

Soviet Legend Vysotsky's Death Mask Cast to Be Sold at Auction

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The bronze cast of Vladimir Vysotsky's death mask. [hermitagefineart.com](https://www.hermitagefineart.com)

A bronze cast of a death mask of Soviet singer-songwriter and actor Vladimir Vysotsky [will go up for auction](#) in Monaco next week, according to the international auction house Hermitage Fine Art.

The piece is part of a sale featuring more than 200 works of Russian and Eastern European art dating to the 19th century. The auction will be held in person and online next Tuesday.

The bronze cast comes from the estate of Vysotsky's widow, the French actress Marina Vlady. It is valued between 100,000 and 120,000 euros (\$115,700–\$138,800).

The original plaster mask was created by Soviet sculptor Yury Vasilyev under Vlady's supervision on the day of Vysotsky's death, July 25, 1980. Two other bronze casts are known to have been made from the original plaster mask.

In her 2005 memoir, Vlady recalled inviting "a sculptor friend" to preserve her husband's

likeness.

“Some find this tradition morbid, while others are shocked to see such an object on the wall,” she wrote, referring to Vysotsky’s own possession of poet Alexander Pushkin’s death mask.

Vysotsky, who died at 42 after struggling with alcoholism, achieved cult status in the Soviet Union for his gritty songs about freedom and daily life and for his acclaimed performances on stage and screen. His gravelly voice and incisive lyrics continue to resonate in Russia, decades after his death.

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