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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Picture Gallery in the Italian Tradition of the Quadreria (1750-1850)

In collaboration with Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Rome
Curated by Stefano Grandesso, Gian Enzo Sperone, Carlo Virgilio
Catalogue Introduction by Joseph J. Rishel

10 January – 23 February 2013

New York, NY: 13 December 2012 – In collaboration with Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Rome, Sperone Westwater is pleased to present, *A Picture Gallery in the Italian Tradition of the Quadreria (1750-1850)*. The exhibition showcases 29 paintings and drawings, all in the Italian figurative tradition, by various European masters created between the mid-18th and mid-19th century. *A Picture Gallery in the Italian Tradition of the Quadreria (1750-1850)* is on view at Sperone Westwater 10 January through 23 February 2013.

The exhibition aims to evoke the manner in which collections – known as *quadrerie* – were formed in Italy in the 18th and 19th Centuries, as well as the way in which they were displayed, covering entire walls of the *palazzi* that housed them. This criterion predates the modern picture gallery, which follows a more scientific idea of classification derived from Illuminism. In addition to satisfying decorative motivations, the arrangement of works within a *Quadreria* followed the collector's personal taste, with pictures hung according to related subjects or artistic genres.

Most of the works on view have never been exhibited or published, although many of them are widely documented in literary sources of the time. Firmly grounded in research, the exhibition presents significant works – masterpieces in some cases – by artists who are not widely known beyond specialist academic circles, but who nonetheless have played a key role in art history, with a view to illustrating the progress that research in Italy has made over the past thirty years.

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition groups the works according to artistic or iconographic genre, first with a series of portraits that offer insight into society of the time, followed by history and figure painting – considered the noblest artistic genre in the neoclassical academy tradition – and lastly, landscapes, to illustrate the phenomenon of the Grand Tour with Classical ruins and popular views.

Among the works in the exhibition is a painting by **Francesco Celebrano** shows members of the aristocracy having a luncheon on a country estate. This painting exemplifies the *ancien régime,* and was likely intended as a model for a tapestry destined for the Neapolitan court. A portrait by **Matilde Malechini** portrays a French baroness in Rome during the Napoleonic occupation, while **Giuseppe Tominz** offers an austere, full-length portrait of a member of the new bourgeoisie in Trieste, the founder of the Assicurazioni Generali. The academy nude studies of **Francesco Monti** and **Placido Fabris** are followed by two demanding depictions of episodes from Classical history by **Gaspare Landi** and **Pelagio Palagi** – influential figures in the artistic circles of Rome and Milan.

The visionary reconstructions of Antiquity in the colored drawings by **Giovan Battista Dell'Era** counterbalance the series of sentimental mythological evocations by **Friedrich Rehberg**, **Natale Carta** and **Henry Tresham**, who presented his large painting, *Sleeping Nymph and Cupid,* to the Royal Academy of London in 1797. This section culminates in the romantic Renaissance literary subject by **Francesco Podesti**. A significant counter-revolutionary allegory by **August Nicodemo** shows the Dauphin at the tomb of his father, Louis XVI, while another large-format allegory by **Francesco Caucig** depicts the sentiment/malaise of melancholy with its remedies from Classical medicine.

After the sublime Biblical subject by **François Gérard**, the monochrome by **Bernardino Nocchi** of a sculpture by Canova, there follows a series of views of famous buildings of the time such as **Hubert Robert's** interior of Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola, and of Classical ruins like the Temple of Diana at Baia in the capriccio by **Carlo Bonavia**. Two aristocratic travelers admire ruins in the paintings by **Andrea Appiani**, while an aqueduct is featured in the Roman *campagna* by **Beniamino de Francesco**. Volcanoes are the subject of two large-scale paintings by **Pierre-Jacques Volaire** and **Carlo de Paris** – the 1771 eruption of the Vesuvius in the Volaire, a virtuoso study of the effects of light caused by the glow of the lava, with lightning and the glare of the moon illuminating the panorama towards Naples and Ischia in the distance. The second volcano is the Pico de Orizaba in Mexico, in a work by a Roman school artist who attempted to document the native customs of Mexico and the grandiose and unspoiled landscapes of that country prior to the imminent transformations that would be brought by civilization. In contrast to this work, there is **Antonio Basoli**, who produced numerous imaginary views without almost ever leaving his native Bologna.

Curated by Stefano Grandesso, Gian Enzo Sperone and Carlo Virgilio, the exhibition has been produced in collaboration with Galleria Carlo Virgilio in Rome, a gallery that specializes in international art in Italy over the 18th and 19th century.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be published on occasion of this exhibition. The book includes an introduction by Joseph J. Rishel, the Gisela and Dennis Alter Senior Curator of European Painting before 1900 and Senior Curator of the John G Johnson Collection and the Rodin Museum, and scholarly entries by Emilie Beck Saiello, J. Patrice Marandel, Fernando Mazzocca, Ksenija Rozman and Nicola Spinosa.

For more information and images, please contact Maryse Brand at + 1 212 999 7337 or maryse@speronewestwater.com. Please find further documentation on our website www.speronewestwater.com.

This exhibition runs concurrently with *Fabio Viale: Stargate.*