



## James Brown's Stage-Worn Boots

**Date**  
c. 1970s

**Primary Maker**  
James Brown

**Medium**  
Leather; Suede

### Description

A pair of custom-made, Cuban heel boots, each with the appliqued initials "JB," owned and worn on stage during the 1970s by the Godfather of Soul, James Brown. The handmade patent leather boots, lined in leather and suede, each have Brown's initials sewn onto the outside, below the buckle, with a zippered closure on the inside. The soles exhibit significant wear, consistent with Brown's acrobatic footwork. James Brown (1933-2006) was an American singer, dancer, and musician known for his energetic stage performances and gospel-tinged vocals. Brown was credited with founding the funk genre of music, combining his brand of soul, gospel, and rhythm and blues (R&B) into a groove-based, percussive sound. Brown began singing at a young age, appearing in talent shows around his hometown of Augusta, Georgia. In 1954, Brown joined Bobby Byrd's R&B band The Famous Flames, where his gospel vocal style fit with the band's soul-influenced sound. By 1957, Brown had become the leader of the group and its name was changed to James Brown and His Famous Flames. They had several hits in the 1950s including "Please, Please, Please" (which later became part of his Cape Routine), "Bewildered," and "Think." In the 1960s, Brown and the group's sound and stage-presence evolved - moving more in the direction of what became "funk." They recorded Live at the Apollo in October 1962, which sold over a million copies and cemented Brown's star status. By the end of the decade, the funk sound was born and was present on songs like "Ain't It Funky," "Bring It Up," and "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose." By the 1970s, Brown's sound had fully formed into funk and despite lineup changes to his band, he continued to produce chart-topping songs. His influence waned by the 1980s, but Brown still maintained a heavy touring schedule, speaking to one of many of his nicknames - "the Hardest Working Man in Show Business." Brown's impact on the music industry was profound. He was part of the inaugural 1986 class of inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 1992, Brown received a Lifetime Achievement Award at that years Grammy Awards. In 2003, he was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors, an award celebrating those in the performing arts.

### Dimensions

Display (both boots): 10 x 10 x 11 in. (25.4 x 25.4 x 27.9 cm)