

TIPS FOR SHIPPING FINE ART PAINTINGS TO A WSA EXHIBITION

By Jaceena Shepard, WSA Exhibition Director

Congratulations! Your painting has been selected for exhibition. So what do you need to do to make sure your art arrives at the Venue undamaged?

Below are some tips to help you work through the packing and shipping process.

1. Review the Framing and Delivery Instructions posted on the WSA website.
If you don't understand any of the requirements, contact Jaceena Shepard (jaeshep@aol.com) or Shirley Tucker (sjtuck41@att.net) for clarification.
2. Inspect your painting. Is your painting framed according to the Prospectus requirements?
 - The painting must be exactly as it appeared on the online entry form – no alterations or price changes.
 - Maximum Frame Size is 48" in any direction.
 - Frame must be simple wood (without ornamentation) or gold, silver or black metal (without decorative corners). Don't forget to consider American Frame Company (www.AmericanFrame.com) when buying frames. As a member of the American Frame Alliance Program, WSA members 5% back on purchases. Use Code **"Alliance 2014"**
 - Frames must be less than 3" wide.
 - Color painted frames are not allowed.
 - Frame must be light enough to be handled by one person.
 - The artwork must be under Plexiglas plastic glazing, wired with taped ends, and ready to hang.
 - No saw tooth hangers.
 - Mats (inner and outer) if used, must be white or off-white tones.
 - Wood Liners/Filets, if used, must be wood tone, white, gold or silver.
3. Clean the framed artwork before preparing it for shipping. Check for any damages or blemishes to the frame.
4. Attach the Accepted Entry Form that is with the Framing and Delivery instructions on the WSA website, to the back of your painting. This is a must. The personnel receiving the shipped art will check it against the Juror's Accepted art list/images.
5. When you are packing your painting, take no shortcuts. It is either packed right or you will have to suffer through the phone call that says, "Your painting arrived damaged."
 - The most cost effective way to ship a painting is with an Art Shipping Strongbox. You can purchase these boxes from Airfloat Systems (www.AirFloatSystems.com). WSA members will get a 20% discount on their purchases; use **code "WSA"**. The boxes are available with or without ABS (puncture proof plastic) liners. For paintings of higher value, I strongly recommend going with the lined box. The boxes come in different sizes to accommodate all size paintings, with easy instructions. They are reusable. They are the quickest, safest, and most affordable way to ship your art.
 - If you plan to use another shipping container make sure it is strong enough to protect your painting and durable enough to be used for return shipping. **Nailed or stapled crates will not be accepted.**
 - If you are not using the Airfloat Systems Strongbox, these shipping company recommendations will help:
 - Place Glass Skin protective tape over the Plexiglas on your framed artwork. Glass Skin protects the artwork from accidental breakage or shattering of the Plexiglas. I used to think this step was not necessary until one of my paintings was scratched with shattered Plexiglas when the box was dropped. It is easy to apply and remove and can be found at most art supply stores, including Airfloat Systems. It can happen, so protect against it.
 - Use paper to wrap your entire painting. This protects the surface of the painting.

- Now, take a piece of cardboard and cover the face of the framed painting before bubble wrapping. You can tape this directly to the paper wrap. In order to ensure a safe transit in a cardboard box, you need to give 3-4 inches of bubble wrap thickness.
 - Make sure the sides and corners of the painting have extra padding. These are generally the problem areas when shipping.
 - Place the painting into the cardboard box. Line the box with extra sheets of cardboard and bubble wrap. Make sure the painting cannot move around in the box.
 - **Packing peanuts are not allowed.**
 - Put a copy of the shipping invoice inside the shipping box, along with your pre-paid UPS or FEDEX shipping label for the return of your artwork. If your shipping label falls off or is removed accidentally, the invoice will help the shipper to identify the contents and where it is going.
 - Secure the outer box with strong, reinforced packing tape. Tape all joints that can be opened.
 - Contact your shipper for the best date for shipment to arrive at the Venue on time.
6. Make sure either the shipper (UPS OR FED-EX) or you have adequate insurance to cover any damage to or loss of your painting.
 - Carry your own insurance
 - Ship via Fed-Ex next day delivery. The reason for this is, Fed-Ex will leave next day shipments on the trucks instead of moving them to the warehouse, or they will hand carry them through the process. Since most damage comes from aggressive handling, the less time your shipment spends in transit, the safer it is.
 - In my opinion, the best way to go is with UPS. The most cost effective way to ship a painting is buy and use a Strongbox. Insure the painting to cover damage or loss, and send it standard overnight or 2-day delivery. Note: If you have a high-value painting, insure the package for \$3500 or more, and send it standard overnight or 2-day delivery. All next day and 2-day packages, with high values over \$3500 are hand carried instead of moved into the warehouse. It is a safe and cost conscious way to go.
 - If you use UPS it is best to go to an actual UPS store vs. a third party who handles UPS. Sometimes the UPS handlers are not aware of the UPS policy to provide Pre-paid return labels and will refuse your request.
 7. Be sure to mark or label the shipping container as “FRAGILE – ART – HANDLE WITH CARE” to alert the handlers during the shipping process.
 8. If recycling a shipping box, remove all labels; cover all imprints from the previous shipping. If there is an intended sequence of opening the container, mark it as well; i.e. “OPEN THIS SIDE FIRST”.
 9. To avoid risk of damage to the frame, mark the container with “OPEN WITHOUT CUTTING OR PUNCTURING”.
 10. The Shipper will need to know the size in inches (Height, Width, Depth) of the package. They also need to know the value, if you are going to insure it, and the zip code of its destination to quote you a shipping price. Be prepared.

Many of you may have different tips that work well. If you care to share them, WSA would most appreciate to hear from you.

My thanks to UPS, FED-EX, Airfloat Systems, and American Frame for providing information included in this article.