

ICEFAT NEWS

NEWSLETTER FROM ICEFAT NO 1 – 2003 HIGHEST STANDARDS IN FINE ART SHIPPING

PROMISING FUTURE FOR ICEFAT

Meet Marianne Honders, ICEFAT secretary, in a personal interview about the history and future of ICEFAT.

It was early 1977 when it all started – for ICEFAT and for me! I was asked to take the minutes for a meeting of the Directors of six fine art handling companies from Europe and the USA. The purpose of this meeting was to establish a forum where companies, specialized in handling fine art, from all over the world, would meet to discuss mutual business issues. It would be an informal conference, but some rules and regulations were required to ensure that only specialized art moving companies would be invited.

The first Convention was held in October 1977, at the Okura Hotel in Amsterdam, where 80 delegates from 56 companies gathered to meet each other. It was a success and everybody agreed that this Convention should become an annual event!

THE ONLY EMPLOYEE

The Organization grew and so did my family. It was an easy decision for me to reduce my working hours at my company and accept the proposal of the Steering Committee to install the ICEFAT Secretariat at my house, and become the one and only paid ICEFAT Employee!

Today, this situation hasn't changed – except that being Secretary General is my only job now which keeps me busy for an average of 20 hours a week, flexibly spread out over days, evenings and weekends...

What did change were my job responsibilities: taking minutes of Steering Committee meetings and writing letters and telexes to our agents was my "core business", in the beginning. Nowadays, I



MARIANNE HONDERS

still take minutes and write letters – by e-mail. But the volume of work has increased dramatically over the years, with the almost monthly teleconferences of the Steering Committee and our Sub-committees – a new phenomenon in ICEFAT in recent years.

The Sub-committees are active in areas such as Membership, Finance, Marketing, Website and the editing of the ICEFAT Newsletter. There is also the financial administration of ICEFAT – and the highlight of the year – the organization of our annual Convention somewhere in the world.

DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION

During 27 years of existence, the structure of ICEFAT has changed from an informal group of companies, invited by the Steering Committee to a conference once a year, to a Democratic Association, actively promoting the highest standards of fine art shipping for the benefit of both our Members and Clients.

The Association is still managed by a Steering Committee, consisting of six Members currently from Europe, Canada and the USA. Annual elections are open to all ICEFAT Members to run for a minimum term of 3 years – with a maximum of 3 terms. Last year four candi-

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ICEFAT WEBSITE

Fresh and informative improvements in navigation and browser compatibility make the new site a time saver for all users, members and visitors alike.

Our new webmaster, Andi Alameda, has constructed and edited over 200 pages that make up the ICEFAT website.

ICEFAT is on line at www.icefat.org featuring the publication of this newsletter and includes links to all members worldwide. The ICEFAT website will post the current issue and provide links to an archive of past issues.

Be sure to bookmark this page – www.icefat.org – for the quickest access to the most current ICEFAT news and member information.

On the website you can find out more about ICEFAT, for example:

- locate a member by Country, Company or Contact
- send a message to the entire organization
- find links to Customs information for specific member countries



MEMBERS INFORMATION ON THE WEBSITE

Members are welcome and encouraged to download the current issue for distribution. You can send the newsletter electronically or have it translated (if required) and printed for mailing to your clients.

The members area has been updated to include member submitted pictures and recap of the Convention held in Lima, Peru.

In addition you will find preliminary information regarding the 2003 Helsinki Convention. Be sure to mark the convention dates on your calendar.

DEAR READERS



Welcome to the first edition of the ICEFAT Newsletter, one of the projects we are currently developing in order to promote ICEFAT – synonymous for the highest standards of professionalism in the field of fine art packing and shipping.

With this Newsletter we strive to provide a platform for articles and opinions on topics of interest to both our Members and Clients. On behalf of the editors I invite you all to submit any written contributions, or ideas for articles, you may have, to the secretariat in order to make this an attractive and informative document for improving communication between Clients and Agents.

ICEFAT Members are committed to hold their companies to the highest quality standards, and it is our belief this can only be achieved through close and respectful co-operation between our Clients and Ourselves.

Let me recommend this Newsletter to you with the expression of confidence that it will contribute to tightening the relationships with our Customers – to the benefit of both parties.

We are looking forward to hearing from you !

Pol Maertens – Chairman of ICEFAT

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WELCOME TO ICEFAT AT AAM CONVENTION

ICEFAT is pleased to have the opportunity to exhibit the qualities and energy of our organization for the first time during this year's AAM Convention in Portland, May 18–22.

