

Guitar Kurt Cobain sensationally smashed at 1991 pre-fame gig leads Hake's Nov. 19-20 pop memorabilia auction

Rock artifact of immeasurable importance was retrieved by local musician at Jan. 18, 1991 Nirvana concert and gifted to friend who safeguarded it for 33 years

YORK, PA, UNITED STATES, November 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hake's will crank up the volume to 11 on November 20 as they auction the single most important rock music artifact to pass through their hands in 57 years as pop culture specialists. After residing in a private collection since 1991, the Japanese-made [guitar](#) that a barely-known Kurt Cobain trashed onstage at a small gig in Washington will re-emerge on Day 2 of a 2-day event with a story that deserves its own chapter in the history of grunge.

It all began on January 18, 1991, in Olympia, Washington, about an hour away from the Pacific Northwest's music capital, Seattle. On a makeshift stage at The Evergreen State College Library, fewer than 500 local scenesters coughed up \$4 each to attend a one-off anti-Gulf War benefit concert headlined by an up-and-coming local band, Nirvana. Few in attendance could have imagined how famous or influential the band would become later that year with the release of their career-changing single Smells Like Teen Spirit, from the LP Nevermind. The band's set that night in Olympia culminated with Cobain's violent destruction of a red-and-white Memphis Stratocaster-replica guitar, which was discarded, then recovered from the ensuing melee by Chris Brady, bassist in the band Pond. Later, Brady gifted the battered instrument to his good friend Janel Jarosz, owner of The Ooze, a small Portland, Oregon, record shop. It would go on to serve as the centerpiece of a Nirvana display that won a national MTV-sponsored contest.



Scott Mussell, Director of Americana at Hake's Auctions, with the guitar Kurt Cobain destroyed onstage at a Jan. 18, 1991 gig in Olympia, Washington. Hake's Auctions image

Jarosz, a huge Nirvana fan who also played in a band called Trailer Queen, cherished the guitar and kept it safe, even securing it to her record shop's ceiling after two break-ins. Now, after 33 years of ownership, she has entrusted Hake's in York, Pennsylvania, to auction the historical music treasure. Jarosz discusses its back story alongside Brady in an entertaining Hake's-produced video that is a must-see for grunge fans. The guitar has an open-ended auction estimate, with a required starting bid of \$20,000.

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The Kurt Cobain guitar is the single most important rock music artifact to pass through our hands in 57 years as American pop culture specialists.”

*Alex Winter, President of
Hake's Auctions*

Another tremendous Nirvana memento offered in the November 19-20 auction is the original, one-of-a-kind hand-cut/applied mechanical master art for the [poster](#) publicizing the band's April 17, 1991 concert at the OK Hotel in Seattle. It was on that occasion that Nirvana live-debuted the grunge anthem Smells Like Teen Spirit. The art is signed and inscribed in pencil on verso by the late Seattle artist Mark Bendix with the notation “Original Paste

Up Master MB.” Accompanied by a bill of sale dated and signed by both Bendix and the auction consignor – who acquired it directly from the artist – it is expected to make \$10,000-\$20,000.

Other grunge-related items in the sale include a 1991 Nirvana tour crew shirt (one of fewer than 20 made), Cobain's high school yearbook, and many signed records. Cobain's signature appears on both 7-inch and 12-inch singles; as well as on a boxed set additionally signed by Dave Grohl and Courtney Love. The auction's impressive selection of concert posters covers many music genres, including grunge, early blues, and psychedelic rock.

The auction also includes many Star Wars rarities. Topping the list is a Kenner Star Wars (1979) [Boba Fett](#) rocket-firing L-slot prototype action figure, 3.75 inches tall, unpainted and encapsulated; and AFA-graded 85 NM+. The L-slot rocket-firing mechanism – significant because its spring raised safety concerns that would thwart the proposed production run – is clearly visible from the back of the case. A top prize in the world of Star Wars collectibles, this high-grade prototype comes with a notarized CIB COA and is estimated at \$100,000-\$200,000.

A Kenner Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (1980) Princess Leia Organa prototype action figure/doll dressed in a Bespin Gown is from the unproduced 12-inch series. The figure has a 1978 stock Princess Leia body with a different, hand-painted head and hair hand-rooted in a pattern that is different to that of other 1978 Star Wars dolls. Estoteric and important, this rarely-seen prototype is one of only a handful that were produced. With its CIB LOA, it will open for bidding at \$25,000.

An important Silver Age comic book, The Amazing Spider-Man #1, was issued by Marvel Comics in March 1963 and has been CGC-graded 7.5 VF. The book features first appearances of J. Jonah Jameson and The Chameleon, retells the origin story of Spider-Man, and is notable for being the

first Fantastic Four crossover. A classic that combines a Stan Lee story with Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko's cover art, and interior art by Ditko, this comic is entered with a pre-sale estimate of \$35,000-\$50,000.

