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VALUATIONS**



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## Sotheby's Pop Culture Sale

**During September, Sotheby's London held their inaugural 'Popular Culture' sale.**

The market for memorabilia has been a focus for international auction houses in recent years. Sotheby's historically was one of the first major players in memorabilia but chose to move away from the field in the early 2000s. Recently, with several highly successful sales internationally and after the unprecedented interest generated by last year's Freddie Mercury auction, Sotheby's announced in early 2024 the introduction of their European Popular Culture department.



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 61, Doctor Who: A CyberMaster Helmet, BBC Studios, 2022, £9,600

This first online auction contained 65 lots from across the spectrum of music, television, and film memorabilia. The exhibition preview drew over 1,000 visitors making it clear the appeal of Pop Culture for potential buyers.

The earliest pieces were early 1960s Beatles related memorabilia – while the most modern was a costume from the yet to be release Gladiator II.

One of the most eye-catching pieces was a CyberMaster helmet worn in the 2022 series of Doctor Who! (Lot 61). The CyberMaster's are villainous characters with a design reminiscent of the iconic Cybermen – instantly recognisable to Sci-Fi fans. The lot had been donated by the BBC to the auction and was one of several items sold to benefit the Film + Television Charity, who support those who working behind the scenes in the industry. The combination of a charitable cause and striking headwear led to the lot exceeding its estimate of £4,000 – 6,000 – fetching £9,600 (inc. BP).

Other lots sold on behalf of the Film + Television Charity were the (aforementioned) complete costume used in the highly anticipated Gladiator II (Lot 62). The movie is due for release in November 2024 - the costume providing a sneak preview into production quality and characters. It is rare for a complete outfit



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 62, Gladiator II: A Screen-used Hero Costume for the Rhino-Riding Gladiator 'Glyceo', Paramount Pictures, 2024, £9,600

to appear at auction prior to the film's premiere. The costume has been visible in the trailer and will feature as uniform of a gladiator 'Glyceo' who can be seen riding a rhinoceros into an arena prior to battle. This lot was an opportunity to acquire a piece from a future classic. Against the estimate of £5,000 – 8,000 it achieved a total of £9,600 (inc. BP).

Vinyl proved popular with collectors during sale – and indicated the ongoing strength of this market.

Lot 28 was an example of a collectable sought by Beatles and vinyl aficionados alike – a sealed 1st state copy of the controversial 'Yesterday And Today' LP. This version of the album has a sleeve dubbed the 'Butcher Cover'. It was one of the most shocking images of The Beatles and the era. Released by Capitol Records in Canada and the USA in 1966 the cover photograph for 'Yesterday and Today' was taken by Robert Whitaker (1939-2011). The image, depicts The Beatles in white lab coats, surrounded by decapitated dolls and butchered meat. It was created as a black humoured, surrealist breakaway from the usual images of the group and apparently inspired by Whitaker's own reflections on Beatlemania.



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 28, The Beatles: A Rare 'Yesterday And Today', First State Sealed Mono Alan Livingston Copy, 1966, £48,000

So shocking was the image to audiences it was swiftly withdrawn and recalled. To save costs, many of the 'Butcher Cover' sleeves were overlayed with a new photograph of the band, known by collectors as the 'Trunk Cover' - a rather vanilla image of The Beatles surrounding a steamer trunk.

The version of the LP available here was a rare unopened and sealed copy of the 'Butcher Cover' record. The lot had been part of the collection of the former President of Capitol Records. This piece had been intended to be returned to the factory and pasted over, with the 'Trunk Cover' image. Instead, it was taken home by the record companies President, and subsequently forgotten – only to be discovered years later, alongside thirteen other LP's (four stereo and ten mono).

The pre-sale guide of £40,000 – 60,000 reflected the scarcity of the piece, eventually selling for £48,000 (inc. BP).

Lot 36 was a rare, limited edition 7" blue vinyl copy of Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody / I'm In Love With My Car'. Only two hundred pressings of this blue vinyl were produced by EMI. They were created as gifts for the

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Queen: A Rare Blue Vinyl Pressing Of The Single 'Bohemian Rhapsody / I'm In Love With My Car', 1978. £18,000

attendees of a dinner held at Selfridges in July 1978. Despite Queen not attending the event, they were presented with framed copies - Freddie's own (numbered 2) appearing in last year's Freddie Mercury auction and selling for £69,850.

