

ICEFAT NEWS

NEWSLETTER FROM ICEFAT NO 3 – 2007 HIGHEST STANDARDS IN FINE ART SHIPPING

THE ROLE OF A COURIER

A Courier is an individual, usually a representative of the owner of an object, who travels with the object to ensure its proper care, safe arrival, unpacking and installation.

In many circumstances it is standard practice for a representative of the lending Museum to act as courier during the movement of objects between locations. A courier is responsible for the safety of the object during all stages of transport between venues and must supervise the unpacking, or packing, installation and check the objects against condition reports provided by conservators at the point of origin.

With the development of more sophisticated conservation and packing techniques, objects that would have previously not traveled, due to conservation issues, size or complexity of packing or installation, can now be included in exhibitions. This brings new challenges for the museum courier. In some situations there can be an advantage in sending either a conservator or a technician as that courier.

TEAM OF COURIERS

With these challenging objects and short installation/de-installation windows at some venues, it may be necessary to put a team of couriers together. This team could comprise the project coordinator, a



COURIER SEAT IN AN ART TRUCK

curator, a conservator and a technician. The advantage of including a conservator and a techni-



A COURIER WEATCHES A MAIN DECK AIRLINE PALLET BEING LOADED.

cian is that they can be selected from staff who have worked on the conservation, installation/de-installation, and packing of the objects, and so bring with them valuable knowledge of specific objects.

All couriers must be trained to make decisions under difficult circumstances and to ensure that all movements are carefully controlled.

Couriers need to be equipped with detailed conservation reports, packing notes and photographs and will usually be briefed by the Museum Packing and Transport team on how to unpack and repack an object. It is vital that objects be repacked in exactly the same way each time, to ensure that the object's condition remained stable.

Acting as a courier also provides opportunities to share information with technical staff from other museums - to discuss, develop and improve methods.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to another edition of ICEFAT News. This issue follows up on ICEFAT's 31st annual convention in beautiful Vancouver Canada. The 2007 convention exceeded last years record breaking convention in terms of Countries represented, Companies present and colleagues in attendance. This is truly a testament to the commitment of all our members world-wide and to the strength, goals and objectives of this dynamic organization.

A wide range of topics were covered at this year's convention including an update from the Best Practices Storage sub-committee whose liaison with insurance industry leaders is setting our members apart from the others. Led by this sub-committee, ICEFAT continues to set the highest standards in fine art shipping...

Presentations from PACIN and member companies were both informative and in some cases very entertaining. ICEFAT was proud to honour the accomplishments of fellow member Harsch Transport as they celebrated their 50th anniversary of dedication to the fine art shipping industry.

In this issue of ICEFAT News you will find updates on Best Practices and new initiatives being taken regarding the TSA situation in the USA. We will also be highlighting one of the unsung heroes of our industry "the Courier". We all work behind the scenes and in the trenches. It benefits us all to have an advocate within the museums we work with who really understand what goes on out there – air side.

As always, we are looking for ideas and topics of interest for our readership. Please let us know if there is something you would like to see or have us report on.

Drawing on experience and knowledge from all corners of the world is something ICEFAT does best. I wish everyone the very best over the festive season.



Mark Starling
ICEFAT Chair

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FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT COURIERS

We asked Jacqueline Cabrera, Associate Registrar for Getty Villa and Vice Chair of the Registrar's Committee – Western Region:

1. How do you decide which loans must have a Courier?

Every institution has their own standards, however in general, a Courier may be required if the object is of high value, fragile, rare, small in size and/or the transit route is a complex one.

2. How do you determine who will act as Courier with a particular loan?

The Courier should know the object well. Here at the Getty Villa, the curators, mount makers or conservators act as Couriers for our antiquities collection loans. If the object requires a complex mount then a mount maker or conservator are most likely chosen. Registrars and Preparators are also asked to do Courier trips but that unfortunately is not very often.

However a few years ago, we loaned out a very large roman mosaic to an east coast museum. Upon preparing the loan it was obvious that the transport and installation of the object was going to be very complex. It was then decided that our Lead Preparator, Kevin Marhsall was the best staff member for that trip. He is very experienced with rigging large works of art and has a great deal of knowledge on the installation of ancient objects as well.

3. What are your five best tips for being a Courier on an international shipment?

1. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes but always remember that you are representing your intuition so dress professionally too.

2. Know your loan requirements; know how to unpack and/or pack your crate, know your object and its conservation needs, and know your mount. Don't arrive unprepared. You can avoid this by meeting with your registrar, packer and your mount maker prior to departing on your Courier trip.



