

A 4-STEP GUIDE

to Safe & Secure Art Storage & Handling



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Introduction

Throughout this four-step guide, our expert art handlers at Art Work FAS share their in-depth knowledge and best practices for art storage and handling. Whether your collection is one piece or one thousand pieces, a family heirloom or a complex contemporary installation, our team has the specialized skills and experience in the proper transportation, installation, and storage of artwork. Each of these four steps plays an important role in keeping your art safe and secure.

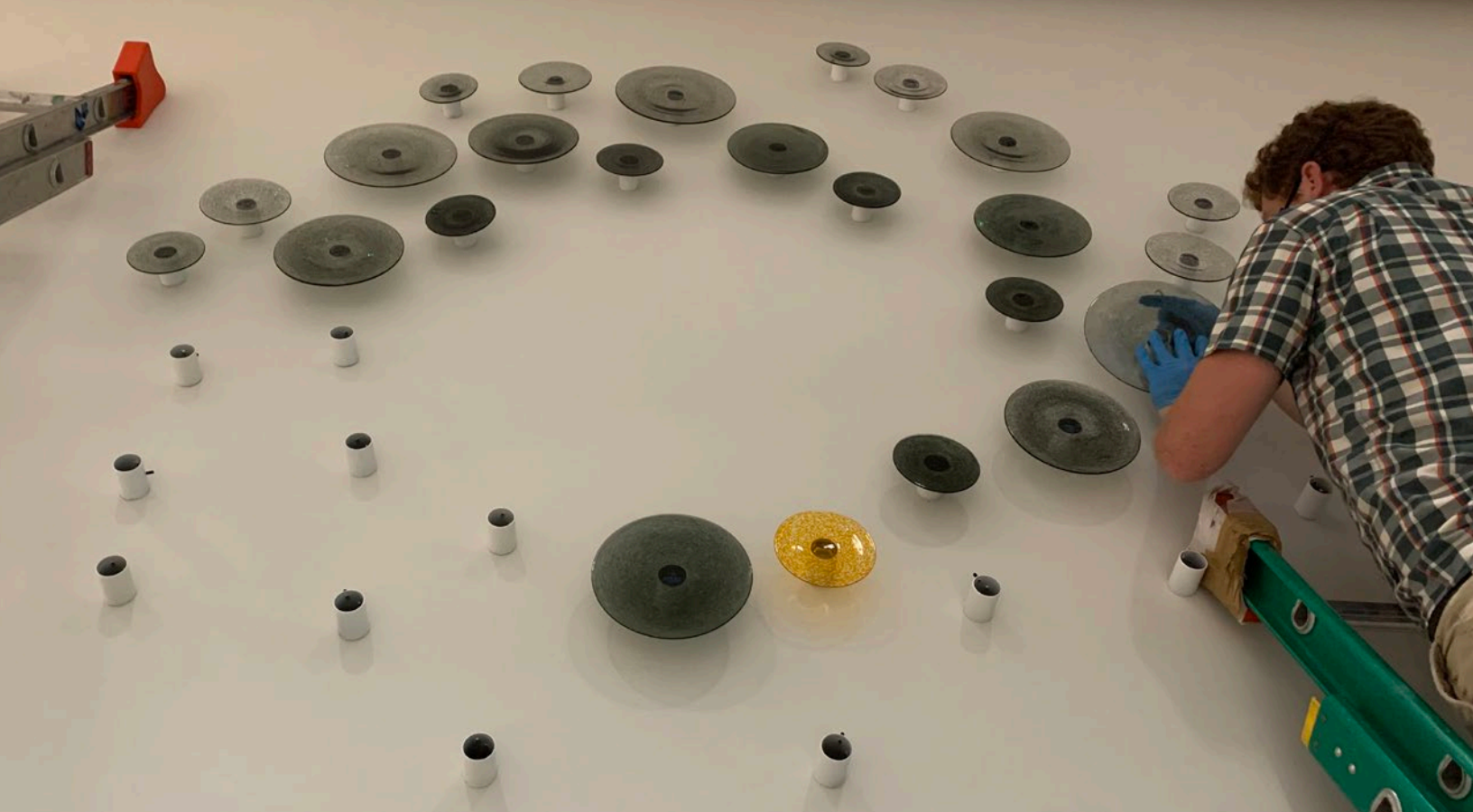
Step 1: Understand the Role of an Art Handler

Step 2: Select the Right Crate for Transportation

Step 3: Find the Proper Climate for Storage

Step 4: Preserve & Protect Your Art

We share your passion for art and are dedicated to the care of private collections, ensuring that they will last for many years. Your collection is valuable to you—sentimentally, aesthetically, and monetarily. We've created this guide to help you ensure the safety and preservation of your artwork.



