The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi

Oil on copper, Italian or Iberian School, 18th century

An illustrated study for Atlantiques

20 November 2026 | Ref. CA–ATL–SALVATOR–2026–11



Figure 1: *The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi*, after conservation (October 2026), in its present frame.

Italian or Iberian School, 18th century
The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi (Saviour of the World)
Oil on copper; 47 × 39 cm (height × width); 58 × 50 cm framed.
Cleaned, consolidated and revarnished by Francis W. Downing Ltd, Harrogate, October 2026.

A half-length image of the young Christ, his right hand raised in blessing above the orb of the world, his head turned to meet the viewer over his shoulder. This study examines the painting's subject, comparative context, technique, condition, frame, age, documentary history, market and value.

1 The work at a glance

Subject	Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, represented as a youth: blessing with the right hand, the orb of the world before him.
School and date	Italian or Iberian School, 18th century, c. 1700–1790 (Sections 9 and 10). Previously offered as Italian, 17th century.
Estimated value	Gallery retail value GBP 5,500, including VAT (Section 13).
Medium	Oil on a single copper plate.
Dimensions	47 × 39 cm (height × width), unframed; 58 × 50 cm framed, as recorded in the sale listing.
Inscriptions	No signature, date or inscription is visible on the front. The reverse of the plate carries a chalk numeral "2".
Conservation	Francis W. Downing Ltd, ACR FRSA, Harrogate: surface cleaning, removal of discoloured varnish, local treatment of paint shrinkage, minimal inpainting and a non-yellowing synthetic varnish; condition after treatment reported as stable (27 October 2026).[D1]
Presentation	Late 19th- or early 20th-century gilt composition frame with a gilded inner slip; new protective Tyvek backing.
Documented history	With a dealer in Lisbon, Portugal, 2026; acquired by Atlantiques, London; conserved in Harrogate, July–October 2026.[M1][D1]

1.1 First impressions

The painting is built on a strong contrast: a softly lit face and hands emerge from a deep, almost black ground, while a warm red glow behind the head gives the figure its aura. The colour is concentrated in three notes, the rose-red of the tunic, the blue-green of the mantle and the gold band of the orb, and the composition leads the eye in a single movement from the blessing hand to the face and back to the orb.

What holds attention is the look. The head is turned three-quarters towards the left, yet the eyes slide back towards the viewer, and the closed, slightly full lips leave the expression open: serious, attentive and gentle at once. Section 4 considers how this effect is achieved.

2 Description of the painting

The figure is shown at half length and set slightly to the right of centre. The body turns towards the left of the picture while the head turns back and tilts gently, so that the face is seen in three-quarter view. Long light-brown hair falls in loose curls to the shoulders. The forehead and the bridge of the nose receive the strongest light; the cheeks are warmed with rose, and the lower half of the face passes gradually into shadow.

The figure wears a rose-red tunic with a rounded neckline, and over it a blue-green mantle that crosses the chest and gathers over the left shoulder and arm. At lower left a red cloth falls over the arm that supports the orb, a dark sphere encircled by a gilded band. Above the orb the right hand is raised in blessing, seen from the side: the thumb is raised and two fingers extend towards the left edge of the plate.

Behind the head a reddish glow forms a broad, diffused nimbus. It takes the place of the gold halo or rays seen in many devotional images, and is achieved entirely through colour against the dark ground.



Figure 2: The painted surface after conservation.

3 Subject and iconography

3.1 Christ as Saviour of the World

The image belongs to the type known as the *Salvator Mundi*, "Saviour of the World". In its usual form Christ is shown at half length, raising the right hand in blessing and holding the orb of the world, often surmounted by a cross, as a sign of his sovereignty over creation.[I1][I2] The type was widely diffused in European painting from the late 15th century onwards, from Netherlandish panels to the composition associated with Leonardo da Vinci and its many derivations.[I2]

Three elements in the present painting identify the subject:

- **The blessing hand**, raised above the orb.
- **The orb of the world**, rendered as a dark sphere with a gilded equatorial band and a vertical band rising from it. This is the traditional tripartite orb, recalling the medieval division of the world into three continents. It is supported from below by the left hand, partly covered by a red cloth at lower left. No cross is visible in the present state; the top of the orb is overlapped by the blessing hand and the tunic.
- **The nimbus and the garments**: a red aureole behind the head, and a red tunic beneath a blue-green mantle, the traditional colours of Christ's dress.

3.2 A youthful Christ

The figure is beardless and youthful, with soft features and long hair. This is a deliberate choice rather than an error of identification. Images of Christ as a child or adolescent holding the orb and blessing form a recognised branch of the *Salvator Mundi* type in the 16th to 18th centuries. Examples include Netherlandish images of the Infant Christ on the orb and Spanish copper paintings of an



(a) The blessing hand. **(b)** The orb with its gilded band.

Figure 3: The two attributes that define the subject.

adolescent Christ blessing, such as a small *Salvator Mundi* on copper catalogued in 2021 as from the workshop of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo.[I3][M2]

This youthful, idealised appearance explains why the figure was described as "Young Girl" in the conservation documentation. The attributes, the blessing and the orb, establish that the figure represents Christ.[D1]

3.3 Why "Salvator Mundi" rather than "Sacred Heart"

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has its own, clearly defined iconography. It developed from the late 17th century after the visions of St Margaret Mary Alacoque, and its defining element is the heart itself, shown on Christ's breast or in his hand, usually with flames, a crown of thorns, a wound and a cross. Pompeo Batoni's painting in the Church of the Gesù in Rome is the best-known early example.[I4][I5]

No heart is represented in this painting. Its attributes are those of the *Salvator Mundi*, and that is the most accurate title. "The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi", or in Spanish *El Niño Jesús Salvador del Mundo*, describes both the subject and its particular, youthful interpretation.

4 The face and the gaze



Figure 4: The face after conservation.

