



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty ◦ Preserving Culture

Educating Youth ◦ Building Capacity

SINCE 1922

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EVE AUCTION HOUSE MUST END SALES OF SENSITIVE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE & ADHERE TO CALLS FOR REPATRIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 4, 2019, 11:00 a.m. E.S.T. – The Association on American Indian Affairs demands France’s EVE Auction House halt its continued sales of highly sensitive Native American cultural heritage items and act on recent calls for repatriation. The sale of sensitive Native American cultural heritage is appalling and continues to violate the human rights of indigenous peoples.

On Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. local Paris time, EVE Auction House sale *Bijoux – Orfevrerie – Amerindien Tribal – Erotica* is scheduled to sell over fifty items of Native American cultural heritage from over twenty Tribal Nations from the United States and Canada, including highly sensitive items that are held by a Tribal Nation and cannot be removed from the Nation by any individual. These types of sensitive items have likely been stolen or taken under duress or through violence and without free, prior and informed consent of the Tribe.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office’s August 2018 report, nearly 1,400 items affiliated with U.S. Tribal Nations were placed for sale in France from 2012 to 2017; half of these items were sold for nearly \$7 million. Previously, the auction house’s 2016 attempted sale of the Acoma Shield was met with international uproar as the sacred ceremonial item was found to be misappropriated from the Pueblo of Acoma.

Auction houses, consignors and dealers have professional and ethical responsibilities to deal honestly with the public and validate the ownership of any item for sale, and properly verify the authenticity and legitimacy of an item of Native American cultural heritage. The only method to obtain an item’s authenticity and legitimacy is to contact the Tribe or Tribal Nations affiliated with a particular item, as only a Tribal Nation has the expertise to verify the status of these items. Without proper investigation into items of Native American cultural heritage through Tribal consultation, EVE (and other auction houses) may be in conflict with U.S., Tribal, and international mechanisms, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms indigenous peoples’ right to the use and control ceremonial objects and that the state shall provide redress to indigenous people for cultural property taken without their free, prior, and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions, and customs. France acknowledges these human rights, and other countries like Germany and the Netherlands have been developing nation-wide processes for repatriation.

In November 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron released the report “The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics” calling for the restitution of African cultural heritage items “taken by force or presumed to be acquired through inequitable conditions” during the French colonial period in Africa. Native American cultural heritage has also been taken away to private collectors and institutions in France during the U.S. colonial period, and trafficking to France continues to this day. France is responsible to correct the illegitimate possession and market of Native American cultural heritage by entities in France.

Please help the Association on American Indian Affairs to bring our cultures home! First, we call on buyers interested in Native American culture to invest in Native American contemporary artists and not antiquities and artifacts. Second, let us call on the U.S. State Department to work with the French government to further its restitution efforts stated in its November 2018 report to include Native American cultural heritage and to stop selling Native American cultural heritage unless consultation with Tribal Nations can verify whether an item should be sold. The Association can work with you or your organization if you wish to return an item to an affiliated Tribal Nation. You may be eligible for a U.S. tax exemption for returning important cultural heritage.

The Association on American Indian Affairs is a 501(c)(3) organization and the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country protecting sovereignty, preserving culture, educating youth and building capacity. The Association was formed in 1922 to change the destructive path of federal policy from assimilation, termination and allotment, to sovereignty, self-determination and self-sufficiency. Throughout its 96-year history, the Association has provided national advocacy on watershed issues that support sovereignty and culture, while working at a grassroots level with Tribes to support the implementation of programs that affect real lives on the ground.