

NYC space auction includes lunar-dust covered item (Update)

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Everything from American and Russian spacesuits to a moon dust-covered strap from the Apollo 12 mission will be available to space history buffs at auction in New York City next week.

Among the highlights at Bonhams on Tuesday is a motion picture sight ring, a small polarizing filter put on a camera that was used by astronaut James Irwin on Apollo 15.

"It was used in the module when it landed on the moon and also on takeoff," said Cassandra Hatton, Bonham's space history specialist. "It's extremely rare, probably the only one in private hands." The sight ring is being sold by Irwin's estate and is estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Another fascinating item is an Apollo 12 shoulder strap embedded with lunar dust. It was used when astronauts Charles Conrad and Alan Bean conducted two extensive surface explorations during which they accumulated a large amount of lunar dust on their suits, gloves and flight equipment. The strap has a pre-sale estimate of \$25,000 to \$35,000.

The sale is significant because "we have items that came directly from astronauts, items that they carried into lunar orbit with them, items that went to the lunar surface and items that have lunar dust on them," Hatton said.

Other highlights include Apollo 11's lunar surface checklist sheet with annotations by astronaut Buzz Aldrin. The data enabled Aldrin and Neil

Armstrong to return to earth.

The auction house said it is one of the most extensive sets of notations ever made on the lunar surface. It has a pre-sale estimate of \$35,000 to \$45,000.

Other items include a Mercury era spacesuit estimated at \$8,000 to \$12,000. It is an example of the cover layer for the famous silver spacesuit of the Mercury program. The one being offered is not attributed to any astronaut and was never flown.

A Soviet-era Strizh spacesuit designed to protect cosmonauts from ejection is estimated at \$15,000 to \$20,000. Bonhams said it is one of only 27 created for test and training purposes between 1981 and 1991.

American flags flown on various expeditions also are in the sale, including a silk version carried to the moon by Aldrin on Apollo 11. It's estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000.

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