

Unique camera from NASA's moon missions sold at auction

March 23 2014



A Hasselblad 500EL "Data Camera HEDC Nasa" Jim Irwin Lunar Module Pilot camera, dated from 1968, used on the moon during Apollo lunar programs is sold at an auction for 550,000 euros (\$760,000) at the Westlicht Gallery in Vienna on March 21, 2014

The only camera to return from NASA's moon missions in 1969-1972 was sold at an auction in Vienna Saturday for 550,000 euros (\$760,000), far outdoing its estimated price.

The boxy silver-coloured camera, which was sold to a telephone bidder, was initially valued at 150,000-200,000 euros.

The Hasselblad model was one of 14 cameras sent to the [moon](#) as part of NASA's Apollo 11-17 missions but was the only one to be brought back.

As a rule, the cameras—which weighed several kilogrammes (pounds) and could be attached to the front of a space suit—were abandoned to allow the astronauts to bring back moon rock, weight being a prime concern on the missions.

"It has [moon dust](#) on it... I don't think any other camera has that," Peter Coeln, owner of the Westlicht gallery which organised the auction, said of the rare piece.

The camera, which was being sold by a private collector, was used by astronaut Jim Irwin to take 299 pictures during the Apollo 15 mission in July-August 1971.

A small plate inside is engraved with the number 38, the same number that appears on Irwin's NASA snapshots.

Close to 600 objects were on sale on Saturday. The Westlicht gallery is the world's largest [auction](#) house for cameras and has overseen the sale of some of the most expensive photographic equipment in history, including a 1923 Leica [camera](#) prototype that sold for 2.16 million euros, a world record.

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