

Getting Smart About Moving Your Art

A basic guide for professional art
packing, shipping, and handling

CHUBB®

Proper packing and shipping is the best way to ensure the safety of valuable artwork. Specialists in fine art packing and transporting will take care of the art when it is most vulnerable.

Introduction

Following is a practical overview of the latest art packing and shipping techniques and technologies. The guide is by no means all encompassing, but it should help the collector ask the appropriate questions of his or her art handler. In addition, it provides a better understanding of the minimum requirements for a particular job.

This guide includes the following:

- General Recommendations
- Packing
- Crating
- Transporting and Receiving
- Tips For Collectors

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Gloves like these should be worn by anyone handling your fine art.

General Recommendations

- Shippers should measure the pieces ahead of time.
- If packing on-site, handlers and loaders should remove jewelry, watches, tool belts and any other unnecessary items that might accidentally damage art. Handlers should always wear clean gloves.
- Create an inventory list of the items being shipped for yourself, the shipper and the receiver.
- See to it that packages are sealed properly and securely.
- Do not advertise the contents on exterior labels (e.g., “ArtWork”).
- Avoid local household packers; they are not experienced in the protection of fine art.
- Always clearly mark the packaging to indicate the face of the work and its proper orientation. Write “FACE” and “TOP” using an “up” arrow.
- Always transport hinged works in the orientation in which they are displayed. This is the best rule of thumb for any artwork.
- Be aware of the condition of the artwork prior to packing and upon its arrival.

Packing

Soft Packing

Soft packing is typically used for shorter distances. Although the time in transit is shorter, proper packing is essential. “Soft packing” does not mean wrapping your art in bubble wrap and putting it in a shopping bag!

Two-Dimensional (2-D) Works

Various packing methods are available for different 2-D works.

Unframed works on paper

- Wrap in glassine; if packing a photograph, use photo release paper.
- Create corners similar to photo corners to keep work from slipping.
- Sandwich between two sheets of cardboard slightly larger than the work and wrap in plastic.
- Seal all edges with tape.

Unframed painting with flat surface

- Wrap in glassine then plastic, and seal all seams with tape. Sandwiching this between two sheets of cardboard will help to further protect the work.

Unframed painting with raised surface (impasto)

- Create a cardboard collar by using a sheet of cardboard measuring 8 to 10 inches larger than the work in both dimensions, folding up the edges to create a five-sided box.
- Wrap in plastic, stretching the plastic tightly so it does not sag and touch the face of the paint. The tension of the plastic will keep the painting from shifting in the collar.

Framed & glazed works

- If glazed with plexi, cover the face with glassine, wrap in plastic, and seal all seams. A cardboard face cut to the size of the piece can be added for extra protection. If glazed in glass, do the same as for plexi. Do not tape the glass as it may have a special non-glare coating.
- If particularly heavy, add corner pads after wrapping and sealing.

Three-Dimensional (3-D) Works

Sculptures traveling short distances can be safely soft packed. Two packing methods are recommended:

Blanket wrap

- Wrapping with clean blankets is often the best protection for heavy works when all elements are stable and the surface is not delicate.
- If possible, strap heavy works to a pallet for easy moving.

Cavity pack

- Smaller works can be transported in foam-lined boxes or commercial bins. They should be braced in the box or bin with foam or placed in foam cutouts shaped to cushion the object.
- If the surface is painted or otherwise delicate, place a single layer of soft Tyvek or lens tissue loosely in the cavity to prevent abrasion.
- Seal the bin or the box in plastic.

Special packing for textiles

- Large textiles can be safely folded. Fold to the face of the work with the back exposed.
- Use as few folds as possible to fit the piece into the largest flat box available to prevent shifting.
- Line the box with acid free tissue.
- Place a tightly crumpled length of tissue at each fold to prevent creasing.
- Cover the folded textile with tissue; wrap the box in plastic and seal.

If packing multiple items in a commercial cardboard bin

- Line the bin with cushioning foam or a blanket.
- Place items face-to-face and back-to-back, separating each with sheets of cardboard or other cushioning materials (see photo below).
- Excess blankets, padding and cushions should be used, especially if multiple items are being shipped in one box.

