



## French Court Allows Auction of Sacred Hopi Artifacts to Proceed

A controversial auction of sacred Hopi artifacts went forward on April 12, 2013, after a Paris municipal court judge ruled that a Paris auction house could hold an action of tribal masks considered sacred by the Hopi and other tribes located in the southwestern United States. The Hopi tribe, its supporters, and the United States ambassador to France sought to intervene and delay or cancel the auction. Hours before the auction was scheduled, however, a Paris court ruled against the Hopi Tribe, rejecting the argument that the artifacts embody living spirits, the sale of which is prohibited under French law. Despite the presence of protesters inside and outside of the auction house urging patrons not to take part in the bidding, the Hopi artifacts brought in a total of \$1.2 million in sales, with 65 of the 70 items listed sold. A headdress known as the Crow Mother generated the highest bid, selling for \$210,000.

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A visitor looks at antique tribal masks revered as sacred ritual artifacts by a Native American tribe in Arizona which are displayed at an auction house in Paris April 11, 2013. Credit: [Reuters](#)/John Schults