



Exporting Art

A Guide for Artists at International
Exhibitions and Commissions

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IAA: The International Association of Art, IAA/AIAP, is an NGO (a non-governmental organisation) in operational relationship with UNESCO, comprising artists belonging essentially to the fields of painting, sculpture, printmakers and artists practising other forms of creative work in the visual arts.

The objectives of the Association are to stimulate international cooperation among the artists of all countries, nations or peoples, and to improve the economic and social position of artists at the national and international levels and to defend their material and moral rights.

Preface

It is as common for contemporary artists to exhibit abroad as in their country of origin. Simultaneously there has been an increase in mobility, with artists spending periods working abroad. Artists today also take an increasing grip on their careers and participate more actively in the work around their exhibitions. Contacting exhibitors and curators, managing negotiations and organising the logistics of an exhibition have become given parts of an artist's work. Seemingly a great opportunity and not too hard an undertaking, this can actually be quite complex. A number of issues need to be addressed and there are at least a couple of pitfalls to avoid. How should you transport your art? How should you pack your art? What kind of insurance do you need? How will your art be handled and presented during the course of the exhibition?

We have produced this booklet to facilitate your work when planning an exhibition or a commissioned work outside or within the EU. We hope to be able to help you with the different issues that will arise during this work. Furthermore, we also hope to give general advise regarding what to consider in your contact with clients, as well as personal experience, good and bad, from a number of participants from the art world.

The IAA works to strengthen your position and your rights and thus facilitate your work as an artist nationally and internationally.

Swedish National Committee of the IAA

Packing art

Packing your art properly is important. The main reason for this obviously being avoiding that your art gets damaged during transport. Make sure that your packaging is documented with pictures and that a detailed list is made, specifying the contents of each box.

Another suggestion is that you specify the weight of each box – this makes handling the boxes easier. Proper documentation also makes packing and unpacking your art easier for the persons handling this. If you use external help, make sure that the packing room has a climate control system controlling temperature and humidity. Companies specialising in art transport usually have climate control systems, even in their trucks.

MATERIAL

Plywood and padding are the basic materials used in good packaging. It is important to use ISPM 15 labelled material for your box, if you are going to transport art outside the EU or to Portugal. ISPM 15 is an international standard for the treatment and labelling of packaging timber. If you do not use timber labelled ISPM 15, you will be stopped and turned away by customs at arrival. In other words, this is important to keep in mind.

A gaffer taped cardboard box is the

most commonly used plain type of package, but keep in mind that these are often handled carelessly when loaded and unloaded. Placing a five centimetre thick shock absorber all along the insides of the box provides extra protection. To be sure that your art is treated properly during transport you can place equipment that measures the temperature of the air etc. in the box. For example, it can be advisable to invest in a so-called Shockwatch. This measures any strong impact and movement caused during the journey and thus serves as proof if something happens to your art.

When in it comes to soft packing of art you can use for example Tyvek and/ or bubble wrap. If you use bubble wrap, preferably place the bubbles facing out from the painting, to avoid marking the art. You can also use triple layer bubble wrap, with bubbles in between two smooth layers of plastic sheeting. There is also anti-static bubble wrap that neutralises static electricity. Paintings without frames benefit from being packed in a box made from plywood. Do not forget to indicate with arrows which side should be kept up. Use glass stencils to indicate that the content is fragile. Glass tape should be used to avoid the glass breaking and cutting the works of art.

Depending on the material of the works of art, you probably know what



INTERVIEW with Caroline Elgh

Caroline Elgh works as Assistant Curator at Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm and has extensive experience working with Swedish and international artists. She has been involved in solo and group exhibitions and believes that an open dialogue between artist and curator/exhibitor is benefits working with the exhibition greatly. Packing and transporting the art are important parts of the exhibition process. To Caroline Elgh it is important to be careful when packing the art, but also to document the artworks and the packing process photographically.

- This is how we work at Bonniers Konsthall. We register all the art when it arrives at the exhibition space and we make sure to photograph packing and unpacking to keep control over the art that we borrow. Packing art the right way is important and each work of art requires its own specific treatment. It is often a good idea to build transport boxes that correspond to the needs of the particular artwork. Also, do not under estimate bubble wrap.

- Bubble wrap is always good. In most cases the art arrives in good shape but occasionally, obviously, something has happened to it during transport.