The painting's main achievement is the face. The painter turns the head away from the axis of the body and directs the eyes back to the viewer, so that the figure seems to have just looked round. The turn creates a diagonal that runs from the blessing hand up to the face. It makes the glance feel momentary and lets the image read clearly across a room. The irises are placed towards the corners of the eyes, each with a small, precise highlight. The left eye, seen almost frontally, and the right, partly foreshortened, are carefully differentiated.



Figure 5: The eyes: irises turned towards the viewer, with single points of light.

The transitions of the modelling are soft. There is no hard contour between the cheek and the hair, or between the chin and the shadow of the neck, and the corners of the mouth dissolve into shadow. This blurring of edges, often described as *sfumato*, keeps the expression slightly undefined: the mouth is closed, neither smiling nor stern. Combined with the sideways glance, it gives the face a quality of quiet engagement that changes subtly as the viewer moves.

The effect also serves the devotional purpose of the image. A *Salvator Mundi* addresses the person who prays before it. Here that address is personal, almost conversational, rather than hieratic. The viewer meets the eyes of a young Christ who has turned to bless.

5 Technique and the copper support

5.1 Painting on copper

Copper plates were valued from the late 16th century for the smooth, non-absorbent surface they offered to oil paint. Painting on copper allowed fine detail and luminous colour. It was practised widely in Italy, Flanders, Spain and the Spanish and Portuguese colonial world, and in New Spain it remained common throughout the 18th century.[T1][T2] Most surviving coppers are of cabinet size. At 47 × 39 cm this plate is comparatively large, a format suited to devotional use in a private chapel or domestic interior.

5.2 The reverse of the plate



Figure 6: The reverse of the copper plate within its new backing.

The reverse shows the metal plate, with a dark brown oxidised patina, scattered dark accretions, paint splashes and patches of green corrosion products towards the lower edge. Its colour is consistent with the copper support recorded by the conservator.[D1]

A chalk numeral “2” at upper left is probably an inventory, sale or framing mark. No stamp, maker’s mark, label or inscription is visible in the photographs.

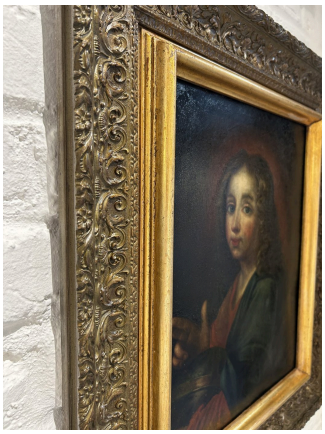
An enhanced-contrast study of the photograph (Section 10) shows an even surface with fine scratches and drip marks. It does not show the shallow dents typical of a hand-hammered plate. Without raking light this observation is not conclusive. The plate has not been examined out of the frame, and its edges and thickness are not visible.

5.3 Handling of the paint

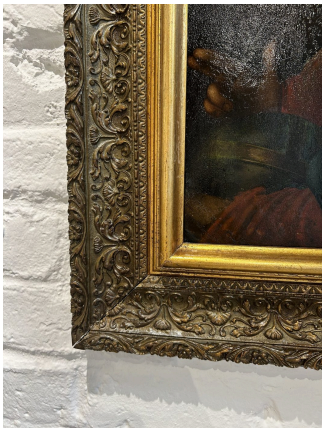
The face is painted with thin, blended layers over a light preparation, with warm reds glazed into the cheeks and lips. The hair is the most freely painted passage, laid in with fluid, confident curling strokes of ochre over brown. The metallic highlight on the gold band of the orb is a precise touch of still-life observation. The drapery is treated in broader passages with scumbled highlights along the folds of the mantle. The dark background is laid in more thickly than the flesh.

Across much of the surface, especially in the dark background, the paint has a finely wrinkled texture. The conservator records this as a reaction in the paint and resin layers that has caused shrinkage; it was partly reduced but cannot be fully reversed.[D1] The same texture is visible in the photographs taken before treatment (Section 6). It is therefore a long-standing feature of the paint film, rather than a consequence of the recent work. Wrinkling forms when the surface of a paint layer dries before the paint beneath it. It is favoured by thick layers, by paint rich in oil, and by added resins or driers.

It occurs in paintings of the 17th century as well as later, so it does not date the work in itself.[T3]



(a) Oblique view: the wrinkled texture of the paint in the background.



(b) Lower left: hand, orb and red cloth.

Figure 7: Surface views after conservation.

6 Condition and the 2026 conservation



(a) Before conservation (2026 sale photographs).

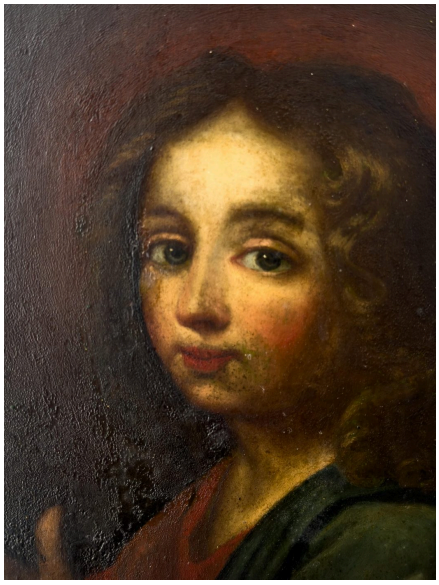


(b) After conservation (November 2026).

