

One Giant Leap: Auction of Historic Vintage Space Photographs Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Project Apollo

Groundbreaking works from the collection of Victor Martin-Malburet offer a timely invitation to reflect on the evolving legacy of Project Apollo

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, October 19, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Marking the 50th anniversary of the last human voyage to the moon, Wright and LAMA are pleased to present [One Giant Leap for Mankind: Vintage Photographs](#) from the Victor Martin-Malburet Collection, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Project Apollo (1961–1972), an auction to take place in Chicago on October 28th, 2022. This stunning collection comprises more than 300 original historic photographs from Project Apollo, the NASA program responsible for placing the first humans on the surface of the moon. Meticulously researched and collected over the course of 25 years by Victor Martin-Malburet, each image represents extraordinary feats of human exploration, imagination, and collaboration, and many of those being offered have never been published.

Astronauts Turned Artists

Equipped with the most sophisticated cameras developed by Kodak, Hasselblad, and Zeiss for the unimaginably challenging conditions of space and the lunar surface, Apollo astronauts were instructed with no ambiguity about the significance of photography to their mission: “If you get great photos, they’ll live forever,” summarized former NASA chief of photography Richard Underwood, “Your key to immortality is in the quality of the photograph and nothing else.” While the astronauts’ primary goal was to record their activities, the images that they created transcend documentation. It is not just the splendor of what is portrayed but also the sheer aesthetic appeal of the images.



Courtesy of Victor Martin-Malburet Collection, Wright and LAMA

“The [Apollo] astronauts are often presented as great scientists and heroes, but rarely are they hailed as some of the most significant photographers of all time. From the unknown, they brought back a new visual vocabulary. Through them, art broke free of gravity,” offers Martin-Malburet. “The breathtaking images of the James Webb Space Telescope released earlier this year remind us that the trajectories of space exploration and image technologies remain inextricably linked. In today’s digital era, it is easy to forget that Project Apollo and its extraordinary technical achievements took place when photography was still analog, requiring light-sensitive chemistry, film, and photographic papers.” Brimming with “firsts” and punctuated with every major visual milestone of the Golden Age of space exploration – many of which became instant cultural touchstones – One Giant Leap celebrates Project Apollo’s profound impact on art, science, and the human understanding of our place in the cosmos.



The Whole Picture

For Project Apollo’s grand finale, astronauts of the last human voyage to the moon captured the fully illuminated disk of Earth, the only humans to witness this view. Known as The Blue Marble, NASA image AS17-148-22727 was taken by Harrison Schmitt or Ronald Evans of Apollo 17 on December 7th, 1972, five hours after launch and 18,000 miles from Earth. Lot 430 (\$15,000–25,000) in One Giant Leap, a large format vintage chromogenic print specially produced for presentation by NASA, is a true rarity – no human has since been far enough from Planet Earth to capture another whole-Earth image.

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Five years before The Blue Marble, NASA unmanned satellite ATS 3 transmitted the first color photograph of the full Earth from outer space. Considered one of the most important photographs ever taken, it was used for the iconic cover of the first Whole Earth Catalogue, the countercultural magazine founded by Stewart Brand and lionized by Steve Jobs. Printed in 1967, Lot 174 (\$6,000–8,000) may be considered “the first selfie of mankind.”

Earth Rising

Among the leading lots of One Giant Leap are the first images captured from space by the pioneering Mercury and Gemini astronauts. John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth, was also the first human to carry a camera into space. Lot 106 (\$5,000–7,000), taken by Glenn, depicts the Earth's horizon and space from the Friendship 7 and is the first human-taken photograph from space.

Astronaut William Anders had the honor of photographing the exhilarating sight of Earthrise as Apollo 8 circumnavigated the Moon for the first time in December of 1968. One Giant Leap features rare photographs of the first Earthrise witnessed by humans, including the iconic shot released by NASA and published on front covers after the mission, but printed here in its almost never-seen original square Hasselblad format (Lot 192, \$8,000—12,000) or large format version (Lot 206, \$12,000 —18,000).

Lot 402 (\$4,000–6,000) has been described by NASA chief of photography Richard Underwood as “one of the greatest photos ever to come out of the space program.” The striking image captures for the first time a human, Apollo 17 Harrison Schmitt, and the distant Earth in a single frame, together with the American flag.

A New World of Firsts, Lasts, Rarities ...and #Selfies

Lot 249 (\$10,000–15,000) is the first human-taken photograph on the surface of another world, by Neil Armstrong. Signed by the Apollo 17 crew to NASA chief of photography Richard Underwood, Underwood himself described this image as “one of the most astounding photographs ever recorded in all of human history.”

Lot 289 (\$30,000–50,000) is one of a handful of known vintage large format prints of the only photograph of Neil Armstrong on the Moon, as NASA believed at the time that no photograph at all existed of the first man on the Moon. The photo was not published for 20 years until researchers recognized Armstrong near the LM Eagle in this frame of a panoramic sequence by Buzz Aldrin.

Lot 159 (\$8,000–12,000), taken by Buzz Aldrin in 1966, is the first selfie in outer space. Lot 195 (\$1,500—2,500) is the first selfie in lunar orbit. Lot 306 (\$2,500–4,000) may be considered the first moon selfie and shows Pete Conrad fully reflected in the visor of fellow astronaut Alan Bean.



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