- We once received a work of art depicting an enormous head made out of Styrofoam and plaster. It was obviously a very fragile work of art and it had been damaged in transport because of insufficient packaging. We contacted the artist right away and it was solved smoothly due to the transport company accepting responsibility and compensating the artwork. This underlines the importance of packing the art properly and of making explicit agreements with the transport company


Generally speaking Caroline Elgh feels that the artists that Bonniers Konsthall work with document and pack their art carefully. At times the art is also borrowed from galleries, museums or private collectors. Regardless of whom the art arrives from it is important to have a good dialogue and to begin discussions about artworks and transport at as early a stage as possible.

- Both when it comes to solo shows and group exhibitions, it is important to get a dialogue going with the artist at an early stage to be able to discuss the requirements of the work of art. What kind of space, what lighting and what technique will suit the work? This way we already know how to think before the artwork arrives. The best solutions are always found in collaboration.

It may happen that the artworks are sent from one exhibitor to another. In this case it is important that you make sure that everybody involved understand the requirements for packing your art.

Once Caroline Elgh received a work of art that came straight from an earlier exhibition. It was part of a performance involving a piece of dough for making bread. The piece had not been cleaned, so she got a shock when it arrived at Bonniers Konsthall.

- A terrible stench hit us as the work of art was infested with mould. We tried to find a solution, but the owner of the premises and the sanitation companies that we contacted gave us thumbs down. It all ended with the artist suggesting that we discard the work of art. We had to take it to a garbage dump outside of town that accepted special waste.



material suits. Choose your packing methods and transportation in regard to this. If you are unsure of which materials are the most suitable, you can contact a conservator for advice. To avoid mould and other damage caused by damp you should pack very tightly, using plastic close to the works of art, as well conduct the packing in a dry space. It is also important that air is able to circulate in the box.

PACK ACCORDING TO WAY OF TRANSPORT

Due to high waves, vibrations and the risk of damage caused by water, transport by boat is less suitable for certain types of art. If you decide to ship works of art by boat, the demands on the packaging are usually greater. Generally transport by air is gentler, but on the other hand involves size restrictions. Aircraft models travelling within Europe usually take cargo up to 100 or 160 centimetres high. Alternatively, drive your art to a larger airport with Jumbo freight planes that usually have a capacity to take crates up to 209 centimetres.

If you intend to transport works of art yourself in for example a smaller truck, it is important to stabilise the boxes properly and drive carefully. If you use a transport company specialising in transporting art, the cars are usually specially

equipped with for example air suspension, to protect the art against bumps and other sudden movements.

LARGE BOXES

Preferably make the crate as large as possible, even if this is not required by the size of the artwork. Smaller boxes tend to be handled less carefully than larger ones. A bigger crate also decreases the risk of being lost during transport. Very large crates should have a bottom adapted to transportation by forklift. The distance between the heels of the crate should be at least 57 centimetres. It is also important to know the dimensions of the doors in the premises where you will be exhibiting.

Always attach proper handles on your crate. Even if it is too heavy to carry, handles are necessary for pulling it into place.

Be careful not to place anything right against paintings. Always build a frame that creates a space between the packing material and the artwork. You can for example use Neopolen, as this does not give off any particles. Silk can be used for sensitive sculptures.

Transporting art

Transport by air, road, sea or rail? Truck transportation is the most common within Europe. Air Freight, as mentioned in the previous chapter, involves strict height restrictions on boxes. But if a work of art is large and destined to cross the Atlantic sea for example, it can be transported by truck to a larger European airport to be transported by a Jumbo airplane that has a larger cargo space. You can transport works of art yourself or hire someone to manage part of or the whole transport.

HIRING A TRANSPORT COMPANY

If you use a transport company, make sure that it meets branch regulations. Preferably use a company specialising in art transport, as they are used to handling art and also have good knowledge of how you should transport your specific show in the best way. Their trucks are equipped with climate control and their packing methods are specialised to suit art. Also make sure you write a contract. Each transport situation is unique, which is why transport companies do not usually have set price lists. It is therefore useful to contact the company at an early stage to discuss what help you might need. Most companies specialising in art transport offer solutions including packing and transport as well as handling of documents and insurance. This naturally becomes a bit more expensive but, on

the other hand, means that you do not have to arrange everything yourself.

Also make sure to have a time schedule. When hiring a transport company it can take a month before the artworks are transported, due to several orders being transported at the same time.