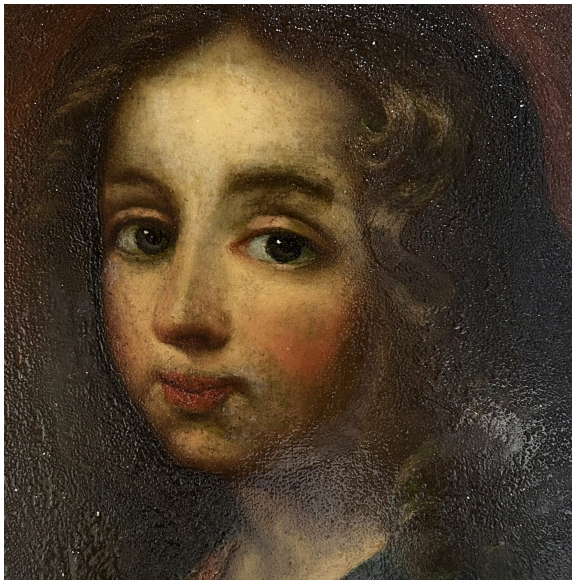
Figure 8: The painting before and after the treatment carried out by Francis W. Downing Ltd. The photographs were taken under different lighting.

The painting was received by Francis W. Downing Ltd, Fine Art Conservation, Harrogate, on 27 July 2026. The conservator found minor surface grime over a discoloured varnish, and a paint-resin reaction to the right of the head and in the outer, darker areas. The painting was considered reasonably stable.[D1]

Treatment. The work comprised the removal of surface dirt and of layers of discoloured resin varnish; minor heat treatment of the paint shrinkage where possible; minimal inpainting where appropriate; and a final coat of non-yellowing, UV-protective synthetic varnish. The frame was cleaned and



(a) Before: dull varnish, greenish surface deposits on the chin and cheek.

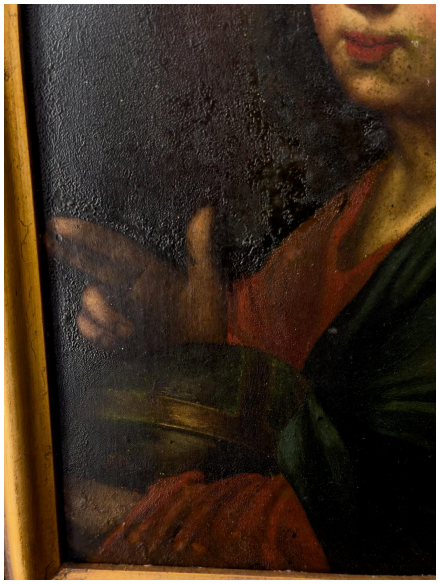


(b) After: clearer modelling of the flesh and eyes.

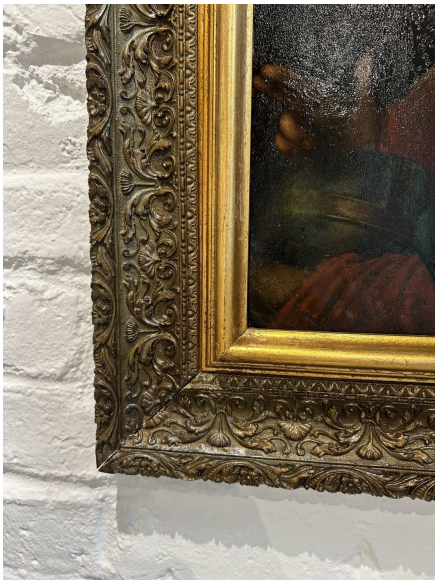
Figure 9: Detail of the face before and after treatment.

treated, and the painting was refitted with an acid-free, anti-mould Tyvek backing. Its condition after treatment was recorded as **stable**, with a recommended re-examination in five to ten years.[D1]

Visible results. Comparison of the photographs shows the removal of the whitish haze and of the small pale spots on the mantle, a cleaner reading of the flesh and of the blue-green drapery, and a more continuous dark background. The wrinkled texture of the paint remains visible, as the conservator anticipated.



(a) Before: blanching and losses in the background around the hand.



(b) After: the background consolidated and evened.

Figure 10: Lower left quadrant before and after treatment.

Points for the collector. Some areas of the dark ground and the lower edge show minor losses and retouching. The location and extent of inpainting are not mapped in the conservation report; an

ultraviolet examination would show them. Small glints in some photographs are reflections from the new varnish on the wrinkled paint, not damage.

7 Frame and reverse

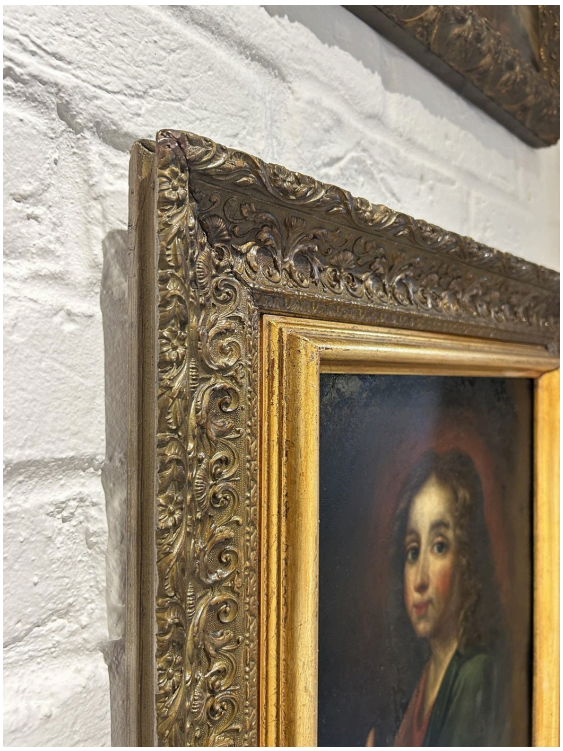


Figure 11: Upper left corner of the frame.

The frame

The painting is presented in a broad frame of moulded composition ornament on a wooden core, with acanthus scrolls, palmettes and rosettes on a stippled ground, finished in gilding toned to a dark antique gold. A gilded inner slip with a rounded profile separates the frame from the plate.
The pressed, repeating ornament is characteristic of commercially produced frames of the late 19th or early 20th century. The frame is therefore not original to the painting, which was reframed at that date. Its rich ornament and warm tone suit the painting's dark ground and gold accent.

