

# Touched by greatness

When celebrity memorabilia graced by the blood, sweat and tears of superstars goes under the hammer, an auction draws attention like no other with mega fans and private collectors alike bidding for huge settlements

From the iconic Nike Air Jordan 1s, to Lady Gaga's acrylic nail, and everything in between, there is some amazing celebrity memorabilia still treasured out there today, thanks to Sotheby's and others keeping auctioneering alive.

Worn in a game and signed by Michael Jordan himself in 1985, a pair of Nike Air Jordan 1s sold for \$560,000 in a Sotheby's auction in May 2020 to break the record for the most expensive pair of sneakers ever sold at auction.

Michael Jackson paraphernalia still fetches impressive coin, with Kim Kardashian paying \$65,625 for the velvet jacket he wore to Elizabeth Taylor's birthday party in 1997, and again at the 50th Cannes Film Festival screening of his film *Ghosts*. The jacket, which sold for more than three times the expected selling price was for Kardashian's 6-year-old daughter, North. As another Christmas gift for North, Kardashian purchased Jackson's *Smooth Criminal* fedora hat for \$56,250, while she gifted her brother Robert two Elvis Presley rings.

In 2009, Michael Jackson's famous white glove, covered in glittering crystals, sold for \$350,000 to Hong Kong businessman Hoffman Ma. According to Reuters, the glove

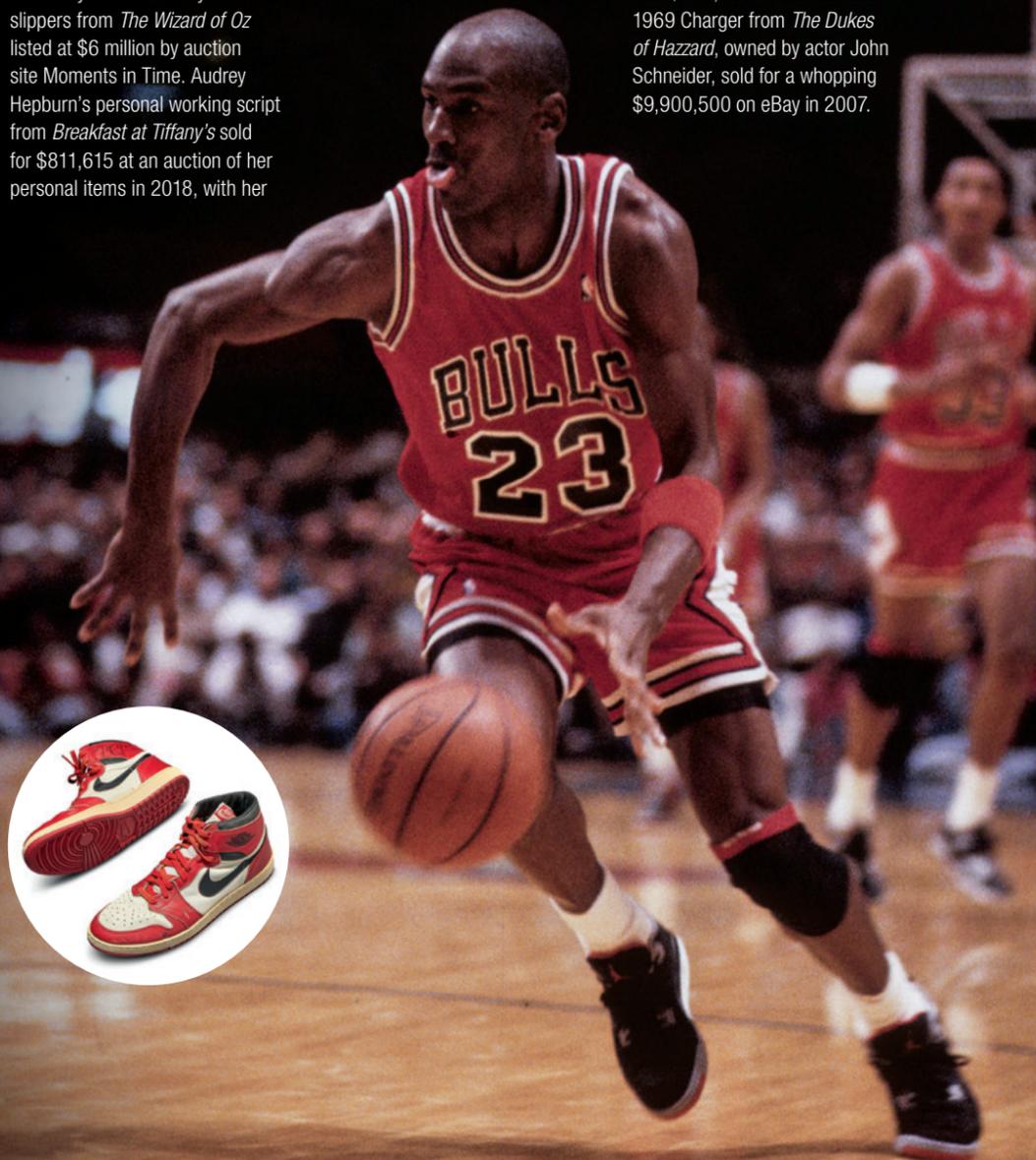
Right: Michael Jordan's Nike Air Jordan 1s, worn and signed in 1985 by the Chicago Bulls legend himself