If you are going to transport the artwork yourself, it is advisable to build a proper box to protect the artwork during transport (see the chapter about packing art). There are also custom-built transport crates available to purchase. It is also important to ensure that there is some staff on site when you arrive, to help you load your goods. Even if you are not handling your own transport it is important to keep in touch with the exhibitor, so that the arrival runs smoothly.

If you are transporting art to Russia, be aware that that this can become expensive and extremely time consuming due to the expense and bureaucracy of local management. Preferably use air transport to and from Russia.



Export and temporary export

The following is a review of various export documents as well as some other practical details that should be taken into account when exporting your art temporarily. As every export situation is unique and custom regulations differ between countries, we only offer general advice.

CUSTOMS MANAGEMENT

Although your export situation is always unique, it is still important to keep in mind that customs authorities around the world usually treat art as any other commodity. Thus, aesthetic value is of no relevance. Rather, your artworks will be measured in weight and price. It is advisable to use this model of measurement in your customs documents to simplify the customs process. Export regulations differ depending on whether a work of art is exported commercially or privately.

Companies importing and exporting to countries outside the EU have to submit an electronic export declaration to the customs administration. You can submit it yourself or employ an electronically connected authorised customs agent to help you. As an individual it is possible to fill out a paper form. Remember that this is an extensive document that needs some time assigned to it.

COMMODITY CODE

For exports to countries outside the EU commodity codes are used according to a customs tariff that can usually be found on the website of the customs administration of a country.

It is important to use the correct commodity code for the kind of art that is being exported to avoid problems with customs. Remember that you are responsible for the correct classification of your works of art, even if you use an agent to fill in the export declaration form.

EORI NUMBER

Companies importing or exporting within the EU must apply for an EORI number on the customs administration's website. Individuals can still apply for an EORI number manually when leaving the country but applying for it in advance saves time. Individuals travelling with the intention to sell their art are subject to the same regulations as companies and must thus apply for the EORI number in advance.

Customs generally recommend that you have thorough documentation of the works of art that are being sent or brought along when travelling. It is advisable to have photographs of the works of art as well as a written description of the materials they are made of.

TEMPORARY EXPORT WITHIN THE EU

Import and export barriers have decreased within the EU to the advantage of artists. Since the introduction of the single European market within the EU Member States, art can in principle be transported across EU borders without any customs restrictions. However, keep in mind that the authorities of each

Member State still regulate import of for example organic material.

TEMPORARY EXPORT OUTSIDE THE EU

Temporary export usually implies that the goods must return to the country of origin within three years, as well as a restriction on processing or alteration during the period of export. Individuals can get a temporary export period extended to ten years. If the artwork remains longer than this an export will be considered final and subject to import VAT. In some countries, however, art import is duty exempt. It is advisable to contact the custom's administration of the relevant country, to ensure what the applicable regulations are in your case.

Customs formalities connected to transporting art outside of the European market amount to time consuming and costly bureaucracy. It can thus be advisable to buy an ATA Carnet.

WHAT IS AN ATA CARNET?

When exporting art outside the EU in connection with for example an exhibition or art fair, you can facilitate customs procedures by buying a so-called ATA Carnet from the Chamber of Commerce. This document allows you to bring your artwork, samples and equipment abroad without paying any VAT or other fees at the border, on condition that the goods are returned to the country of origin within one year. The ATA Carnet is valid for the equipment or the works that you bring with you that are registered on the

document. The document must follow the goods during the full journey and be presented and stamped at each border. It is essential that you get it stamped by customs when the goods are shipped as well as at arrival, as an incomplete ATA Carnet means that you will not get your payment of security deposit to the Chamber of Commerce back. Each trip requires two stamps and a round trip four.

Also remember that the customs administration office in both the country of export and the importing country have certain opening hours. The goods may not be processed or altered in the importing country.

WHAT REGULATIONS APPLY TO THE USE OF THE ATA CARNET?

Goods must be owned by a natural or legal person residing or established in a country other than the country of import. Goods may not be borrowed or rented. Goods must be intended to be returned and thus not constitute consumable goods. If a work of art should, however, remain in the importing country, for example because of a sale, the customs authorities must be contacted prior to the last possible date of return for authorisation and to receive information about current customs procedures.

Goods must be possible to identify at departure, before starting the journey. Goods covered by an ATA Carnet must be manufactured in the EU or previously cleared by customs in the EU.