The reverse

The frame's back shows a stained softwood construction, modern mirror plates fixing the slip and the plate, and a brass picture wire. The protective backing board dates from the 2026 conservation.



(a) The reverse of the framed painting.



(b) Oblique view showing the depth of the frame.

Figure 12: The frame and its fittings.

8 Comparative artistic analysis

8.1 The youthful Saviour in European painting

The adolescent, beardless Christ holding the orb has a distinct pedigree. In 1504 Isabella d'Este asked Leonardo da Vinci for a "youthful Christ of about twelve", the age at which Christ disputed with the doctors in the Temple. Leonardo's Lombard followers produced several such images.[I2] Among them are the *Adolescent Saviour* attributed to Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio (Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid) and Marco d'Oggiono's *Christ Blessing* (Galleria Borghese, Rome). The Borghese painting shows a young, half-length Christ holding the globe and blessing against a dark ground.[I6][I7] An Italian heritage record notes that the blessing Redeemer with the globe became especially popular from the 17th century, and that in Lombardy he was preferably shown as an adolescent, following Leonardo.[I8]

In 17th-century Italy the type passed to painters of Bologna, Rome and Florence. It took on the sweet, classicising idiom that descends from Guido Reni: a *Salvator Mundi* with the globe after Reni is recorded at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Carlo Dolci's images of the Christ Child were widely replicated.[I13][I14] The closest museum parallel found for this study is a *Salvator Mundi* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London. It was once catalogued as Bolognese or Florentine and is now given to a follower of Guercino, probably Benedetto Gennari II (1633–1715). Christ appears as a child, half-length, in a red tunic and blue mantle, with a luminous nimbus on a dark ground, holding the orb low before him.[I1] A *Redeemer as a Child* given to Carlo Dolci or his pupil Alessandro Loni (Musée Fabre, Montpellier) shows the same combination of blessing hand, orb and radiant halo.[I12]

On the Iberian side the dominant devotional image was a different one: the small Christ Child as Saviour, often standing and holding a cross or banner. Examples include Murillo's *Niño Jesús Salvador* (1671) in Seville and Josefa de Óbidos's *Menino Jesus Salvador do Mundo* (c. 1673) at Cascais.[I9] In Portugal the Infant Saviour was much loved in domestic and convent devotion in the 17th and 18th centuries.[I10]

8.2 The present painting in this context

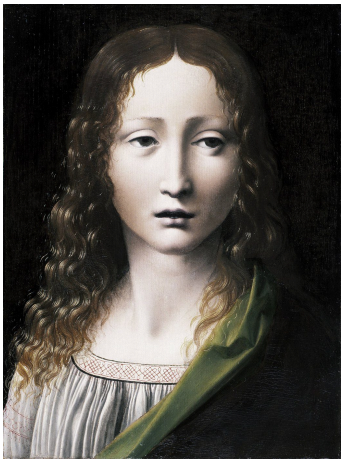
Set beside these works, the present copper is closest to the **Italian adolescent type**. The figure is an adolescent seen at half length, not a small child standing full length. The long, waving hair, the red tunic and cool mantle, the orb held low and the luminous zone behind the head on a dark ground all recur in the Bolognese–Florentine examples. The Dulwich painting is the nearest in type.

The present painting departs from these models in its **pose**. In the comparisons Christ faces the viewer, or looks upwards, and presents the orb frontally. Here the body turns away and the head turns back over the shoulder. The blessing is seen from the side, and the orb is partly hidden by the red cloth. This turns a formal, iconic image into a more momentary and personal one, and it is the painting's most original feature. No other example of this arrangement has been found in the published collections, print archives and market records consulted.

The **facial type** is softer and more rounded than the Lombard models, with rosy cheeks and full lips. In this it comes closer to the sweetness of later Baroque devotional painting, in Italy after Dolci and Guercino's followers and in Seville after Murillo. This may explain why the painting has been placed in Italy and why its appearance in Portugal is unsurprising.

8.3 Quality compared

The comparison also measures quality. The Dulwich and Montpellier paintings are more highly finished: their hands are fully drawn, the orbs are carefully modelled and the halos are precisely



(a) Attributed to G. A. Boltraffio, *The Adolescent Saviour*, c. 1490–95, oil on panel, 25 × 18 cm. Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid. Public domain.



(b) Follower of Guercino, probably Benedetto Gennari II, *Salvator Mundi*, 17th century, oil on canvas, 50.8 × 48.6 cm. Dulwich Picture Gallery, DPG280. Public domain.



(c) The present painting, oil on copper, 47 × 39 cm.



(d) Carlo Dolci or Alessandro Loni, *The Redeemer as a Child*, oil on canvas, 56.5 × 66.5 cm. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. Photo: Finoskov, CC BY-SA 4.0.



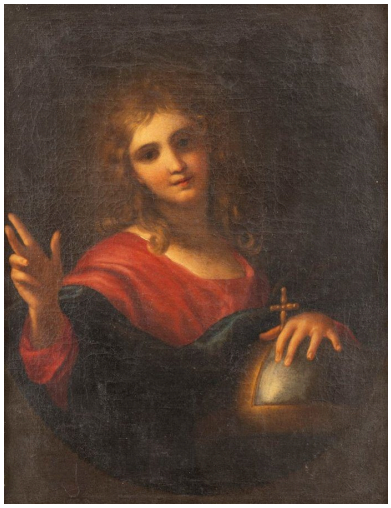
(e) Josefa de Óbidos, *Menino Jesus Salvador do Mundo*, c. 1673. Igreja Matriz, Cascais. Public domain.

Figure 13: The youthful Saviour: Lombard, Bolognese–Florentine, Florentine and Portuguese comparisons.

described. The present work concentrates its finish in the face. Its hand and orb are summary and its drapery is broadly handled. It reads as the work of a competent painter of devotional images, working in a regional or workshop context. It is not by a leading master, but it has a distinctive and successful head.

