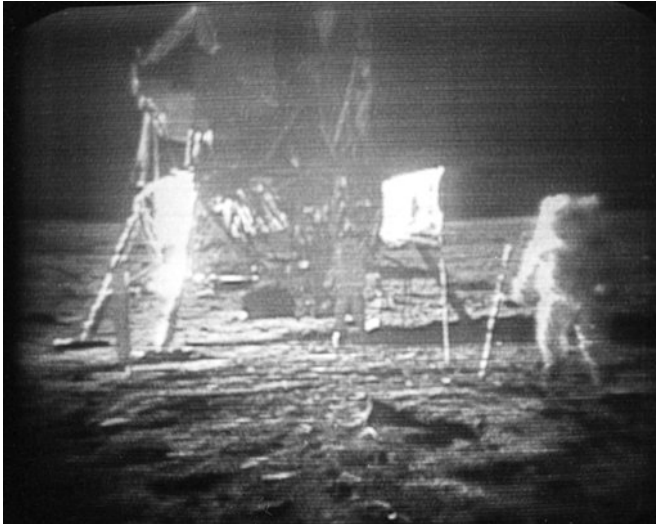


Moon dust collected by Neil Armstrong to be auctioned in NY

13 July 2017, by Verena Dobnik



In this July 20, 1969 file photo, Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong, right, trudges across the surface of the moon leaving behind footprints. Moon dust collected by Armstrong during the first lunar landing is being sold at a New York auction. The lunar dust plus some tiny rocks that Armstrong also collected are zipped up in a small bag and are worth an estimated \$2 million to \$4 million. They're just some of the items linked to space travel that Sotheby's is auctioning off to mark the 48th anniversary of the first lunar landing on July 20. (AP Photo, File)

Moon dust that Neil Armstrong collected during the first lunar landing was displayed Thursday at a New York auction house—a symbol of America's glory days in space now valued at \$2 million to \$4 million.

The late astronaut brought the dust and some tiny rocks back to Earth in an ordinary-looking bag.

It's one of 180 lots linked to space travel that Sotheby's is auctioning off July 20 to mark the 48th anniversary of the pioneer lunar landing on that date in 1969.

The moon dust is the first sample of Earth's satellite ever collected.

The bag has had a storied existence, a decades-long trajectory during which it was misidentified and nearly landed in the trash. About two years ago, it appeared in a seized assets auction staged on behalf of the U.S. Marshals Service. The owner, whose name has not been made public, purchased the treasure and sent it to NASA for testing.

After a legal tussle, a federal judge granted the owner full rights over the curiosity.

Other items on the block are Armstrong's snapshot of fellow Apollo 11 astronaut "Buzz" Aldrin standing on the moon, with an estimated value of \$3,000 to \$5,000.

A documented flight plan astronauts used to return to Earth is valued at \$25,000 to \$35,000.

In a photo valued at \$2,000 to \$3,000, astronaut Gene Cernan from Apollo 17 is seen rolling around in the lunar rover through a valley on the moon.



A print of astronaut Neil Armstrong's photograph of fellow Apollo 11 astronaut "Buzz" Aldrin standing on the moon, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, is displayed in New

York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The photo, autographed by Aldrin, is estimated at \$2,500 to \$3,500. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Capping the sale is a touch of humor: The Snoopy astronaut doll that was the mascot of the Apollo 10 crew, at an estimated pre-sale price of \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon. He died in 2012 in Ohio.

The first human to venture into outer space was Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, who orbited Earth in a spacecraft in April 1961.

Gagarin's description of the planet—translated from Russian—is being offered as part of his observations on being in space. His in-depth report, translated into English, has an estimated value of \$50,000 to \$80,000.

Calling it "a magnificent picture," he wrote: "The Earth had a very distinct and pretty blue halo. This halo could be clearly seen when looking at the horizon. It had a smooth transition from pale blue to blue, dark blue, violet and absolutely black."



A Gemini G1C Spacesuit Thermal Coverlayer, left, and a Wind Tunnel Test Model, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, are shown in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The spacesuit is estimated at \$40,000 to \$60,000 while the test module is estimated at \$8,000 to \$12,000. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



A Custom Command/Service Module, and Planetary Globe, right, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, are displayed in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The Custom Command/Service Module is estimated at \$5,000 to \$7,000. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



A flown Apollo 11 Flight Plan Sheet signed by Buzz Aldrin, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, is displayed in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The sheet is estimated at \$25,000 to \$35,000. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



The Apollo 13 Flown Flight Plan, with extensive annotations by the crew, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, is displayed in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. It is estimated at \$30,000 to \$40,000. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



The Apollo 11 Contingency Lunar Sample Return Bag used by astronaut Neil Armstrong, to be offered at auction, is displayed at Sotheby's, in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The lunar dust plus some tiny rocks that Armstrong also collected are zipped up in a small bag and are worth an estimated \$2 million to \$4 million. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



A full scale Custom Sputnik-1 model, above, to be offered at auction at Sotheby's, is displayed in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. It is estimated at \$8,000 to \$12,000. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)



The Apollo 11 Contingency Lunar Sample Return Bag used by astronaut Neil Armstrong, to be offered at auction, is displayed at Sotheby's, in New York, Thursday, July 13, 2017. The lunar dust plus some tiny rocks that Armstrong also collected are zipped up in a small bag and are worth an estimated \$2 million to \$4 million. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

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