The political section features one of the most sought-after of all campaign buttons and also introduces the Rex Stark political china collection, the finest of its type ever assembled. There would be no argument amongst collectors that an extraordinarily rare "Cox Roosevelt Club" Presidential campaign button Hake #1 is comparable to a copy of Action Comics #1 or a Honus Wagner T206 baseball card. Its image depicts 1920 election running mates James M Cox and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and like all Cox/Roosevelt jugate buttons, it is considered a salesman's sample. Sized 1 inch in diameter, this button was the crown jewel of the John Gearhart collection and now comes to auction with a \$50,000-\$75,000 estimate.

The World Series may be over, but bidders are expected to step up to the plate when a 1917 Collins-McCarthy Candy Co. E135 #82 Shoeless Joe Jackson baseball card crosses the auction block. From a 200-card series, this well-preserved example is one of only 11 known cards of its type in any condition. Estimate: \$10,000-\$20,000

Hake's Nov. 19-20, 2024 online-only pop memorabilia auction is now open for bidding. For a free printed catalog or additional information on any item in the sale, call +1 866-404-9800 (toll-free) or +1 717-434-1600; or email hakes@hakes.com. View the fully illustrated catalog online and sign up to bid at <https://hakes.com/>.

Alex Winter

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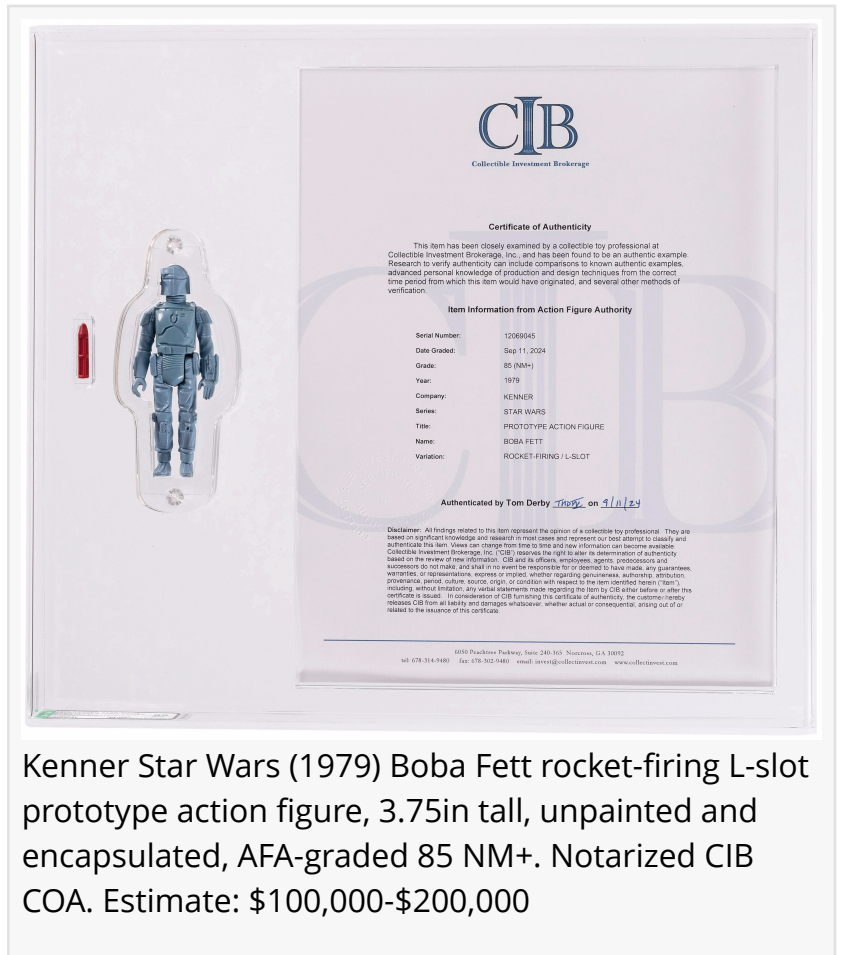
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Stage-used Memphis Stratocaster-replica guitar Kurt Cobain smashed onstage at Nirvana's Jan. 18, 1991 gig at The Evergreen State College Library in Olympia, Washington. Open estimate with starting bid of \$20,000



Kenner Star Wars (1979) Boba Fett rocket-firing L-slot prototype action figure, 3.75in tall, unpainted and encapsulated, AFA-graded 85 NM+. Notarized CIB COA. Estimate: \$100,000-\$200,000

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