in the Romantic movement was to influence all landscape painting thereafter and it worth repeating again the maxim that he was 'the precursor of Impressionism'. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to be offering a work of such outstanding beauty, and this special exhibition in our London headquarters will give the public an opportunity to enjoy the painting for themselves, before it returns to New York for sale next Spring."*

In 1840, Turner visited Venice for what would be his last time, and executed approximately 150 watercolours depicting the Italian city. On his return to London, he developed three oil paintings from these watercolours for the Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition of 1841. The loose and impressionistic style of these pictures collected both admirers and critics, but *Giudecca, La Donna della Salute and San Giorgio*, which will be offered at Christie's, was hailed by the Art Union as *'a glorious example of colour, leaving, as usual, much to the fancy of the spectator; and absolutely extorting applause.'* The work, which has been exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts no fewer than four times, was purchased from the 1841 Exhibition by Elhanan Bicknell for 250 guineas, before being sold at Christie's in 1863 for 1,650 guineas. In 1897, the painting returned to Christie's and was sold at auction for 6,800 guineas to Sir Donald Currie, before his grandson sold the work through Agnew's to William Wood Prince in 1959 for an undisclosed sum. The painting returned to Agnew's in 1992 when they negotiated its sale to a private collector, who in turn donated the picture to the St. Francis of Assisi Foundation in New York.

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) is widely recognized as one of the greatest and most original landscape painters in history. He became a student of the Royal Academy Schools in 1789 and first exhibited a watercolour there in 1790, when he was only fifteen years old. His talent and progress were made apparent when, in 1802 at just 27 years old,

he became the youngest ever artist to be appointed a Royal Academician. His early style was dramatic and romantic, but he absorbed inspiration from his travels around Europe, developing a looser and often abstract style that anticipated impressionism. In retrospect, he is considered to be one of the most influential painters to both the Impressionist and Modern Art movements.

The St Francis of Assisi Foundation is a not-for-profit institution incorporated in New York State to receive bequests and donations both in kind and money to support and promote the missionary effort of the Capuchin Order of Friars Minor. The Foundation makes grants to sustain the expanding missionary presence of more than 1,800 Capuchin priests and brothers in 22 countries of Asia/Oceania, 1,350 priests and brothers in 30 countries of Africa, 1,800 priests and brothers in 20 countries of Latin America and approximately 900 priests and brothers in 14 countries of Eastern Europe.

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Notes to editors:

- The London viewing will be held at Christie's, 8 King Street, London, SW1Y 6QT from Monday, 21st November to Thursday, 15 December. Times vary – please call 020 7839 9060 for opening times.

- From 2006, the principal New York sales of Old Master Paintings will take place in April and October.

Calendar for sales of Important Old Master Paintings in 2006:

April 6 - New York

July 7 - London

October 10 - New York

December 8 - London

- In 1984, *Seascape, Folkestone*, owned by the late Lord Clark of Saltwood, sold for \$9.045 million in London and set the present world auction record for J.M.W. Turner.

- Christie's London will offer a remarkable and little-known masterpiece by Titian in the evening sale of *Important Old Master Pictures* on 8 December 2005. The *Portrait of a Lady and her Daughter* had not been seen for over 400 years having been painted over in the late 16th or early 17th century, and was only recently revealed after nearly twenty years of careful restoration. It is the most important work by the master to come to public auction for many years and is expected to realise in excess of £5 million. Also included in the sale is a group of eight paintings, all of which once formed a part of the renowned Cook Collection at Doughty House, Richmond. The group includes works by Italian, Flemish, Spanish and French artists, and is led by the powerful oil sketch by Sir Peter Paul Rubens, *The Hunt of Meleager and Atalanta* (estimate: £2,000,000-3,000,000). Further highlights include a moving *Christ the Man of Sorrows* by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (estimate: £500,000-700,000) and a *Portrait of Captain Hood* by Sir Joshua Reynolds (estimate: £250,000-350,000).