8.4 The type in 18th-century Italy

A Roman *Salvator Mundi* of the 18th century, catalogued in Rome in 2024, shows how widely this formula circulated.[K23] It shows the same youthful Christ with long, curling fair hair, a red tunic and a dark mantle, blessing, with the orb and cross. Its composition is different: the body faces the viewer, the blessing hand is raised frontally and the orb stands at the right. Its handling of the hands is somewhat more assured. The comparison confirms that the present painting belongs to an 18th-century Italian devotional formula, and that its own contribution lies in the turned pose and the glance over the shoulder.



(a) Roman School, 18th century, *Salvator Mundi*, oil on canvas, 71.5 × 57 cm. Rome, 2024. Image: Finarte.



(b) The present painting, oil on copper, 47 × 39 cm.

Figure 14: The same type, two compositions.

9 School, date and attribution

9.1 School

The painting is unsigned and no prototype has been identified. It may be an independent invention or a variation on a model not yet found. Many devotional paintings on copper followed engravings. A documented case is a New Granadan *Christ Child as Salvator Mundi* based on Schelte à Bolswert's engraving after Rubens. A print source for the present composition may still emerge.[I11]

The type points to Italian models of the 17th and 18th centuries. The copper support, the softened facial type and the painting's Portuguese history are equally at home in the Iberian world. The painting was offered in 2026 as Italian, 17th century.[M1] This study does not consider either an Italian or an Iberian origin established. On the evidence of style, support and history the painting is best described as **Italian or Iberian School**. Examination of the paint and plate (Section 10) may help to decide between the two.

9.2 Attribution

No attribution to a named painter is proposed. The quality of the head is good, but the work lacks the finish of the hands, orb and drapery that would support an attribution to a recorded master or to the workshop of one. The appropriate description is anonymous, by school.

10 Estimation of age

The date of the painting rests on several independent kinds of evidence. None is decisive on its own; together they define a probable range.

Evidence	What it indicates
Support	Painting on copper flourished from the late 16th to the later 18th century in Europe and continued strongly in Spain and its colonies. It became uncommon for devotional images in 19th-century Europe.[T1][T2]
Manufacture of the plate	Copper sheet was beaten by hand until rolling mills spread, from the late 17th century in England and widely by about 1770. The reverse appears flat and even, without obvious hammering dents. If confirmed in raking light, this would point to rolled sheet and favour the 18th rather than the 17th century. The conservator records a "metal panel"; the colour and green corrosion products indicate copper or a copper alloy.[T4][T5][D1]
Iconography and style	The adolescent Saviour with orb, a warm aureole on a dark ground and soft, sweet modelling belong to the later Baroque devotional tradition. A closely related Roman painting of the type is catalogued as 18th century (Section 8).[K23]
Paint film	Long-standing wrinkling, multiple discoloured varnish layers removed in 2026, and a dirt and varnish history consistent with long exposure.[D1]
Reverse	An even, genuinely aged oxide patina, old spots and drips, and green corrosion products: consistent with well over a century of age, and not a modern product.
Frame	A late 19th- or early 20th-century composition frame shows that the painting had been reframed, and was already in circulation, by about 1900.



(a) The reverse of the plate.



(b) The same photograph, high-pass filtered to show surface relief.

Figure 15: Study of the reverse. The filtered image shows fine scratches, drip marks and corrosion, but no clear pattern of hammer dents or rolling waves.

10.1 Conclusion on age

> **Estimated date: 18th century, c. 1700–1790.** The middle decades of the century are the most probable period.

The type, the soft and sweet handling and the closest dated parallel point to the 18th century. The

apparently flat, even plate favours the 18th over the 17th century. The copper support and the condition history are consistent with that date. The frame excludes a modern origin, since the painting was in circulation by about 1900. The description "17th century" given in the 2026 sale listing is not supported by the evidence.

A date in the late 18th or early 19th century cannot be excluded on photographic evidence alone. A late devotional painting in an earlier style would also produce some of these features. Technical examination is the most direct way to settle the question and would materially affect the painting's value (Section 13).

10.2 How the date could be confirmed

- **Raking light on the reverse** and measurement of the plate's thickness at several points, to distinguish a hand-beaten plate from a rolled one.[T5]
- **X-ray fluorescence (XRF)** of the plate and the paint. For the plate, it would distinguish copper from brass. For the paint, Prussian blue in the mantle, available from about 1710–1720, would set an earliest date. Smalt, azurite or indigo would be compatible with an earlier date. Zinc white or chrome pigments would indicate the 19th century.[T6]
- **Infrared reflectography**, to reveal underdrawing. Changes of mind (*pentimenti*) would support an original composition rather than a copy.
- **Ultraviolet examination**, to map the retouching from 2026 and earlier restorations.
- **Analysis of the binding medium** (GC–MS), to test whether the wrinkling arises from a resin-rich medium, which would favour a later 18th-century date.[T3]

11 Provenance and documentary history

- **Before 2026:** unknown. The late 19th- or early 20th-century frame indicates that the painting was reframed in that period.
- **2026:** with a dealer in Lisbon, Portugal, offered as a 17th-century Italian Baroque *Salvator Mundi*, oil on copper, 39 × 47 cm, framed 50 × 58 cm, in the present frame.[M1]
- **2026:** acquired by Atlantiques Fine Art Gallery, London.
- **July–October 2026:** conservation by Francis W. Downing Ltd, Harrogate (report DI 2306, 27 October 2026).[D1]

No earlier owners, labels or exhibition history are recorded. The chalk "2" on the reverse of the plate is the only historic mark observed. Its meaning is not known.

