

For Immediate Release
26 February 2003

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**MASTERPIECE BY TITIAN ACQUIRED BY THE NATION FOR ALLOCATION TO
THE NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND**



The negotiated sale to the nation of the Venus Anadyomene by Titian is being completed by Christie's. It was offered in lieu of tax liabilities arising on the death of the late Duke of Sutherland. The National Galleries of Scotland contributed to the cost of the picture because its value, as agreed by the Secretary of State for the purpose of the offer in lieu, exceeded the tax due. The Gallery was assisted in the acquisition of the picture by grants from the Scottish Executive, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Art Collection Fund.

The picture is from the historic Ellesmere Collection, the most celebrated pictures from which have been on loan to the National Galleries of Scotland since 1946. A major picture from Titian's early maturity, the Venus Anadyomene is datable to the 1520s and shows the goddess rising from the sea.

The source for the figure was a Roman statue, one of a type in which the goddess nonchalantly wrings or arranges her hair.

The painting was in the collection of Queen Cristina of Sweden at her residence the Palazzo Riario in Rome; it was bequeathed to Cardinal Dezio Azzolino and passed through his family until bought by Philippe, duc d'Orléans, regent of France, in 1721. In 1791, a significant portion of the collection was sold by his descendant, Philippe Egalité, duc d'Orléans, to M. Walchiers of Brussels, from whom it was bought by François de Laborde de Méréville, in a failed attempt to keep it in France. The 3rd Duke of Bridgewater was one of a syndicate of three, with his nephew Earl Gower and the 5th Earl of Carlisle, who financed the purchase of the Orléans Collection. The Duke's share included masterpieces by Titian, Poussin and many important Italian seicento painters.

This collection was significantly enlarged by his great-nephew, Francis Egerton, 1st Earl of Ellesmere, and until World War II was displayed at Bridgewater House, London. It was the most important private collection of old master pictures in Britain and had few rivals in Europe.

Since 1946 thirty pictures from the Ellesmere Collection, most of which were acquired by the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, have been on loan to the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh, where they have constituted a significant element of the collection. The acquisition by the National Galleries of the Venus represents a significant step towards ensuring that the other pictures from the Ellesmere Collection on loan may remain available to the public in Edinburgh.

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Images available on request