

by Laura Woolley

If you are thinking about starting a collection of Entertainment Memorabilia, there are some important guidelines to keep in mind. Perhaps the most important thing to remember whether you are collecting for investment or for personal enjoyment is to always buy things you genuinely enjoy. While there are certain trends in the various collecting markets, it is difficult to consider any of them a sure thing for investment purposes. Although the memorabilia markets has shown great promise for long term investors, there are no guarantees. Collecting pieces you truly find appealing is the best defense against a piece not appreciating as much or as quickly as you might have anticipated. If the value of a piece does meet expectations, you are not left owning something that never appealed to you in the first place.

Another general principle in collecting is to buy the best pieces within your price range. Although it is tempting to acquire as many things as possible in a short span of time to get your collection started, take your time and buy perhaps one really great piece a year rather than a great number of mediocre pieces. Quality vs. quantity should be your mantra. In ten years time your collection will command much more respect if it contains a few really great pieces rather than several average pieces.

When shopping, the most important thing to remember is provenance. Doing due diligence on the source of the material and the story surrounding it are the most important things you can do to safeguard yourself against fraud. Forbes Collector magazine reported in 2004 that experts estimate 75 to 90% of autographs sold on EBay are fakes. Know your source and buy from reputable dealers and auction houses. If you're not sure about someone ask around and make some phone calls. Any reputable source will understand if you are seeking a second opinion. If the story surrounding an item sounds too good to be true it usually is.

Many of the pieces being sold on the internet come with Letters of Authenticity or Certificates of Authenticity. While this sounds reassuring, be sure to research who they are from and what they say. Many pieces simply come with a letter or certificate from the person selling the material who may have no direct connection to the celebrity it belonged to. A letter from the celebrity or someone very closely associated with them is best.

A photograph of the celebrity holding, wearing, signing or using the piece is the best form of

authenticity, just be sure the quality of the photo allows you to positively identify the piece. Strong provenance means that the person selling the piece should be able to tell you the history of the piece from the time it left the possession of the celebrity to the moment it is being sold. Some are very simple..."Marilyn Monroe gave this piece to my mother as a gift and now I am selling it" and some are very complex, "John Lennon gave the guitar to his friend who used it for years and then put it on display in a restaurant until it was privately sold and changed hands five times between various dealers and collectors and it is now on private loan at the Hall of Fame." Clearly items that come directly from an artist's estate have the most direct provenance a collector could hope for.

Charity auctions are another reliable source for collectors. The pieces typically come directly from the celebrity, and have unquestionable provenance. You can often find great pieces at charity auctions that may be selling for less than in a traditional auction meanwhile, supporting a good cause. In addition, charity auction purchases are generally tax deductible.

I hope you find these general guidelines useful as you begin to build a collection of your own. Please read more specific tips and information on each of the individual collecting categories of Hollywood, Rock & Roll, Movie Posters and Fashion in our online guides.

Source: <http://www.juliensauctions.com/collectors-guide/tips-on-collecting.html>