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The Valley Press

## A Piece of the Dream

By: Lavender Vroman Showcase Editor



The pink satin gown doesn't look like much, draped limply over a headless mannequin.

But when the dress clung to Marilyn Monroe's every curve as she belted out "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend," an unforgettable cinematic image was born.

The frock is the star item in Profiles in History's massive Hollywood Auction, which will run from Thursday, June 10, to Saturday, June 12, with bidding on more than 1,500 items of film, television and music memorabilia, beginning at noon each day.

Worn by Monroe when she played the gold-digging Lorelei Lee in the 1953 film "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," the strapless taffeta gown is expected to sell for \$150,000 to \$250,000.

Other items featured in the auction include Margaret Hamilton's Wicked Witch of the West hat from the "The Wizard of Oz" (expected to fetch \$100,000 to \$150,000); a collection of Elvis Presley's clothing, jewelry and personal effects; and stop-motion puppets from Tim Burton's "A Nightmare Before Christmas."

Also slated to go on the block: Darth Vader's lightsaber from "Return of the Jedi," Johnny Depp's scissorhand gloves from "Edward Scissorhands," Julie Andrews' "Mary Poppins" carpet bag, an original "I Dream of Jeannie" prop bottle, Michael Jackson's handwritten lyrics to "Beat It," a biplane miniature from 1933's "King Kong" and more than 300 lots of Star Trek goodies, including William Shatner's Admiral Kirk costume.

While many items will go for thousands of dollars, collectors on a tighter budget will find memorabilia for as low as \$200 to \$300, according to Profiles in History general manager Lorna Hart.

"Once in a while, we're rooting for the little guy," she said.

Bids may be placed in person, via mail, phone and fax or live on the Internet at [www.profilesinhistory.com](http://www.profilesinhistory.com) or [www.liveauctioneers.com](http://www.liveauctioneers.com). For more details, call (310) 859-7701 or see the auction company's website.

Collectors may view items from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays through Wednesday, June 9, by appointment only.

Profiles in History presents three major auctions a year, along with specialty events, like the company's recent Hollywood glamor photography auction and an auction of props from the television series "Lost," scheduled for sometime this summer.

"You always have to be looking for new things," Hart said. "We never know what's going to walk into the door tomorrow."

Auctioned items are on consignment with the company. They come from fans, serious collectors and people who work in the entertainment industry, including prop makers, special effects technicians, directors and producers.

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Many vintage Hollywood objects come from retired veterans of the industry who have decided it's time to pass on their collections, Hart said.

In this way, Profiles plays a key role in the preservation of entertainment history, according to president and chief executive officer Joseph M. Maddalena.

"Most of it is so rare," he said. "These things weren't meant to survive the production. When I started this stuff, people were throwing it away. It was junk. It would have been lost. There is no Hollywood museum. Until then, somebody needed to take care of this stuff."

Profiles in History also specializes in historical autographs, letters, documents, signed photographs and manuscripts. Maddalena founded the company in 1985, although his passion for collectibles goes back to his childhood.

Growing up in Rhode Island, the son of antique dealers, he began amassing baseball cards to pass the time at the weekly antique shows his family visited. While attending Pepperdine University in the '80s, he turned his hobby of buying and selling historical documents into a livelihood.

At the Calabasas headquarters of Profiles in History on May 25, staffers were busy organizing auction items, which were strewn about the office, giving it the feel of an eccentric millionaire's playroom.

A one-sheet poster for "The Maltese Falcon" rested near a pair of toothy monster heads from "Alien."

The gown worn by Deborah Kerr while dancing with Yul Brynner in 1956's "The King and I" stood amidst a lineup of movie costumes.

Sequined jumpsuits, gladiator armor and Star Trek uniforms mingled with a pair of plain red rehearsal shoes worn by Judy Garland for "The Wizard of Oz," an assortment of Romulan weapons and a writing desk from the movie "Blade Runner."

In another room, nestled in locked glass cases, was a multitude of show-biz treasure: Hellboy's gun; Bruce Lee's Kato hat from "The Green Hornet"; a blood-drenched "Alien" chestbuster; a tiger claw pendant with the initials "EP," for Elvis Presley; Forks High School ID badges belonging to Edward and Jacob; a prop Wonka Bar; and the switchblade brandished by James Dean in "Rebel Without a Cause."

The value of a collectible is determined, Maddalena said, by whatever amount someone is willing to pay for it. Most of the people who bid in the company's auctions are private collectors.

While historical artifacts may be "more important" and appeal to a more educated buyer, Maddalena said entertainment memorabilia is unique in its "worldwide appeal."

Movies, television shows and rock 'n' roll are "like a currency. They're known everywhere in the world."

Horror and science-fiction franchises, like Star Wars and Star Trek, are especially popular with collectors because "they have the coolest gadgets," Maddalena said.

"People want cool things. It's all nostalgic. People buy things that make them happy."

While owning a shotgun fired by Steve McQueen in "The Magnificent Seven" or a bow and chicken arrow from "Hot Shots! Part Deux" might not sound as impressive as possessing a rare book or a piece of fine art, the motivation of the collectors is the same, Maddalena said.

"(It's) the same appeal to owning a Van Gogh. It's pride of ownership."

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