The copy for offered here, numbered 108, was presented to a typist secretary who worked at EMI's Hayes offices. Included with the lot, were a further gift from

the dinner two 'EMI Records' branded wine glasses - the lot far exceeded the pre-sale estimate of £5,000 - 7,000 eventually reaching £18,000.

Queen collectables have been a growth area over the past decade. Lot 39 was a Jean Paul Gautier designed leather jacket. The garment was worn by Freddie Mercury during his final stage singing performance, in April 1988. This jacket had been gifted by Freddie to a close friend, she had subsequently donated it to charity and the provenance stated it had benefited the Angles Aids Orphanage in 2001. Here against the estimate of £20,000 - 30,000 it sold for £72,000.



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 39, Freddie Mercury: A Jean-Paul Gautier Studded Black Leather Jacket, Stage-Worn By Freddie Mercury At The Dominion Theatre, London, 14th April 1988. £72,000

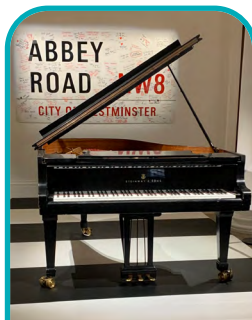
Lot 37 was a good set of four autographed promotional photographs of the band. Despite the estimate of £6,000 - 8,000 they sold for £22,800. Meanwhile, lot 34 was a varied collection 325 polaroid photographs of stars, obtained during the 1970s - 1980s. The collection not only included the members of Queen, but also The Rolling Stones, The Eurythmics, Status Quo, Bee Gees, Run D.M.C but actors and sports stars such as Muhammed Ali, Michael Caine, and Ben Kingsley. This unique archive sold for £108,000 (\*est. £20,000 - 30,000).



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 37, Queen: A Rare Set Of Four Autographed Promotional Photographs, circa 1980. £22,800

Two important musical instruments achieved the highest prices of the auction.

Lot 33 was a Steinway grand piano, manufactured in 1972 and purchased by EMI for use at their Abbey Road Studios in 1973. The piano, which was installed in Studio 3, was in constant use from 1973 to 2016. The quality of the piano appreciated by those recording on it. The Steinway Model A was used on recordings of notable artists including Pink Floyd, Radiohead, Amy Winehouse Paul McCartney, Kanye West and



A Steinway Model A Grand Piano Housed And Used In Studio 3, 1973-2016. £192,000

Lady Gaga amongst others. Pieces used at Abbey Road seldom appear at auction and garner high prices. The estimate of £150,000 - 200,000 proved accurate with the eventual total cost being £192,000.

Timing can be everything with auctions - three guitars contained within the sale had important Oasis provenance. Their sale was announced coincidentally as Oasis revealed their reformation and 2025 reunion tour.

All these instruments had previously belonged to or been used by Oasis's, legendary founder, songwriter, and guitarist Noel Gallagher. The most important of these was lot 43 an Epiphone Les Paul Standard - immediately recognisable to fans and a seminal instrument for the group. The guitar was key in the band's early history (1993/4) when Noel Gallagher owned only a small number of guitars (just two guitars and a bass being available the group).

Noel played it on stage, on television, as well as during the recording of the music video for the record breaking single 'Supersonic'. With a pre-sale estimate of £60,000 - 80,000 it achieved the second highest price of the auction at £132,000.

The other two instruments offered by Sotheby's included Lot 44 an Epiphone EA-250, previously owned by Noel Gallagher and again featured on the sleeve of the 'Supersonic' single. It was notably played during an early television performance in July 1994. Here, the cherry redburst finished guitar sold for £48,000 (est. £20,000 -

£30,000).

Lot 45 had a dual Smiths / Oasis provenance. The 1980 Gibson Flying V was acquired by The Smith's iconic guitarist and songwriter, Johnny Marr in 1989. Marr loaned it to Noel Gallagher - who subsequently used it on the 1994 recording of Oasis's debut album 'Definitely Maybe'. This guitar, a baton in British and Manchester music history sold for £36,000 (est. £20,000 - 30,000).

Overall, the sale achieved a total of just under £1 million.



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 43, Oasis: An Epiphone Les Paul Standard Electric Guitar, Owned & Used By Noel Gallagher, £132,000



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 44, Oasis: An Epiphone EA-250 Electric Guitar, Owned & Stage-Played By Noel Gallagher, £48,000



Sotheby's London, Popular Culture, August/September 2024, Lot 45, Oasis/Johnny Marr: A Gibson Flying V Electric Guitar Formerly Owned By Johnny Marr, Used By Noel Gallagher, £36,000