

For Immediate Release
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Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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**DOMENICHINO MASTERPIECE TO BE OFFERED AT
CHRISTIE'S AUCTION OF
OLD MASTERS AND 19th CENTURY ART
IN DECEMBER 2009**



Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino (1581-1641)

Saint John the Evangelist

Estimate: £7 million to £10 million

Old Masters and 19th Century Art Evening Sale
Tuesday 8 December 2009 at 7pm

London – On 8 December 2009 in London, Christie's will offer one of the most important Baroque paintings to be presented at auction in a generation, and one of the most significant Old Masters to be offered in recent years. *Saint John the Evangelist* by Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino (1581-1641), will be included in the *Old Masters and 19th Century Art Evening Sale* where it will be presented for sale for the first time in over 100 years. It is expected to realise £7 million to £10 million.

Richard Knight, International co-Head of Old Masters and 19th Century Art at Christie's:
'Domenichino's 'Saint John the Evangelist' is a painting worthy of any collection in the world. It is a noble and imposing masterpiece on a monumental scale by an artist who was lauded as the true disciple of Raphael in the 17th century. Its appearance at auction for the first time in over 100 years represents a significant moment for the art market, and an exceptionally rare opportunity for international collectors and institutions.'

Almost certainly commissioned by Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1637), one of the most important Italian art collectors of the 17th century, the picture was one of the most significant of his collection which also included as many as 12 works by Caravaggio.

Measuring almost 2.5 metres by 2 metres, it is a reinterpretation of the artist's pendentive fresco of Saint John the Evangelist in Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome. Apparently painted soon afterwards (*circa* 1627-29), it displays a sculptural character which would go on to define the artist's most celebrated masterpieces; the frescoes in the chapel of Saint Januarius in the Cathedral at Naples.

The picture was recorded in 1638 in the posthumous inventory of the collection of the celebrated collector and patron of Caravaggio, Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, and it was almost certainly commissioned by him. Its importance led it to be included in most 18th century guide books and it was engraved by Jean-Honoré Fragonard.

The Giustiniani collection was largely dispersed at the beginning of the 19th century. The King of Prussia acquired over 160 paintings, most of which were placed in museums in Berlin. Other works from the Giustiniani Collection can be found today in many of the most major museums around the world including The National Gallery, London, The Hermitage in St Petersburg and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Saint John the Evangelist was brought to London from Paris *circa* 1806 by Alexis Delahante. It was acquired by Richard Hart Davis, M.P., an outstanding collector whose impressive group of paintings was purchased en bloc by his friend, Philip John Miles. Miles is said to have paid the extraordinary sum of 12,000 guineas for Domenichino's *Saint John the Evangelist* and it became a part of his collection which included celebrated masterpieces by Raphael and Claude at Leigh Court, Bristol. It was included at his great grandson's posthumous sale at Christie's in 1899, and was subsequently sold to Colnaghi. It was acquired by a private collector and has since passed by descent.

Domenico Zampieri, called Il Domenichino (1581-1641), was one of the most important Italian artists of the 17th century. By the 18th century he enjoyed an enormous reputation and his masterpiece *Last Communion of St. Jerome* in the Vatican was considered to be one of the greatest pictures ever painted, second only to Raphael.

Domenichino was the favourite disciple of Annibale Carracci and he trained under him at the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. Soon after the turn of the 17th century, he had become established as the most celebrated artist in Rome and he received a number of important and prestigious commissions, including the scenes from the life of Saint Cecilia in San Luigi dei Francesi which

were greatly to influence Poussin. In 1631, he moved to Naples and executed an impressive series of ceiling frescoes in the San Gennaro chapel in the city's cathedral. He was forced to flee Naples in 1634 as a result of the fierce jealousy expressed by his rivals in the city. As an exponent of the ideal landscape, Domenichino influenced a number of leading 17th century artists, including Claude and Poussin. Four examples of these landscapes are now in the Louvre, Paris.

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium