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## Simon Fujiwara builds mini museum for Leonardo's Salvator Mundi at the Whitechapel in London

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projections are display

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The Salvator Mundi Experience by Simon Fujiwara and David Kohn © Jeff Spicer/PA Wire

The UK artist Simon Fujiwara has created a mini museum dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci's \$450m Salvator Mundi which will go on show this week at the Whitechapel Gallery in London as part of the exhibition *Is This Tomorrow?* (14 February-12 May). The Salvator Mundi Experience model, conceived by David Kohn Architects, is one of ten experimental multimedia projects on show offering "speculative visions of the future", the organisers say.

In the proposed Leonardo museum experience, the original painting is never shown, with only copies and projections on display, Fujiwara says. "The museum loosely tells the story of the painting, but is in fact more about how museum experiences are changing in general, becoming more immersive, interactive and popular," Fujiwara says.

Last September, the Louvre Abu Dhabi announced that the unveiling of Salvator Mundi had been postponed indefinitely. It has since been the subject of wild speculation with some reports saying that the world's most expensive painting has disappeared. "David [Kohn] and I met with the director of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, but at that point the painting was not considered 'lost'. It was just after plans to show it at the Louvre were cancelled. We did not get any specific information about the painting," Fujiwara adds.

The mass populist appeal of the work, and the media frenzy around the sale and its subsequent whereabouts is explored. "The most irritating part about the whole story is the hysteria around what was a crafted marketing strategy to create the hysteria. This proposal asks us to look at it seriously, to really consider it on a philosophical level," Fujiwara tells *The Art Newspaper*.

He adds though that "the proposal is a seriously thought through attraction. It is not intended to specifically highlight the absurdity but to look at the entire story anthropologically and think about it seriously."

There are several interactive areas and a "centre for giving" aimed at philanthropists. "By converting it into a miniature that is quite lovingly made, it makes you empathetic toward the entire narrative, giving you a 'god's eye' view of the whole thing as it is literally smaller than you and due to the scale shift makes you less threatened by it," Fujiwara says. He even has a copy of the painting which he recently bought on the Thai island of Ko Samui on his way to a Full Moon beach party.