

ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU ❖ SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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HOPI KACHINA DOLL NOVEMBER ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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November's "Artifact of the Month" at Sheldon Jackson Museum is a [Kachina doll](#) from the southwest United State's Hopi people.

Kachina spirits are considered forces that influence the lives of the Hopi. The Hopi believe the spirits come at appointed times each year to help them with their earthly problems. During these times, male tribe members impersonate the spirits during many kinds of ceremonies. The Kachina dolls are miniatures of these impersonated spirits. Children are given the dolls to teach them the identities and symbolism of the various spirits.

A former museum volunteer purchased this Kachina doll in Mesa, Arizona in 1974. The figure represents the "mongwa," or great horned owl, a warrior figure best known for keeping watch on clowns during Hopi ceremonials. As the clowns perform their rowdy antics, other warrior Kachinas join the owl. They leap upon the clowns, spray them with water and beat them with yucca whips to show their disapproval of the clowns' behavior. The owl also symbolizes the hunter of small game.

Although the Sheldon Jackson Museum now gathers artifacts only from Alaska Native cultures, a few Native American objects from other areas were added to the collection up until the 1970s. Each November the museum exhibits one of these pieces to recognize the diverse Native cultures of North American during National Native American Heritage Awareness Month.

Museum patrons may view the Kachina doll Nov. 1-30 at the Sheldon Jackson Museum, 104 College Drive, or on the museum's web site at <http://www.museums.state.ak.us>.

Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and younger are free; annual passes and Friends of the Sheldon Jackson Museum memberships are also available.

Assistance is available for visitors with special needs. Please contact Visitor Services at 747-8981 before the visit.

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