3. Take a book or magazine just in case you are asked to wait for a long period of time between the unpacking and installation of your object. Remember that a Courier trip is work and not a vacation.

4. Be culturally sensitive, know the dos and don'ts of that country so as not to offend your international museum colleagues.

5. Don't schedule other appointments, whether at the borrowing institution or another, until you know how long you will be needed for installation. I always find it amazing how many Couriers make other plans and then get upset when you tell them they are needed a bit longer to do their jobs.

4. What responsibilities do you view as belonging to the shipper when working with the Courier?

At the airport:

- That they listen to the Courier when the Courier foresees a conflict during palletization and act accordingly on behalf of that Courier
- That they properly estimate enough time for the Courier to get checked in and with enough time to get through security

5. Recommended reading?

I always recommend the New Museum Registration Methods book and The PACIN book on crating. But most importantly read your institutions Courier Policy and Guidelines and the object's loan requirements. I also recommend taking with you the Courierspeak by Cordelia Rose.

CHOOSING THE COURIER

Once it has been decided that a Courier is required to accompany an object the next question is who will be the Courier?

For reasons of condition, knowledge of the treatment the work may have undergone, specialist knowledge of how it should be handled during unpacking and installation etc. the Courier should be either a Conservator or Technician.

If the object requires only "regular" knowledge of Museum packing, handling, transport and installation techniques, then a member of the Collection Management team or someone else from the museum staff with knowledge of Museum policies may represent the Museum as Courier. Curators and Collections Management staff are trained in handling objects and in normal circumstances no-one else should handle them if a Courier is sent. In some instances the Courier may be someone not employed by the Museum.

NO JOY-RIDE

The decision making process should be relatively quick and transparent - if there are any questions you should always be able to say why a certain decision was taken. These are work trips and usually involve a lot of hanging around in uncomfortable warehouses and such, but somehow a trip to exotic destinations is always seen as a joy ride to those left at home!

These trips can sometimes certainly be a 'perk' in an otherwise relatively poorly resourced profession, but they can be expensive to the institutions involved and they shouldn't be abused.

WHY SEND A COURIER?

Each institution will determine its own policy. Couriers may be assigned for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Complicated journey.**
- **Special handling.**
- **Fragility/conservation reasons**, complicated installation/size of object.
- **Concerns relating to the borrowing institution**, e.g. first time loan, previous problems indemnity/insurance.
- **Value of item.** It should always be borne in mind that the value of an object can go far beyond its financial or security value. An item with considerable cultural value, be it of national, local or community significance, may have little financial value and not be considered worth stealing. The quality of provenance should also be considered.

HOW IS A COURIER ALLOCATED?

This may be influenced by the following factors:

- Knowledge of the object/item concerned, conservation, handling or display requirements
- Courier suitability: temperament, common sense, stamina, good health and the ability to speak a foreign language.
- The courier requirement must be pointed out to the borrower at the earliest opportunity and the terms agreed between the lender and borrower. At this point, it might be considered whether sharing a courier would be appropriate.

- Previous experience, e.g. of venue, journey, or a personal knowledge of the lender/vendor when collecting objects (a courier with no previous experience should accompany an experienced courier, preferably on an inland journey, before graduating to an overseas location)

COURIER RESPONSIBILITIES

The courier has a shared responsibility with the drivers for the care of the work in transit, from loading to unloading at the point of delivery, but it must be remembered that the drivers are officially in charge of their vehicle, the load and safety.

- In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the courier is ultimately responsible for his/her load, e.g. if Customs insist on the examination of the objects.
- The object(s) must be at a minimum risk at all times: Safely and securely stowed, and correctly strapped (two straps recommended).
- Environmental control – maintaining the correct temperature is especially important. The courier should continually be aware of the object's needs and its current environment. The courier should be prepared to take all practical measures to ensure the well-being of the object, and should take advice from the lending institutions Conservator if necessary. This includes ferry journeys and requires courier vigilance.

- Awareness of any official paperwork in the driver's possession e.g. Export Licence.

BE PREPARED

- On long-haul journeys the drivers will work shifts, this may affect arrival and departure times.
- The journey may be hampered by local road transport regulations, i.e., no lorry driving is permitted at weekends or public holidays in many European countries.
- Carry a credit card and/or local currency in case of unexpected delays.
- Find out who the drivers will be and the vehicle details. Couriers should inform the registrar of their smoking/non-smoking requirements before departure.
- Couriers should be aware of their scheduled stops and arrange a rota to ensure that the vehicle is not left unattended during breaks. Ensure that drivers are equipped with the necessary road maps.
- The vehicle itself should carry water and basic medical supplies.
- The truckcab is the drivers "house & home" and the courier should be sensitive to being a guest.
- The vehicle should not be opened on route. However there may be exceptional circumstances when a courier will need to act decisively, eg. in the event of a breakdown, or customs inspections at ports or to check the load.