12 Market study

12.1 Method

This study addresses the painting's value as it is offered for sale: a conserved and documented work presented by a London gallery. The relevant evidence is therefore the price at which dealers and galleries offer comparable paintings to collectors. Each comparable was judged by the same criteria applied to the present painting:

- **Subject and type**: youthful or adult Christ, single figure or narrative, standard formula or unusual composition.
- **Originality**: a copy after a famous prototype, a print-derived formula, or an independent composition.
- **Quality**: the level of execution as judged from the published photographs.
- **Support and size**: copper or canvas, and the dimensions of the painted surface.
- **Attribution and documentation**: anonymous school, "circle" of a named painter, or a written expertise.

Gallery listings in the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and on international platforms were reviewed in November 2026. Only prices read directly on the dealer's or platform's own page are used.

12.2 Comparables offered by galleries

Work	Size (cm)	Gallery	Price	Comparison with the present painting
[G1] Jacopo Giorgi (circle of Cesare Dandini), *Salvator Mundi*, Florence c. 1660–65, copper[G1]	22 × 15.5	Antichità di Alina	€7,000 (Anticstore); €8,400 (1stDibs)	The Christ Child blessing, his hand on the orb: the closest iconography on copper. Carries a named attribution and a written expertise; less than a fifth of the painted surface of the present work.
[G2] Venetian School, 17th c., *Virgin and Child with Saints*, copper[G2]	53 × 40.5	Cantore Galleria Antiquaria, Modena	€6,500	A large anonymous copper of the same class as the present painting. A more elaborate multi-figure composition; no conservation report or study.
[G3] Circle of G. B. Piazzetta, 18th c., *Christ Salvator Mundi*, canvas[G3]	81 × 64	Milan dealer (1stDibs)	US$4,144	The closest iconography on the market: a beardless adolescent Christ blessing, with orb and cherubs. Its face is stiffer than the present painting's and the canvas shows damage. Canvas, not copper.
[G4] School of the 16th–17th c., *Christ Blessing*, canvas[G4]	58 × 69	Ars Antiqua, Milan	€3,800	Anonymous adult Christ in three-quarter view, comparable decorative level. Canvas, not copper.
[G5] *Holy Family with a Franciscan Saint*, 17th c., copper[G5]	27 × 20	Florin Antiques, Madrid	€3,450	Anonymous small copper of comparable level, multi-figure formula; less than a third of the present work's surface.
[G6] Flemish painter, 16th–17th c., *Christ as Salvator Mundi*, copper[G6]	22 × 18	Antichità Castelbarco	€3,300 (Anticstore); US$3,973 (Chairish)	Anonymous frontal head of Christ, standard formula; less than a quarter of the present work's surface.



(a) [G1] Circle of Dandini. Copper, 22 × 15.5 cm.



(b) [G2] Venetian School. Copper, 53 × 40.5 cm.



(c) [G3] Circle of Piazzetta. Canvas, 81 × 64 cm.



(d) The present painting. Copper, 47 × 39 cm.



(e) [G4] Christ Blessing. Canvas, 58 × 69 cm.



(f) [G5] Holy Family. Copper, 27 × 20 cm.



(g) [G6] Flemish painter. Copper, 22 × 18 cm.

Figure 16: Comparable paintings offered by galleries, reproduced from the dealers' publications cited, for comparison only. Images: the respective galleries.

12.3 Reading the evidence

The scale of the plate. Large copper plates are uncommon. Most devotional coppers are cabinet pictures of 20 to 30 cm, and the present plate offers four to five times their painted surface [G1, G5, G6]. The only comparable of similar size is the Venetian copper [G2], offered at €6,500.

Small anonymous coppers. Anonymous devotional coppers of 20 to 27 cm, of standard formula and without a conservation report or study, are offered at €3,300–3,450 [G5, G6]. Anonymous paintings of Christ on canvas are offered at €3,800 to US$4,144 [G3, G4].

The closest subject. The only adolescent *Salvator Mundi* found on the market [G3] is a larger canvas with a stiffer face and visible damage. The present painting's head is better modelled, its support is copper and its condition is documented.

The weight of a name. A small copper of the same subject with a named attribution and a written expertise is offered at €7,000–8,400 [G1]. This sets the level that a recorded attribution adds to a much smaller picture.

12.4 Where the present painting stands

Measured against these works, the painting combines advantages that none of the comparables unites:

- a **large copper plate** (47 × 39 cm), the size of the largest anonymous copper on the market [G2];
- the **less common youthful form** of the *Salvator Mundi*, an image with a long pedigree

from Leonardo's followers to the Bolognese and Roman painters of the 17th and 18th centuries (Section 8);

- an **uncommon composition**: the type is known, but the turn of the head over the shoulder has no recorded repetition, and the gaze gives the painting immediate appeal;
- a **well-modelled head** and freely painted hair, above the level of the closest iconographic comparable [G3];
- **professional conservation** in 2026 by an accredited conservator, with a written report, a substantial frame and the present illustrated study.

13 Estimation of value

The main factors bearing on value are:

- **Subject:** a popular devotional subject in its less common youthful form, with an unrecorded composition.
- **Support and size:** a large single copper plate, uncommon at this size.
- **Quality:** an engaging, well-modelled head and freely painted hair; the hand and drapery are more summary, as is usual in devotional painting of the period.
- **Date and school:** Italian or Iberian School, 18th century.
- **Condition:** stable after professional conservation, with a documented treatment and a long-standing fine wrinkling of the paint film in the dark ground.
- **Documentation:** conservation report, before-and-after photographs and the present study; documented history from 2026.

> **Estimated gallery retail value (London): GBP 5,500**, including VAT.

Basis. The valuation places the painting well above small anonymous coppers and anonymous paintings of Christ on canvas [G3–G6]. This reflects its four- to five-fold painted surface, its better-modelled head, its uncommon youthful subject and composition, and its documented conservation. It is of the same order as the large anonymous copper offered at €6,500 [G2], and below a copper of the same subject that carries a named attribution and a written expertise [G1]. The valuation is a London gallery figure. It includes the professional conservation, the frame and the documentation supplied with the painting.

