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Christie's to sell Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi

**The painting, presumed lost until 2005, is estimated at \$100m**

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Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi, around 1500 Christie's

Christie's has announced that it will sell Salvator Mundi, a recently-rediscovered painting by Leonardo da Vinci, in its post-war and contemporary art sale in New York on 15 November.

The depiction of Christ with his right hand raised in blessing is estimated at \$100m. It belongs to the Russian oligarch Dmitry Rybolovlev and is the last painting by the Renaissance artist in private hands.

The auction house unveiled Salvator Mundi to the press yesterday, 10 October, alongside a 32 ft-long canvas by Andy Warhol, *Sixty Last Suppers* (1986), a Pop homage to Leonardo da Vinci's celebrated fresco, which Christie's has estimated at \$50m.

Both *Salvator Mundi* and *Sixty Last Suppers* carry third party guarantees, the auction house said.

The decision to include a painting from around 1500 in an auction for work made after 1945 is an unusual marketing strategy. "We thought about it very carefully. It's the story we are telling, in the context that we built," said Alexander Rotter, Christie's head of post-war and contemporary art in New York.

### **Rediscovery**

*Salvator Mundi*, one of fewer than 20 paintings by Leonardo, was presumed lost until 2005.

There is "strong circumstantial evidence" to suggest that the painting was made for the French king Louis XII, said Alan Wintermute, Christie's senior specialist of Old Master Paintings.

However, it was first recorded in the collection of the English monarch Charles I and it hung in the private chambers of his wife, Henrietta Maria.

Passed down by descent in the family, it then changed hands numerous times until it was purchased in 2005 for less than \$10,000 by a group that includes dealer Alex Parish and collector Robert Simon.

The work was then restored to remove considerable overpainting and authenticated by the world's leading Leonardo specialists. In 2011, it went on display at the National Gallery in London.

### **Legal disputes**

*Salvator Mundi* has been at the centre of multiple legal battles since its rediscovery.

One is between its current owner, the Russian billionaire businessman Dmitry Rybolovlev, and his former art advisor, the Swiss investor Yves Bouvier who sold Rybolovlev some \$2bn worth of art. Rybolovlev alleges that Bouvier made him pay inordinately high mark ups (which Bouvier denies). Since the start of the ongoing legal dispute, Rybolovlev's family trust has consigned several works for auction.

Another dispute is between the group of investors who bought Salvator Mundi in 2005 and Sotheby's which sold it to Bouvier for \$80m, [according to court papers filed last year](#). (In turn, Bouvier sold it to Rybolovlev, for \$127.5m).

In advance of its auction on 15 November, Salvator Mundi will be sent for display to Christie's in Hong Kong, San Francisco, London, and New York