DEMYSTIFYING AVIATION SECURITY

Several U.S. agents met at the Vancouver conference to discuss security protocols set forth by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Only agents who are Indirect Air Carriers (IAC) were admitted. An IAC is a U.S. entity authorized to book flights directly with airlines and maintaining records that are frequently audited by the TSA. Many countries are experiencing similar changes with stringent guidelines either in reac-

tion to recent terrorist activities or in response to the TSA's initiative.

The main concern raised at this meeting was vagaries concerning the definition of who can be considered a known shipper. Unknown shippers cannot send freight aboard passenger flights. This causes a serious problem for exhibitions as only passenger aircraft serve many points.

In an effort to de-mystify the terms

that are affecting IACs, it is the intention of the sub-committee to keep up with the TSA's frequent amendments to their rules.



By Jonathan Schwartz
Atelier 4 Inc,
New York USA

PACIN COMES TO ICEFAT



RICHARD HINSON, CHAIR OF PACIN.

Richard Hinson, Chair of PACIN (the Packing Arthandling and Crating Information Network) a Professional Interest Committee of the American Association of Museum presented an overview of the history of PACIN and announced plans for future development.

Founded in 1989, PACIN is dedicated to expanding the network of information and resources available to the museum and art handling communities with the goal of improving art handling professionalism. Areas of focus include packing, crating, shipping, rigging, storage, installation, mount making, exhibition fabrication, technical and material updates, educational and training opportunities, and job descriptions and responsibilities.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

PACIN is directed by an International Steering Committee comprised of museum and commercial professionals from each region of the United States and membership includes museum and gallery Preparators, Registrars and commercial art handlers. Any interested individual, group or company, is welcome to join PACIN and by doing so, will help them fulfil their mission.

The PACIN website www.pacin.org includes Job Listings, a very active Listserve and a wealth of relevant information. We will bring you details of the workshop to be hosted by PACIN at AAM 2008 in Denver in our next issue.

BEST PRACTICES PROGRAM

As many of you may know, there are currently no best practices in place to regulate commercial fine art storage. In support of our code of ethics, ICEFAT is in stage two of a three-year process to establishing a Best Practices Program.

Our goal is two-fold. The primary goal is to provide guidance to commercial fine art warehouses for increasing security and safety of fine art and other collections of value while in storage. The secondary goal is to produce a list for the fine art industry of ICEFAT certified warehouses that offer premium fine art storage.

The preliminary draft is comprised of nine categories and contains over 200



guidelines. The final version will be approved in September 2008. We believe that this is an essential step in becoming a responsible trade body.

*Courtney Maier
Crozier Fine Arts Inc, New York USA*

NEW MEMBER

USA

ARTECH FINE ART SERVICES

Artech Fine Art Services, Seattle, started as a small group of artists in 1977 and has blossomed into a highly regarded, professional staff of over 50 employees. Their primary areas of expertise include:

- Packing and Shipping - to museum standards, anywhere in the world. Artech offers packing experience with all artwork, including art-glass, large paintings, and heavy sculpture. Gateway to British Columbia and Alaska.
- Installation Services - of any scale; regional or beyond.
- Storage - Artech's Fine Art Storage is the Northwest's premier purpose built facility, meeting museum standards for climate control and security.
- Fine Art Framing - custom made frames with an archival focus, our designers are unmatched with decades of experience.



NEWSLETTER SUBCOMMITTEE



SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS (LEFT TO RIGHT) HERMAN CHAN (MICHELLE INTERNATIONAL), MIKE HASCALL (ARTECH), SUZAN SENGOSZ (US ART), KIM POWELL (EDITOR), JONATHAN SCHWARTZ (ATELIER4), ANDI ALAMEDA (WEBMASTER) AND BRYAN COOKE (COOKES CRATING) MEET IN VANCOUVER.

WHAT'S ON 2008

27 APRIL - 1 MAY 2008

AAM Convention, Denver
www.aam-us.org/aam08

18 - 24 MAY

International Museums Week
ICOM www.icom.museum

17 - 21 SEPTEMBER

Western Museums Association Annual Meeting. Anchorage. Alaska
www.westmuse.org

25 - 28 SEPTEMBER

ICEFAT Convention Florence, Italy
www.icefat.org



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ICEFAT NEWS

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