We are looking forward to showing our Clients the diversity of companies and countries represented by membership in ICEFAT. There are two main goals ICEFAT strives to achieve.

The first is to provide our customers with competitive international shipping

services and the second is to constantly strive to help improve the standards of the art handling industry. We intend to accomplish those goals by keeping our clients informed.

We hope you will visit with us in Portland so that we can become better acquainted with each other. Please take a few minutes to stop by our booth, number 206, to visit with us and find out how ICEFAT can assist you and your Museum.

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dates campaigned for two vacancies. It is also good to see that a new generation of Members is enthusiastically volunteering to join Sub-committees and work on the further professionalism and promotion of our Organization. For me, it proves that our membership wants to be involved and take responsibility – if they are given the opportunity, and this is very promising for the future of ICEFAT.

STANDARDS OF QUALITY

The promotion of ICEFAT works! Information requests are being sent to our list-serve – our internal communication tool – by Institutions which have found our Organization while surfing on the web. They e-mailed us that they were amazed by the number of responses they received from our Members.

But not only Clients know where to find ICEFAT: The Secretariat receives membership application requests every month and it would be easy to grow into a large, multi-staffed Organization. But that's not what ICEFAT wants. At our last Convention in Lima, Peru, the Membership unanimously agreed that we should maintain our standards of quality – as the first and most important requirement for Membership.

The Membership Sub-committee has established a profile against which each applicant will be judged before being accepted as a Member. Moreover, the applicant must submit recommendations, from ICEFAT Members and Clients, that testify to their working experience with the applicant's company. Our Members understand their responsibility when they decide to support an applying company, because the acceptance of new members will determine the future quality of ICEFAT towards our Clients.

A NEW ICEFAT

What about the future? Well, I must admit that during the last few years of the nineties – when ICEFAT was in a turbulent vacuum between being an informal group of companies and becoming a professional Association – I had a few sleepless nights over how things would work out. But then, we decided to have our year 2000 Convention in Amsterdam at the Okura Hotel, where the foundation of the Association ICEFAT took place and I thought: "This cannot be coincidental... the start of a new ICEFAT, in a new Century, at the place where it all began so long ago. This has to be right!"

And I think it is! ICEFAT is flourishing with 78 committed Members in 35 countries ambitiously striving to offer their Clients the best quality in fine art packing, transportation and museum services. And ICEFAT will grow with the addition of companies that are experienced in the fine art business and who will become important assets to our Organization and our Clients.

And ICEFAT and me? We have a very special relationship. It's like with children – most of the times we are very close, but sometimes I wish it was a bit further away than my home office, where I can't keep myself from looking to see if there are any new messages before I go to sleep. But then, what job could beat the privileges of mine? Having known so many nice people for so many years, and feeling so appreciated by them, and traveling around the world to such interesting and sometimes exotic places!

No, I won't mind doing this for a good many years to come – I'd love to!

TRANSPORTING ARTWORKS CAN BE SCARY FOR MUSEUM REGISTRARS

Keep us informed about artworks in transit. Ring immediately if something goes wrong! That's the plea from Beverly Balger Sutley, registrar at the Palmer Museum of Art in Pennsylvania.

Alongside her regular job at the museum, Beverly Balger Sutley is also chairwoman of the AAM Registrars' Committee, where AAM stands for the American Association of Museums. She's speaking on behalf of museum customers using fine art transporters.

– When we send our artworks out, we are first and foremost concerned for their safety. It's a nerve-racking experience, sending away valuable works of art, and we're worried about losing contact with them, she says.

When Beverly Balger Sutley and more

especially her colleagues at the great art museums send goods away within the United States, they are always able to go along with the goods being transported when circumstances dictate.

– I'm not saying it happens often, but it does happen. I've been on some horrible trips. But when we send something say to Europe, then we have to be able to just let it go out of our immediate control. We're totally dependent on the transporter being our eyes and ears.

CONSTANT REPORTS

So it's important that the transporter keeps Beverly Balger Sutley and her colleagues informed about whatever happens on the journey. They need constant reports on the whereabouts and safety of their artworks. They also want to know that the goods have arrived in good order. And above all – they want to be informed if something unexpected happens on the journey. They also expect the transporter



BEVERLY BALGER SUTLEY

to deal with any couriers travelling with the goods.

– On one occasion, our courier was on the plane, but not the goods. That got us extremely concerned. Someone somewhere had simply not done their job, which was to see that the courier and the goods were on the same plane. But that happened a long time ago now.

