

Russian space memorabilia goes to auction

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The Russian space station Mir orbits Earth in 1998. A spacesuit worn by cosmonaut Anatoli Artsebarsky, pieces of Soyuz shuttles that rocketed into space and a Mir Space Station control panel are among dozens of Soviet space program items for sale this month in Canada.

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"The quantity of items associated with the Soviet space program, items that were used for research and ground testing and some that actually went into space that are to be sold at this auction is significant," said Sean Quinn of Canadian auction house Waddington's.

"You get a sense of the magnitude of the Soviet space program handling

all of these items. It's a very interesting history. They had so many firsts," he told AFP.

"It's strange to look back to this Cold War era, given the current spirit of cooperation between Russia and (the West). It all seemed like ages ago, but it ended only 20 years ago."

The Soviets began working on rockets in the 1930s and are credited with breakthroughs such as the first satellite to orbit the Earth, the first ballistic missile launch, the first human in space, and the first probes of Venus and Mars.

Throughout its history, the program remained secretive as it competed with US space missions.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian space memorabilia has popped up at auctions around the world, including 40 lots at this Toronto auction to be held on March 30.

The hottest items expected to fetch tens of thousands of dollars include Artsebarsky's Sokol KV-2 space suit, a Mir Space Station command control console and monitor, and a pointing scope used during the Cold War to spy on the United States from a Soviet Almaz military [space](#) station.

Quinn said his favorite, however, is a small clock from a [Soyuz spacecraft](#) that is "both functional and a great conversation piece. It would fit nicely on someone's desk," he said.

The seller is an immigrant from Eastern Europe who amassed the collection over 20 years.

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