

APPRECIATING ART TRANSPORT AND WAREHOUSING RISKS

By Huntington T. Block

When shipping your artwork either through long-haul transit to an international art exhibition or short-term warehousing, it is important to understand and review the safety and security of the shipping method as well as any temporary storage locations used along the way. Whether you are shipping an expensive painting or a lesser valued photograph, we recommend first identifying the potential risk exposure of the artwork during transit, due to size, weight, and shape characteristics.

For packing, shipping, and storage, your fine art should be protected properly by utilizing competent packers, to ensure that your artwork can withstand the normal hazards associated with transit or storage.

Although many believe the most common risk to artwork is theft, the occurrence is quite rare. In fact, artwork being damaged during transport is one of the common causes of fine art insurance losses with around 60% of art damage claims arising from transport.¹

Loss or damage can occur at any stage of the movement of the artwork, whether it be due to insufficient packing prior to shipping, poor handling of the item during shipping, or while in storage.

Because transporting of artwork is where damage most frequently occurs, Huntington T. Block recommends using quality, professional art handlers, shippers, and warehouses where possible to ensure the safety of fine art pieces.

SHIPPING CARRIERS:

Huntington T. Block understands that private collectors, museums, and dealers look at many variables when shipping their artwork, seeking the safest conditions at a reasonable price.

- When HTB's clients ask about using standard carriers, we advise them to expect that their packages will be treated differently than with professional art handling.
- Consider a professional fine art handler. Art handlers specialize in fine art shipping, are often artists themselves, and are interested in protecting the artwork under their care.

ART STORAGE FACILITY:

- Look for warehouses that hire and train art handlers who have an arts background. Human error accounts for a great deal of damage to art and interested employees may help reduce such errors.
- Despite the attractive prices of self-storage facilities, they don't always include essential services to protect artwork, including temperature and humidity protections, reliable security systems and control over stored commodities onsite, they should be avoided whenever possible.
- It's also important to consider the location of an art storage facility to help ensure that the facility has the appropriate protections in place to keep your artwork safe in case of a catastrophic event.
- Finally, when selecting a fine art storage, as fine art storage facilities are used by many individuals, prior to moving artwork to that location, ask your broker if the insurance carrier approves of the facility and is able to insure the artwork at this location.

¹ <https://www.burnsandwilcox.com/60-percent-of-art-damage-claims-arise-from-transport/>

PACKING, SHIPPING, AND STORAGE RECOMMENDATIONS:

When shipping and storing artwork, anyone who deals with the shipping and storage of artwork, should:

1. Be clear on who is responsible for the shipment/transit/storage and insurance of the artwork.
2. Have a condition report of the art conducted both prior to any packing and shipping and upon delivery. A condition report documenting the condition of the item, should be prepared by a professional third party and included with the shipment documentation.

THE VALUE OF HUNTINGTON T. BLOCK:

We understand that each collection is unique. Huntington T. Block helps our clients reduce risk exposure through our consultative approach and experience. Experienced based advice and guidance helps our clients protect their artwork and avoid a loss. For more information, please contact a representative from Huntington T. Block at: HTBinfo@huntingontblock.com.

This article is provided for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide individualized advice. This article should not be viewed as a substitute for the guidance and recommendations of a retained professional and should not be construed as legal advice. All descriptions, summaries or highlights of coverage are for general informational purposes only and do not amend, alter, or modify the actual terms or conditions of any insurance policy. Coverage is governed only by the terms and conditions of the relevant policy.

Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency, Inc. is a licensed insurance producer in all states; Texas License #17489; operating in CA under license # 0825502.

© 2026 Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency, Inc.