What could strengthen it further. Technical examination confirming the 18th-century date, the identification of a print source, or a specialist's attribution to a defined regional school (Roman, Bolognese, Genoese, Sevillian or Lisbon) would add to the painting's standing.

14 Catalogue entry



Figure 17: *The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi.*

Italian or Iberian School, 18th century
The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi
Oil on copper
47 × 39 cm (height × width); 58 × 50 cm framed
In a late 19th- or early 20th-century gilt composition frame. Conserved by Francis W. Downing Ltd, Harrogate, 2026.

The young Christ turns from the orb of the world to meet the viewer's eyes, his hand raised in blessing. Soft, blended modelling and a warm red aureole draw the face out of a deep, dark ground, while the rose tunic, blue-green mantle and gilded band of the orb give the composition its restrained colour. An intimate devotional image on a substantial copper plate, recently cleaned and revarnished.

15 Care and display

- **Environment:** hang away from direct sunlight, radiators, fireplaces and other sources of heat. Avoid damp walls and marked seasonal changes in temperature and humidity.[D1][C1]
- **Light:** moderate, UV-free lighting. LED lighting at low intensity is suitable.[C2]
- **Handling:** hold the frame, not the plate. A copper plate can bend if it is unsupported, and any bending can crack the paint layer.
- **Cleaning:** dust the frame gently with a soft brush. The painted surface should not be cleaned or treated except by a conservator.
- **Re-examination:** the conservator recommends a brief examination every five to ten years.[D1]

- **Documentation:** keep the conservation report and this study with the painting.

16 Conclusions

This oil on copper represents Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, in a youthful form. The blessing hand, the orb of the world, the aureole and the traditional red and blue-green garments establish the subject. "The Youthful Christ as Salvator Mundi" is the appropriate title. The description "Young Girl" in the conservation documents reflects the figure's idealised youth, not the subject. "Sacred Heart" would not be correct, because the defining attribute of that devotion, the heart, is absent.

The type descends from the Italian adolescent Saviour, Lombard after Leonardo and later Bolognese and Florentine. The painting is best placed in Southern European devotional painting, Italian or Iberian, and is dated on the evidence of style, support and condition to the 18th century, c. 1700–1790, most probably its middle decades. No other version of the composition has been identified. Its most distinctive and original quality is the face, turned over the shoulder with a soft, open expression and a gaze that engages the viewer directly. The hands and orb are more summary, and no attribution to a named painter is proposed.

The 2026 conservation has stabilised the painting and markedly improved its legibility. The fine wrinkling of the paint is long-standing and was only partly reducible.

Against comparable works offered by galleries, assessed for subject, quality, originality, size and documentation, the painting's gallery retail value is estimated at **GBP 5,500**, including VAT. Technical examination and a specialist opinion on its school are the steps most likely to strengthen its standing.

About this study

Prepared for Atlantiques from photographs of the painting before and after conservation, the conservator's report and the sources listed below. The painting has not been examined in person by the author of this study, and no technical analysis has been carried out. Artistic readings are interpretations of the visible work. School and date are proposed on stylistic and material grounds and are not documented. The value is an estimate of gallery retail value based on the published gallery prices cited, assessed for subject, quality, originality, size, attribution and documentation. Research sources were consulted between 17 and 20 November 2026.

17 Sources and selected bibliography

Object documentation

[D1] Francis W. Downing Ltd, Fine Art Conservation, Harrogate
Conservation Report – After care advice, no. DI 2306, 27 October 2026, signed Francis W. Downing ACR FRSA (ICON accredited). Condition, treatment, present condition and recommendations. Documentation held by the gallery.

[M1] Dealer listing, Lisbon, 2026
Pintura barroca Cristo Salvator Mundi, Arte religioso, Óleo sobre cobre, S. XVII; copper, 39 × 47 cm, framed 50 × 58 cm; described as Italian, 17th century; 1stDibs reference LU9157248727232. Listing photographs show the painting before conservation. https://www.1stdibs.com/es/muebles/decoraciones-de-pared/pinturas/pintura-barroca-cristo-salvator-mundi-arte-religioso-%C3%B3leo-sobre-cobre-s-xvii/id-f_48727232/

[P1] Photographs of the artwork
Twelve photographs after conservation (front, details, oblique views, frame and reverse), 13 November 2026, and seven photographs from the sale listing before conservation.

Iconography

[I1] Dulwich Picture Gallery, *Salvator Mundi*
Collection entry; description of the type, with Christ blessing and holding the orb. https://www.dulwichpictu regallery.org.uk/explore/explore-the-collection/salvator-mundi/

[I2] Salvator Mundi (Leonardo)
Overview of the composition associated with Leonardo da Vinci and of the *Salvator Mundi* type. https: //en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvator_Mundi_(Leonardo)

[I3] Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
Joos van Cleve, *The Infant Christ on the Orb of the World*. https://museothyssen.org/en/node/16912

[I4] Encyclopedia.com, "Sacred Heart, Iconography of"
From the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcr ipts-and-maps/sacred-heart-iconography

[I5] Pompeo Batoni, *Sacred Heart of Jesus*
Church of the Gesù, Rome. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_Heart_of_Jesus_(Batoni)

[I6] Attributed to Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio, *The Adolescent Saviour*
c. 1490–95, oil on panel, 25 × 18 cm, Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid, inv. 02680. Image: Wikimedia Commons, public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giovanni_Antonio_Boltraffio_-_The_Adolescent _Saviour_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

[I7] Galleria Borghese, Marco d'Oggiono, *Christ Blessing*
Inv. 435, oil on panel. https://www.collezionegalleriaborghese.it/en/opere/salvator-mundi-2

[I8] ICCD, Catalogo generale dei Beni Culturali, "Cristo adolescente"
Heritage record ICCD8299227, on the youthful Redeemer with globe. https://sigecweb.beniculturali.it/sigec/it em/print/ICCD8299227