Another incident ended much better. A plane carrying a valuable art consignment had engine trouble and landed in France. On that occasion, Beverly was kept informed the whole time as to what was happening and how the items were being sent on.

FEEL SECURE

– It's vital that transporters know the trick of improvising when something unexpected happens. But even then, we want to know what's happening.

The customer is always right – so it's said. But where complex services like these are concerned, it's not always true.

– Of course we want to make demands, for example about special packaging. We're very picky. But at the same time, the art transporters are the experts, and we expect them to tell us how something can be done if there's a better way than what we've asked for.

Beverly Balger Sutley is glad that ICEFAT exists. It makes it easier to find good transporters in different countries. The standards set for membership are a quality mark.

– Even though transporting makes us nervous, it almost always goes well. Many of the transporters are very well known and have good reputations. We feel secure being able to turn to their colleagues within the same organisation, she says.



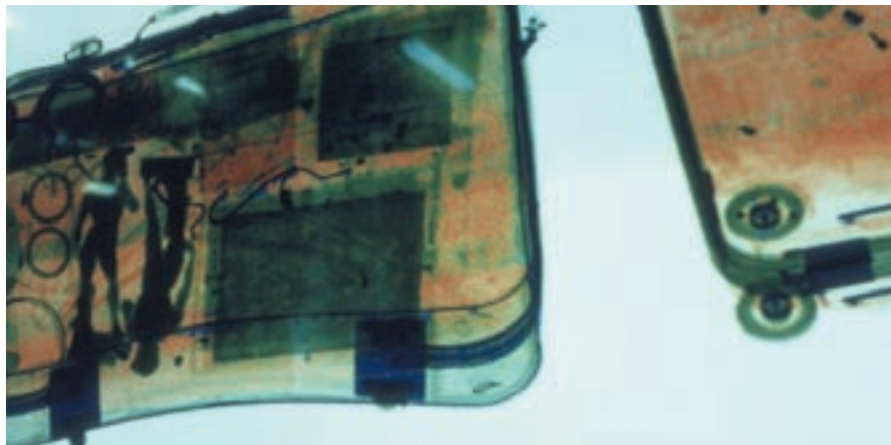
ICEFAT MAKES IT EASIER TO FIND GOOD TRANSPORTERS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, BEVERLY BALGER SUTLEY SAYS.

X-RAY RADIATION "SAFE"

Increased security levels at airports worldwide are making the question of how much x-ray radiation valuable artworks can tolerate highly relevant.

A questionnaire has been sent out to ICEFAT members, asking transporters to find out what x-ray equipment is being used at their respective airports. Unfortunately, a comprehensive list has proved difficult to produce. Many security departments are reticent.

After ringing around to an airport security department, a transporter and the Swedish State Radiation Protection Institute, it would seem, however, that there is little to be concerned about, even with so-called computer tomography, which exposes the object to the highest levels of



radiation for the longest period of time.

Generally goods are not subjected to computer tomography. This equipment is primarily used for hand baggage.

The background radiation to which both people and cargo are subjected during the flight is many times greater

than the dose emitted by the x-ray equipment.

In addition, according to the SSRPI, museums themselves use much stronger radiation in their examination of artworks than that used by airports in examining freight and luggage.

CRITERIA FOR ICEFAT MEMBERSHIP ON THE WAY

Adoption of new membership qualifications will be completed when the ICEFAT Steering Committee meets during the AAM Convention in Portland Oregon.

Work on drawing up criteria has been going on for six months, during which time all member companies have been inventoried and a profile created describing a typical company. This profile forms the basis for the final criteria.

One of those taking part in the work has been Johan Öfverbeck, whose day job is as chief of the Fine Arts Division of the Swedish member company MTAB.

– The criteria needs to be tough, and needs to point out the transporters' skills and experience, he says.

There is already a requirement for member companies to have been working with art transport for at least three years, and to be able to present references. This means that an application for membership must be backed up by at least three transporters who are already members, who have worked in collaboration with the applicant and can testify to the applicant's competence. The application must also be supported by three museums, able to verify that they have collaborated with and approved the transporter.

Member companies must also be aware of the economic and cultural value of artworks, and keep themselves up to date on relevant customs

and security regulations.

We want to enhance the level of service options available for our customers. ICEFAT welcomes qualified new candidates for membership, particularly in countries where we do not yet have a presence.

– For example; we are busy accumulating information on art moving companies located in the former Eastern bloc countries, Latin America and Africa. We are also reviewing companies that are not yet ready for membership in ICEFAT. We are willing to help them improve their level of services to meet museum standards, as long as they are serious companies, says Johan Öfverbeck



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