Comic Book Sales Leap Despite Recession Fears

Incredible Hulk #181 Sells for Record Price of $146,000 in ComicLink Auction


CGC UNIVERSAL GRADE
9.8
Incredible Hulk #181
Marvel Comics, 11/74
WHITE Pages
Suscha News
Len Wein story
Herb Trimpe and Jack Abel art
Herb Trimpe cover
1027516001
1st full appearance of Wolverine.
Wendigo appearance.
CGC
INCREDIBLE HULK
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
181
NOV
02456
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
HE'S HERE! THE WORLD'S FIRST AND GREATEST CANADIAN SUPER-HERO!
AND NOW... the WOLVERINE!
AND THE SURVIVOR OF THEIR EPIC BATTLE MUST FACE-- the WENDIGO!

Portland, Maine Nov 9, 2022 (Issuewire.com) - Portland, Maine Nov. 9, 2022–Compared to their 52-week highs, the S&P 500, Nasdaq, and Bitcoin are all down precipitously, currently sitting at 80%, 66%, and 28% of those highs, respectively. At least one investment category is showing that it is able to buck the trend. Vintage, investment-quality comic books featuring the beloved heroes that have spawned the Marvel Cinematic Universe and dominate the entertainment industry are still hitting all-time record highs in the face of recession fears. Reflective of this is the $146,000 ComicLink.com sale on October 26th of *Incredible Hulk* #181 (published in 1974), which is an all-time record high in the CGC grade of 9.8 for the comic book housing the first full appearance and first cover appearance of Wolverine. CGC has been the leading certification company in the comic book hobby since the firm began grading and encapsulating comic books 22 years ago. The only higher sale for an example of Hulk #181 occurred in 2011, also on ComicLink, when the single highest CGC 9.9 example sold for $150,000. 9.9 grades are incredibly rare which is why there is only one in that condition. By comparison, there are 148 CGC 9.8s in existence according to the CGC census, which contains data including the number of comic books graded for any particular issue, as well as the quantity in each condition. It is especially impressive to see the $146,000 result for this 9.8 when you consider that *Incredible Hulk* #181 is not very rare at that grade level.

“This sale is really a testament to the strength over the last decade of the certified comic book market,” said Josh Nathanson, Founder and Managing Director at ComicLink. “The number of strong buyers has skyrocketed along with their purchasing power. As a result, we’ve seen demand eclipsing supply even as that supply has increased with more comic books certified. That fuels higher prices, setting the stage for the record-setting result achieved by our consignor for this *Incredible Hulk* #181 in the most recent ComicLink auction.”

Most comics that have sold for six figures or more were published from the late 1930s through the early 1960s, such as comic books introducing Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, and the Hulk. During this period comic books were far from being considered collectible. Once read, they were typically disposed of like magazines and newspapers are today, so the survivors, particularly in nice shape, became true rarities. However, in the mid-1960s newspaper stories started reporting that a collectors market was forming, with people forking over upwards of $1,000 for early examples. Comic books were subsequently saved in greater numbers each year and by the mid-1970s, they were a known collectible and thousands of copies of each new superhero release were saved by collectors, some of who still are active in the hobby today, almost 50 years later.

For the past 50 years, high-value vintage comic books have proven to be recession proof and they tend to grow in demand and value in both good economic times and bad. According to Nathanson, "In good times, collectors have more disposable income and are looking to splurge on some of the prize books they couldn't afford as a kid. In bad times, collectors, many of whom still have disposable income but few places to put it, often seek alternative investments, and comic books have done very well. Not only do certain comic books continue to grow in value during such times, but it's also a lot of fun to own the first appearance of characters such as Spider-Man, Iron Man, and yes, Wolverine. There is also something gratifying about holding a tangible and attractive asset in one’s hands that goes beyond the thrill of any typical monetary speculation. They can now be considered a long-term asset class, historically very stable in value, not as prone to the tumultuous swings that we see in the stock market, crypto, and even more recently, with speculative NFTs collectibles that only exist in the virtual world and can lose all of their value at any given time."

ComicLink started in 1996 as the first online comic book consignment firm. It has grown into one of the largest Auction services focused on vintage comic books and original comic art. The firm matches sellers looking to get top dollar for their quality materials to the world's most loyal and aggressive buyers looking to build their collections. Visit ComicLink.com for more information.

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