[I9] Josefa de Óbidos, *Menino Jesus Salvador do Mundo*
c. 1673, Igreja Matriz, Cascais. Image: Wikimedia Commons, public domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/ wiki/File:Josefa_menino-jesus-salvador.jpg

[I10] Museu de São Roque, Lisbon, *The Infant Jesus Saviour of the World*
Portuguese sculpture, second half of the 18th century; on the devotion in Portugal. https://museusaoroque.sc ml.pt/en/collections/sculpture/the-infant-jesus-saviour-of-the-world/

[I11] PESSCA, Project on the Engraved Sources of Spanish Colonial Art, no. 6579
Schelte à Bolswert after Rubens, *The Christ Child as Salvator Mundi*, and a New Granadan painting derived from it. https://colonialart.org/artworks/6579a/view

[I12] Carlo Dolci or Alessandro Loni, *The Redeemer as a Child*
Musée Fabre, Montpellier, 825.1.46. Photo: Finoskov, CC BY-SA 4.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/F ile:PeinturesMus%C3%A9eFabre123_enfant_j%C3%A9sus_r%C3%A9dempteur_Dolci.jpg

Comparative material

[M2] Setdart, Barcelona, Old Masters & Sculpture, 1 June 2021, lot 52
Workshop of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Salvator Mundi*, 17th century, oil on copper, 15 × 10 cm. An adolescent Christ blessing, the left hand on the orb.

[K23] Roman School, 18th century, *Salvator Mundi*
Oil on canvas, oval, 71.5 × 57 cm. Catalogued by Finarte, Rome, 28 November 2024, lot 71.

[I13] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, after Guido Reni (?), *Salvator Mundi*
Collection record of a 17th-century figure of Christ blessing, with the globe. https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/397016

[I14] Carlo Dolci, *The Christ Child holding Wreaths*
Blanton Museum of Art; one of Dolci's widely replicated images of the Christ Child. https://blanton.emuseum.com/objects/15820/christ-child-holding-wreaths

Gallery comparables

Prices as published on the galleries' own pages, consulted November 2026. Images reproduced in Section 12 are credited to the galleries named.

[G1] Antichità di Alina
Jacopo Giorgi (circle of Cesare Dandini), *Salvator Mundi*, Florence c. 1660–65, oil on copper, 22 × 15.5 cm, with expertise by Federico Berti; offered at EUR 7,000 (Anticstore) and EUR 8,400 (1stDibs).

[G2] Cantore Galleria Antiquaria, Modena
Venetian School, 17th century, *Virgin and Child with Saints*, oil on copper, 53 × 40.5 cm; offered at EUR 6,500. https://www.proantic.com/en/1546637-venetian-school-of-the-17th-century-virgin-with-child-and-saints.html

[G3] Milan dealer, 1stDibs
Circle of Giovan Battista Piazzetta, *Christ Salvator Mundi*, 18th century, oil on canvas, 81 × 64 cm; offered at USD 4,144. https://www.1stdibs.com/art/paintings/figurative-paintings/giovanni-battista-piazzetta-circle-giovan-battista-piazzetta-1683-1754-christ-salvator-mundi/id-a_15495782

[G4] Ars Antiqua, Milan
School of the 16th–17th century, *Christ Blessing*, oil on canvas, 58 × 69 cm; offered at EUR 3,800. https://www.proantic.com/en/1796974-16th-17th-century-school-christ-blessing.html

[G5] Florin Antiques, Madrid
Holy Family with a Saint, 17th century, oil on copper, 27 × 20 cm; offered at EUR 3,450. https://www.proantic.com/en/1562666-holy-family-with-a-saint-oil-on-copper.html

[G6] Antichità Castelbarco
Flemish painter, 16th–17th century, *Christ as Salvator Mundi*, oil on copper, 22 × 18 cm; offered at EUR 3,300 (Anticstore, ref. 110106) and USD 3,973 (Chairish). https://www.chairish.com/product/28833225/

Technique and care

[T1] Phoenix Art Museum, *Copper as Canvas*
Copper as Canvas: Two Centuries of Masterpiece Paintings on Copper, 1575–1775, exhibition catalogue, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[T2] C. Bargellini, "La pintura sobre lámina de cobre en los virreinatos de la Nueva España y del Perú"
Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas 21, no. 74–75 (1999), pp. 79–98. https://www.analesiie.unam.mx/pdf/74-75_79-98.pdf

[T3] D. Peggie, "Drying and paint defects"
National Gallery, London, *Vermeer and technique*. On the causes of wrinkling in oil paint. https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/research/the-meaning-of-making/vermeer-and-technique/drying-and-paint-defects

[T4] RKD Studies, *Marks and brands*, ch. 5
"Coppersmith marks on Southern Netherlandish copper plates"; on the hammering and later rolling of plates, and the rarity of marks. https://marks.rkdstudies.nl/5-coppersmith-marks-southern-netherlandish-copper-plates/

[T5] AIC Conservation Wiki, "Metal Supports"
After I. Horovitz, "Paintings on copper supports", *The Conservator* 10 (1986). Hammer and rolling marks seen in raking light. https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Metal_Supports

[T6] J. Kirby, "Fading and Colour Change of Prussian Blue"
National Gallery Technical Bulletin 14 (1993), pp. 62–71; on the introduction of Prussian blue c. 1710. https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/technical-bulletin/kirby1993

[C1] Canadian Conservation Institute, Care of Paintings on Ivory, Metal and Glass
CCI Note on the care of paintings on metal supports, including copper. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/care-paintings-ivory-metal-glass.html

[C2] Canadian Conservation Institute, Caring for paintings
Preventive conservation guidance on light, display, handling and cleaning. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paintings.html

Disclaimer

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A Photographic details



(a) Before conservation: the painted surface.



(b) Before conservation: upper right corner of the frame.

Figure 18: Photographs from the 2026 sale listing.