was worn by Jackson when he famously moonwalked across the stage for the first time at the 1983 Motown 25 television special.

Film paraphernalia usually leads the charge on celebrity memorabilia under the hammer, with Judy Garland's ruby red slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* listed at \$6 million by auction site Moments in Time. Audrey Hepburn's personal working script from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* sold for \$811,615 at an auction of her personal items in 2018, with her

tan Burberry trench coat, black Givenchy cocktail dress, and a working script for *My Fair Lady* all also auctioned off at eye-watering prices. Olivia Newton-John's skin-tight black *Grease* pants were sold to Spanx founder

Sara Blakely for \$162,000 and Darth Vader's helmet worn by actor David Prowse in *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* sold to an anonymous bidder for \$898,420 in September 2019, after the estimated selling price was \$400,000. A General Lee 1969 Charger from *The Dukes of Hazzard*, owned by actor John Schneider, sold for a whopping \$9,900,500 on eBay in 2007.



A fully restored version of James Bond's Aston Martin DB5, which appeared in the *Goldfinger* film, was sold at an RM Sotheby's auction for an impressive \$6.4 million. It is one of only three "Bond-modified" DB5 vehicles in existence. "No other car in history has played a more important leading role on film and in pop culture than the Aston Martin DB5," Barney Ruprecht, a car specialist at RM Sotheby's, said in a press release ahead of the sale.

A *Batman Returns* costume worn by Michael Keaton sold for \$41,250 at auction in 2017 and a bullwhip used by Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones* sold for \$35,460,

not including fees. Having been estimated only to fetch a mere \$5,000, the whip was originally donated by Harrison Ford to the Institute of Archaeology in London to help build a new Centre for Conservation and Museum Science at University College, London University.

Scarlett Johansson's used tissue was reportedly sold on eBay for \$2,050 after the star said she'd caught a cold from co-star Samuel L. Jackson. Johansson announced she would sell the tissue while appearing on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* in 2008 and then give the proceeds to charity.

Lady Gaga's acrylic nail was auctioned off for \$12,000 after a crew member on *The Born This Way Ball* tour found it backstage. The auction included not only the nail, but also a letter of provenance from the crewmember, two photographs of Gaga with and without the nail, an Aviva Stadium staff handbook, an event crew wristband, and a Lady Gaga *The Born This Way Ball* grey crew t-shirt.

The dark blue Victor Edelstein off-the-shoulder velvet gown Princess Diana wore while dancing with John Travolta at the White House in 1995 sold to The Historical Royal Palaces for \$347,000, while Marilyn Monroe's *Happy Birthday, Mr. President* dress, which was covered in 2,500 rhinestones, sold for \$1,267,500 at a Christie's auction in 1999.

Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry collection sold for a record-breaking \$116 million in 2011.

Top: Darth Vader's mask went for \$898,420 Above: James Bond's Aston Martin DB5 sold for \$6.4m Right: Lady Gaga's acrylic nail was auctioned off for \$12,000

The iconic actress' "La Peregrina" natural pearl, diamond, ruby, and cultured pearl necklace sold for \$11.8 million including fees which, at the time, made it the most expensive pearl ever sold at auction. This record was recently surpassed with an auction of one of Marie Antoinette's pearls, which sold for a whopping \$36 million.

A chair that J.K. Rowling sat in while writing the first two *Harry Potter* books fetched \$394,000 at an auction in 2016. Sold to a private collector, the 1930s-era chair had previously sold for \$29,000. ■

