Cel Pricing

How much should I pay? And why?

This topic is very personal and there is no "right" answer. The value of an animation piece is based on many factors. Below is a list of *some* of the things that can impact prices and should be kept in mind when hunting for your next purchase.

- Series Popularity - Pricing can change depending upon the popularity of the series at the time of the sale. For example a few years ago as early as 3 Card Captor Sakura was selling at bargain basement prices. Now cels are commanding premium prices on the market due to the release of the new series and it's popularity in China.
- Scarcity of the Artwork - For years the only way to get Evangelion was to purchase it from people who had smuggled it out of the studio. Until one day the studio dumped the entirety of their Evangelion vault on the market, so before this happened artwork was only available in the $1000s, after the dump happened prices went down for a bit, and then went back up once the market dried up.
- Quality of the Cel - Is the cel of a stick figure, or is it a beautiful 3/4 face short with shimmering eyes. While Cel quality is always personal thing, the look of it can of course drive up the price.
- Character - As silly as it sounds Character Tax is definitely a thing certain characters will drive up the price of a character, heck even certain versions of a character, a good example of this is the difference between Vegeta and Majin Vegeta, Vegeta on a normal day at worst is usually around $200 (this can change of course based upon other factors as well of course), Majin Vegeta usually will come to double that and sometimes even more than that.
- Scene/Recognizability - The more recognizable a scene the cel is from the higher a price it will command. This applies to multiple types of scenes including OP/End and even Eyecatches, how recognizable is the scene to even a casual fan? This definitely drives up the price.
- Condition of the Cel - How bad is the line fading (is it comparable to other cels of the era)? Is there any buckling or bubbling in the acetate? Is it stuck to the sketch? Is there paint loss? Are the matching background and sketch work behind the image included with it? (This one can hugely drive up price) If it is in pristine condition, this will affect the overall price of the cel as well.

All of these things can affect pricing and it is ultimately up to you how much you are willing to spend on a particular piece. On top of the above factors you should always research the more recent sale prices for a series to give you an idea of what a particular market is like. Go to auction sites and check sold auctions in your series, if the cel is well above these recent sales ask yourself what you are willing to pay.

Another thing to keep in mind is that you should remember that cels are generally a sunk cost there is no money in them if you are looking to get paid in the end this is not the hobby for you. When people are getting out very rarely do they make any money on their previous treasures. Keep that in mind when you are budgeting for this at times fun, at times rewarding, at times frustrating hobby!

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