Additional Tips for Packing

- **Pastels are an exception.** They should be framed with glass, not plexi, which generally has a static charge that can attract pastel dust. Pastels are safer traveling flat rather than upright.
- **Bubble Wrap.** Bubble wrap is best avoided as it can leave marks on all but glassy surfaces. If bubble wrap must be used, be sure it does not come in contact with any part of your artwork.
- **Staples.** Avoid the use of staples; they can become loose and cause damage.
- **Tape.** Do not use excessive amounts of tape, and always make tabs to facilitate easy removal.



When transporting multiple items, each piece should be individually wrapped and protected from the other pieces with a layer of cardboard or foam.

Crating

Crating for Longer Distances

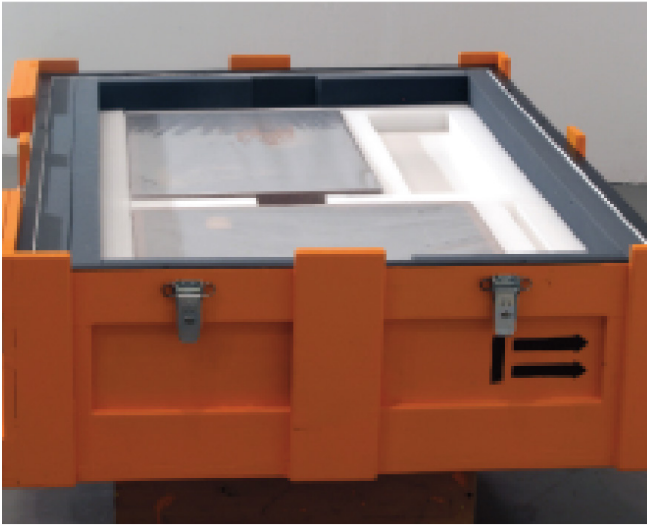
Crates should always be used for longer transits. A crate is not just a plywood box; rather, it is typically a carefully constructed wooden container with a cushioned interior.

- Crate lids should be tightly sealed and, if possible, held into place with buckles.
- There should be skids built into the bottom of the crate. Skids will support the artwork and help to keep it steadily in place during transport.
- Wooden frames or “handling frames” are used to protect unframed works, or when the surface of the canvas is heavily painted (impasto). Using a handling frame requires the installation of permanent clips on the back of the work. The holes are drilled very carefully into the support. Screws of appropriate length must be used to prevent puncturing the canvas.

Transporting and Receiving

When Transporting

- The truck should have a working lift gate, functioning locks and a climate control system. Two drivers are always required.
- Pieces should be strapped snugly to the walls of the truck.
- An inventory list should be prepared for each item packed on the truck.
- Make note of the condition of the crate and wrapping.



Inside this crate, the custom cavities prevent the works from shifting during transport. The exterior plastic shell keeps the works waterproof and damage-proof during shipping.

When Receiving

- Upon arrival and unloading, use the inventory list to check off all expected packages.
- Note the condition of each wrapping or crate as it is received. If unable to inspect a package's condition, write "un-inspected" on the receipt or waybill.
- If the condition of the shipment is suspect or damaged, make a note on the waybill, take photos, unwrap immediately and save the wrapping. **If damage is discovered, report the damage immediately to your Chubb agent or broker.**

Tips for Collectors

How to Find the Right People For the Job

The best way to find a specialty packer is through a professional referral, i.e., one of the art-related firms that ships, packs and transports art every day.

- Conservators
- Auction house specialists
- Art dealers
- Museum registrars
- Other fine art collectors

If you are a first-time art collector, please do not be intimidated about asking for a shipping and packing referral. This type of request is expected—even from seasoned buyers.

Getting Started

For help getting started, contact your Chubb agent or broker. S/he can connect you with one of Chubb's in-house collection specialists who can assist you.

In addition to helping you to find a professional art packer and shipper, Chubb in-house collection specialists can help you with appraisals and cataloging, as well as on-site consultations regarding maintaining ideal storage and display conditions for your art. They can also provide practical recommendations for protecting your collection from burglary, fire and other causes of loss.

For more information, or a list of preferred shipping vendors, please contact 1.877.60CHUBB (1.877.602.4822).