



Fashion Scoops

Expensive Bag

After 10 minutes of frenzied bidding in Paris on Thursday, Jane Birkin's original Hermès Birkin sold for \$10.1 million at Sotheby's in Paris, shattering the previous record by nearly 20 times.

Sotheby's said the sale "establishes new benchmarks for the most valuable fashion item sold at auction in Europe, and the most valuable luxury item ever sold at Sotheby's Paris."

The opening bid was 1 million euros, prompting gasps in the room and sparking an "electrifying" bidding battle between nine collectors, according to Sotheby's, which fielded

bids from within the room, online and over the phone.

"In the end, the handbag that changed fashion history was met with applause as it sold to a private collector from Japan, bidding via telephone through Maiko Ichikawa, country head of Sotheby's Japan."

Billed as "one of the most iconic fashion items ever created," the all-black leather Birkin prototype commissioned in 1984 spawned one of the world's most recognizable and coveted handbag styles, and turned Birkin, a British actress and singer, from a style icon into a household name.

In the run-up to Thursday's sale, thousands of people attended exhibitions of the handbag in Paris and Hong Kong, and 270 participants from 38 countries registered for Thursday's "Fashion Icons" auction, with the Birkin bag the star lot.

Morgane Halimi, Sotheby's global head of handbags and fashion, said the record-breaking sale price "is a startling demonstration of the power of a legend and its capacity to ignite the passion and desire of collectors seeking exceptional items with unique provenance."

She also lauded "the

enduring spirit and appeal of its muse, Jane Birkin."

Sotheby's noted that the previous auction record for a handbag was a White Himalaya Niloticus Crocodile Diamond Retourne Kelly 28, which fetched \$513,040 in 2021, while the current auction record for any fashion item is a pair of ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz," which sold for \$32.5 million last year.

— MILES SOCHA





Jane Birkin's original
Hermès Birkin.