WHAT COSTS ARE INVOLVED IN GETTING AN ATA CARNET?

The Chamber of Commerce's website usually provides a price list which can assist you in figuring out the total price of your trip. The first time you apply for an ATA Carnet, you also have to deposit up to 35% of the value of the goods as a security. This deposit is paid back when the ATA Carnet is returned to the Chamber of Commerce. If you do not have a joint-stock company you must deposit 35% of the value of the goods at each application. Sometimes it is hard to determine the value of a work of art but a reasonable assessment will suffice. A specification of the production costs can serve as the minimum value. One journey is included in the basic price for an ATA Carnet and there will be an additional charge for each trip added to the document. An ATA Carnet is valid for twelve months and extra journeys can be added. However, keep in mind that the deposit will not be paid back until you have returned the ATA Carnet to the Chamber of Commerce.

SELLING ART ABROAD

If you sell any works of art while taking part in an exhibition outside the EU, it is important that you present documents that validate the sale when leaving the country. This affects what taxes you have to pay. For example, if you sell an artwork to a buyer who has a VAT number and who is registered for VAT in the country where the sale takes place, you do not pay any VAT. The buyer pays the VAT in his or her country. Make sure that you get the buyer's correct VAT registration number as you are obliged to register the sale with

the tax authorities in your own country. If the buyer cannot provide a valid VAT number you must add VAT onto the sale. Given that the buyer had a valid VAT number, all you need to do is to declare the sale as income in your tax return.

You may want to register for VAT in the country of the exhibition. This facilitates tax payment if you sell artwork to an individual, among other things. Each country has its own regulations and tax rates, so it is advisable to contact the country's embassy for further advice. In most cases you will be dealing with the tax office of the country.

WHAT IS A PROFORMA INVOICE?

If you intend to sell some of your artworks, you can use a proforma invoice. This lists each work of art with a price, making any charge related evaluations easier for the customs authorities.

When using a proforma invoice, you must deposit a duty fee. This usually equals the deposit due when the artwork is exported for sale, that is, import VAT and so on. The deposit will be refunded if the artwork is not sold and has been taken out of the country. However, if you have sold any of your artworks, you must produce evidence, such as receipts, at customs before leaving the country.

Proforma invoices should preferably be written in English and made in three copies, signed by hand. They should include sender, an organisation number, the name of the recipient including full address, the artist's name, the technique and material used and the estimated value of the art. Proforma invoices can usually be downloaded from the local Chambers website.

Insurance and Contracts

It is important that you check your insurance cover. If you are covered by some kind of studio insurance, it is still a good idea take out additional insurance covering transport and the exhibition. Make sure you find out what insurance the exhibitors have, as you cannot assume that it is adequate. It is advisable to check this out, and to make adjustments in the exhibition contract accordingly.

If you use a transport company, it is important to find out what their insurance covers and what the maximum coverage is. Companies specialised in art transport usually offer special art insurance. It can be a good idea to find out what your insurance does and does not cover and compare this with other insurances tied to the exhibition project, to avoid any gaps in the insurance. This way, you can rest assured that you will receive compensation if something happens to your art during transport or the exhibition.

Some freight companies have insurance that requires that they have packed the goods. However, these usually only cover damage that is caused during packing. Thus, for example theft or loss would not be covered.

AGREEMENTS

In an ideal world, you would receive a written contract from the exhibitor, regulating the various commitments of the parties. If not, it is advisable to draw up a contract. Make sure that you include a wording in the agreement stating that all parties must account for any costs, as well as that you have the right to your own images, so that they are not used incorrectly in marketing for example.

Unfortunately, written contracts are often seen as something unnecessary and even suspect in many parts of the art world. If you do not get a written contract it is advisable to recapitulate all conversations you have had, with the various parties involved, in an email. This email can serve as a summary, where you describe briefly how you have understood your agreement. This is a simple but very efficient way to avoid any misunderstanding. It may seem unnecessarily formal and circumstantial, but will prove to be useful. If you stick to the recommendations above and document all communication with emails, this will also serve as an alternative to a formal legal contract.





This booklet has been produced by Sweden's International section within the IAA (International Association of Art). The booklet offers basic knowledge about practical issues concerning international commissions. What do you need to think about when packing works of art? Which customs documents do you need? What do you need to think about regarding transport and insurance? We hope that increased knowledge about these issues will make your work as an artist easier.

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