Abu Dhabi authorities revealed as buyers of $450m 'Leonardo painting'
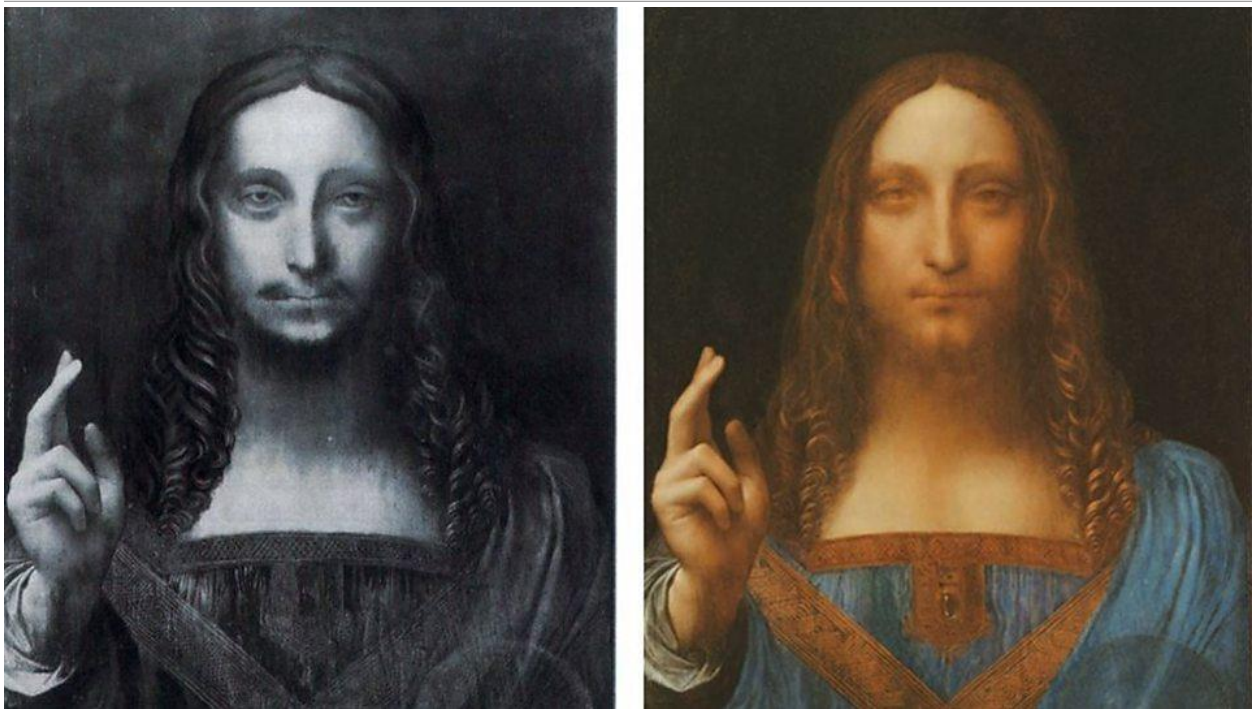
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The record sale brought cheers and applause at the packed Christie's auction room

Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and Tourism has confirmed that it bought the $450m Salvator Mundi painting for the state's new Louvre gallery.

The 500-year-old painting of Christ is believed to be the work of Leonardo da Vinci.

There had been media reports that it had been bought by a Saudi prince.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum said it was "looking forward to displaying" the painting, which recently fetched the record price at auction in New York.

Salvator Mundi (Saviour of the World)'s $450m (£341m) price made it the most expensive artwork ever sold at auction.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi opened in November 2017

At the time of the sale in November, the buyer was unidentified and was involved in a bidding contest, via telephone, that lasted nearly 20 minutes.

The New York Times reported on 6 December that the buyer had been Saudi prince Bader bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan al-Saud, citing documents the newspaper had reviewed.

Leonardo da Vinci died in 1519 and there are fewer than 20 of his paintings in existence.

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Salvator Mundi, believed to have been painted sometime after 1505, was the only work thought to have been in private hands.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum opened earlier this month in the United Arab Emirates. It cost £1bn to build and has been under construction for eight years.

It has a permanent collection of 600 artworks, with another 300 loaned from France. The museum is paying Paris hundreds of millions of dollars for this as well as for the use of the Louvre name and managerial advice.