

## ABSTRACTS SELECTED

### ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS?

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#### *Duryodhana, a new era of moral stand?*

A thousand-year-old temple, called Prasat Chen in Northern Cambodia, featured two narrative groupings of sculptures illustrating tales from Hindu epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana). This temple was heavily looted. The groupings had about a dozen statues in all, and six of them have been traced to the United States. All started when the Cambodian authorities advised by UNESCO and EFEO, stopped in March 2011 the sale of a major sculpture, called Duryodhana, a 10th-century sculpture, at Sotheby's New York as the pedestal of the statue was found at the Prasat Chen in Koh Ker site. Following Cambodia's complaint, the Duryodhana was withdrawn from auction immediately and was later the subject of a federal court case in New York on Cambodia's behalf. Sotheby's officials said the sculpture was acquired legally by its owner. More archaeological excavations were carried out by the Cambodian Authorities and EFEO in August 2012 at the Prasat Chen temple in the Koh Ker site during which 7 other pedestals appeared.

In June 2013, the Metropolitan Museum took the decision to reconstitute to Cambodia two Pandava statues that were donated to the Museum's collection some decades ago. On this occasion, the Director General of UNESCO and the Cambodian authorities made an appeal to other museums to return the objects they possess belonging to the Koh Ker temple complex following the Metropolitan's ethical gesture, and encourage museums, actors from the art market and art collectors to adopt the same responsible and ethical behavior. Sotheby's said it does not believe the Met's decision will affect its case. However, the return created pressure on the other three museums to review the provenance of their statues.

- Is moral pressure more efficient than legal action?
- What is the role of the UNESCO 1970 Convention in this context?

Unidroit Convention? Bilateral agreement between the USA and Cambodia?

- What was the impact of US' assistance to Cambodia in terms of diplomatic relations?

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