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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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.'*

Most probably painted for Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani or his younger brother, Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1637), the picture was first recorded in 1621 as part of their collection in Rome. The Giustinianis were among the most important Italian art collectors of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the picture was one of the most significant of their collection which also included no fewer than 15 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. 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 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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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**Images available on request**  
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#### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totaled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium