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J.M.W. Turner's Masterpiece *Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino* To Be Offered For Sale at Sotheby's in July

--Undoubtedly One of the Most Important Turners Ever To Come
to Auction--

--Exceptional Condition--

--Impeccable Provenance, Last Seen on the Market in 1878--



J.M.W. Turner RA, *Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino*, oil on canvas, estimate: £12-18 million*
90.2 by 122cm (35.5 by 48 in)

FRIDAY, 26 MARCH, 2010 -- Sotheby's is delighted to announce that in its Evening Sale of Old Master and Early British Paintings in London on Wednesday, 7 July 2010, it will present for sale Joseph Mallord William Turner RA's great

masterpiece *Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino*, with an estimate of £12-18 million. Painted in 1839, this breathtaking painting shows the artist at the height of his technical powers and is undoubtedly among the most important of Turner's works ever to come to auction. The painting is further distinguished by its immaculate condition and impeccable provenance, having only appeared on the open market once in the 171 years since it was painted. The picture was bought by the 5th Earl of Rosebery, and his wife Hannah Rothschild, in 1878 and has remained in his family collection ever since. This uninterrupted provenance ranks this work as perhaps the most important of only five comparable major Turner oil paintings remaining in private hands today. The auction of this painting presents an astonishingly rare opportunity. Arguably Turner's finest depiction of an Italian city, this sun-filled panorama represents the culmination of the artist's fascination with Rome, a fascination which lasted a period of more than 20 years.

Sotheby's has the most successful track record of selling works by Turner. Commenting on the forthcoming sale of *Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino*, David Moore-Gwyn, Deputy Chairman, UK and Senior Specialist in Early British Paintings at Sotheby's, states: ***"This is Turner at his absolute best. One of the most evocative pictures of Rome ever painted, this picture has everything: a colourful, relaxed beauty, exquisite detail, flawless condition and superlative provenance and exhibition history. One of the last great Turner masterpieces to have remained in private hands, its sale at auction represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for collectors and one of the landmark moments of my 35-year career at Sotheby's."***

Turner was fascinated by Italy - like many of his contemporaries and predecessors - and it was a country which provided him with a rich source of subject matter, particularly given his interest in the rise and fall of civilizations. *Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino* is his final painting of Rome and the monumental work, which measures 90.2 by 122cm (35.5 by 48 in), brings together all of the studies that he made during his two visits to the Italian capital. One of Turner's most compelling landscapes, when he first exhibited it at the Royal Academy Turner chose to accompany the painting with lines from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: "The moon is up and yet it is not night,/ the sun as yet divides the day with her." However, Turner has done much more than merely capture the city lying in a moment between day and night; he has fused the city's modern life with its historic past. Through meticulous attention to detail and a brilliant and bold use of colour he has recreated a sparkling city bathed in atmospheric light. The painting evokes the very essence and qualities of an Eternal City.

For the painting, Turner has taken as his viewpoint the top of Capitoline Hill and from here he depicts a scene that unfolds as the spectator's eye first engages with the Forum, flanked by the Arch of Septimus Severus, the Temple of Saturn and the Coliseum. Beyond the distinctive shapes of those familiar buildings, the great arches of Diocletian's Baths come in to focus on the left of the view and the distant landscape around the city captures the silhouette of St John Lateran clearly visible on the skyline. The dreamlike vista combines and presents us with the glories of the past; classical antiquity (with the remains of ancient Rome), the Rome of the Renaissance and Baroque and the seat of the

Papacy while daily contemporary 19th-century life in the city - with its goatherds, religious processions and people simply attending to their business – takes place in the foreground.

Modern Rome – Campo Vaccino's state of preservation is truly exceptional; never relined and never subject to repair or restoration, the picture retains the freshness of the moment it was painted to a remarkable degree. David Moore-Gwyn states: ***"The condition of this painting is one of its most amazing attributes. It is outstanding and helps to highlight the genius of Turner by revealing the various techniques that he employed: the cross hatching of dry paint, the thinning out of the paintwork, the working with the bristles of his brush, the array of paint textures and the subtle nuances of colour he uses. These remarkable workings are clearly evident to the eye."***

The painting's first owner was the Scottish landowner and collector Hugh Munro of Novar, Turner's close friend and supportive patron during the 1830's, who acquired the work directly from the artist's Royal Academy exhibition of 1839. Novar was one of the greatest collectors of Turner's work and the only one of his patrons to travel with him to Italy. *Modern Rome* remained in Novar's collection for almost 50 years until sold in 1878 by his executors. The Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929) and his new wife Hannah Rothschild acquired the painting at this auction, while on their honeymoon, for the staggering sum of 4,450 gns. The picture has since descended through the family of the 5th Earl of Rosebery.

The picture's exemplary provenance is further enhanced by its exhibition history and inclusion in a vast body of literature on the artist. The painting has featured in no fewer than three exhibitions at the Royal Academy and has also been on public exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Tate and more recently in the highly acclaimed *JMW Turner* show at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. It has also been on loan to the National Gallery of Scotland since 1978, and was recently part of their *Turner and Italy* exhibition in 2009, which travelled to Ferrara and Budapest.

* Pre-sale estimates do not include buyer's premium

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The current auction record for J.M.W. Turner was set by his *Giudecca, La Donna della Salute and San Giorgio*, which sold in April 2006 for \$35.9 million / £20.5 million – a record also for a British painting at auction at the time.

Sotheby's and Turner:

Sotheby's has an unrivalled knowledge of buyers for works by J.M.W. Turner.

Sotheby's has a successful track record with works by J.M.W. Turner at auction:

- *The Temple of Jupiter Panellenius* for \$12.9 million in January 2009, the second highest price for a work by Turner at auction
- *Pope's Villa at Twickenham* for £5,417,250 in July 2008
- *Bamborough Castle* for £2,932,500 in December 2007
- The Important Turner Watercolours from the Guy and Myriam Ullens Collection in July 2007 for £10,767,200
- *Heidelberg with a Rainbow* for £2,038,500 in June 2001
- *Seascape, Folkestone* for £7,370,000 in July 1984, an auction record for Turner at the time
- *Juliet and her Nurse* for £2,723,404 in May 1980, an auction record for Turner at the time (the previous highest price for Turner was £300,000 for *Wreckers on the Coast*)

Over the past three years alone (2007-2009) Sotheby's has sold 34 works by J.M.W. Turner, totaling \$55 million.

EXHIBITION DATES:

The painting will be on view at:

Sotheby's New York from 29 April to 14 May

Sotheby's London from 4 to 7 June, 16 to 22 June and 3 to 7 July

--The painting will also be available for private view by appointment--

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