

Sotheby's to Offer The Most Important Space Artifact to Ever Appear at Auction

The Bag Used by Neil Armstrong on Apollo 11 to Bring Back the Very First Samples of Moon Dust Ever Collected, Traces of Which Remain in the Bag

The Only Such Relic Available for Private Ownership
Expected To Fetch \$2/4 Million



Apollo 11 Contingency Lunar Sample Return Bag
Used by Neil Armstrong on Apollo 11 to bring back the very first pieces of the moon ever collected – *traces of which remain in the bag*. The only such relic available for private ownership.
Estimate \$2/4 million

NEW YORK, 19 May 2017 – On 20 July 2017, the anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, Sotheby's New York is to offer the bag that was used to bring back to Earth the very first sample of lunar material ever collected. Traces of the moon dust and small rocks are still deeply embedded in the fabric of the bag, which is labeled "Lunar Sample Return" in bold black letters, giving a collector the chance not only to own some of the first lunar material ever collected, but also an exceptionally rare relic of humanity's greatest achievement – landing a man on the moon. Nearly all of the equipment from that historic mission is housed in the U.S. National Collections at the Smithsonian;

however a recent court ruling has allowed this to be the only such artifact in private hands. The bag will be offered in Sotheby's inaugural [Space Exploration](#) sale and is expected to fetch \$2/4 million.

Cassandra Hatton, Vice President and Senior Specialist in charge of the sale commented: “This seemingly modest bag was part of mankind’s greatest journey, and played a crucial role in the single most important scientific task of the Apollo 11 mission – to bring back the very first sample of lunar material ever collected. To be able to see such an object in person is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It is one thing to read about going to the moon; it is quite another to hold in one’s hands an object that was actually there, and that still carries traces of that faraway place.”



The sale will also include a large color photograph of Buzz Aldrin taken by Neil Armstrong during the Apollo 11 Moonwalk (estimate \$3/5,000)

During the Apollo 11 mission Neil Armstrong collected nearly 500 grams of material finer than 1 cm, as well as 12 rock fragments larger than 1 cm from five different locations on the lunar surface in the region known as the Sea of Tranquility. Given the then unknown nature of lunar material, this decontamination bag was used to minimize any potential harm the samples might pose to the Command Module and planet Earth. A discussion of the bag between Mission Commander Neil Armstrong and Command Module Pilot Michael Collins can be found in the Apollo 11 Onboard Voice recordings:

Armstrong: “If you want to have a look at what the moon looks like, you can open that up and look.

Don’t open the bag though.”

Collins: “What was that bag?”

Armstrong: “Contingency Sample.”

Collins: “Rock?”

Armstrong: “Yes, there’s some rocks in it too...”

The true history of the bag went unknown for decades, until just a year ago. It was offered three separate times in 2014 by a small auction house on behalf of the US Marshall’s service, garnering not a single bid. It was relisted again in 2015, where the current owner won the lot with a bid \$995. Interested in the history of her purchase, she sent it to NASA in the hope of obtaining further information. Scientific tests revealed the dust in the bag to be moon dust, specifically from the Apollo 11 landing site, and the part number printed inside of the bag matched up to that of the

“Contingency Lunar Sample Return Decontamination Bag” listed in the Apollo 11 Stowage list; the bag was returned to the owner two weeks ago. She plans to share a portion of the sale proceeds with a number of charities, including the Immune Deficiency Foundation and the Bay Cliff Health Camp Children’s Therapy and Wellness Center, and plans to set up a scholarship for students studying speech pathology at her Alma Mater, Northern Michigan University.

News & Video: <http://www.sothebys.com/en/news-video.html>

Twitter: www.twitter.com/sothebys

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sothebys

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sothebys

Snapchat ID: sothebys

YouTube: www.youtube.com/SothebysTV

Weibo: www.weibo.com/sothebyshongkong

WeChat ID: sothebyshongkong

Sotheby’s has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby’s became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby’s presents auctions in 10 different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris, and Sotheby’s BidNow program allows visitors to view all auctions live online and place bids from anywhere in the world. Sotheby’s offers collectors the resources of *Sotheby’s Financial Services*, the world’s only full-service art financing company, as well as the collection advisory services of its subsidiary, *Art Agency, Partners*. Sotheby’s presents private sale opportunities in more than 70 categories, including S|2, the gallery arm of Sotheby’s Global Fine Art Division, and two retail businesses, Sotheby’s Diamonds and Sotheby’s Wine. Sotheby’s has a global network of 80 offices in 40 countries and is the oldest company listed on the New York Stock Exchange (BID).

*Estimates do not include buyer’s premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer’s premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.

Images are available upon request

Browse sale catalogues, view original content, stream live auctions and more at www.sothebys.com, and through Sotheby’s apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, Apple TV and Amazon Fire

#