Step 1:

Understand the Role of an Art Handler

You may think that hiring any moving or storage company will work for getting artwork from Point A to Point B. Or, maybe you've decided to try your hand at installing art in your home, office, or workplace yourself. This is a bit like visiting WebMD versus going to an actual doctor. You may get a quick result, but it's not likely to be the exceptional long-lasting result you were initially looking for. To take the guesswork out of artwork relocation, enlist the help of an art handler. After all, their whole day is filled with planning, care, and all things art.

An art handler plays a key role in the life of a work of art. They oversee a piece of art

or collection's storage, transportation, and installation—among many other things. While many of the technical aspects of being an art handler are learned on the job, intuitive artistic knowledge isn't something everyone innately embodies, and it's an essential trait each art handler must have to do their job well.

Art handlers have a unique perspective while working with each piece since they care for and handle each work in a different way. The intimacy an art handler has with every piece is special and allows them to care for each piece as if it were their own, whether it's an O'Keeffe or a 100-year-old sculpture.

Day to Day

The day of an art handler will vary depending on the assignment. It may begin with building a handcrafted crate designed for an individual piece. From there, an art handler may expect countless hours of planning, installing, and deinstalling works for public displays of art or private collections.

With works of various mediums placed in different locations, teams must coordinate, schedule, and execute installs that are specific to each project, starting with shipping and transportation. Location, hardware, and many other factors are planned in advance in order to perform seamless installs and deinstalls.

Skills and Knowledge

Art handlers are typically artists themselves or have degrees in the arts. Those with first-hand

knowledge of artwork have an advantage that allows them to care for and handle a masterpiece, like a Degas, in the specific way it needs to be treated. The nature of the job also includes grasping a variety of tasks, so it's important that each handler is an expert in every aspect of handling art.

Furthermore, the ability to properly plan and anticipate any specific need is a huge aspect of what makes each project run smoothly. Being prepared for unexpected circumstances is an important part of every project, and our staff at Art Work FAS is ready to problem solve on the spot. We're armed with the additional hardware, tools, and equipment for almost any hiccup, and we know how to keep our cool when plans shift last-minute. Having trained artists with an eye for aesthetics is something we take pride in, and we are happy to advise you on your project.





Step 2:

Select the Right Crate for Transportation

When it comes to transporting fine art, every detail matters. This is especially so when choosing the right shipping crate. Crates are designed for transporting and storing art, and each crate has its place. The size, media, and quantities of the fine art that you are shipping or storing are all factors in deciding what kind of crate is best for your situation.

Open Crates

Open crates—such as U-frames, slat crates, or pallets—are a good choice for the local movement of fine art that needs protection beyond softpacking (cardboard, foam lining,

glasskin taping, and/or archival packaging material). These types of crates can also be utilized for longer trips made by experienced fine art handlers on properly equipped trucks.

Enclosed Crates

Enclosed crates are necessary if you are shipping your fine art via air, ocean, or road freight - any time it will not be cared for by fine art professionals. And while experienced art handlers like Art Work FAS treat all fine art carefully, if your piece is particularly delicate or sensitive, an enclosed crate is the safest option.

One-Way Crates

Despite the name, these strong, economically priced crates can actually be used more than once. Our team typically recommends this type of crate for anyone looking to safely ship their art on a one-way trip.

Standard Crates

Standard, mid-grade crates are made of stronger plywood materials. They are appropriate for heavier and larger items. A great benefit of standard crates is that they can be reused multiple times and maintain reliability with each use. We recommend standard crates for transporting art on two-way trips.

Museum Crates

With artwork that is part of a touring exhibition, of extremely high value, or just very sensitive, we recommend a museum crate with reinforced construction. This crate is similar in construction to a standard crate, but the added security of reinforced construction with an exterior sealant and bolt and plate closure system helps this crate withstand years of wear and tear.

Don't Risk it with DIY

Improper crating can lead to the damage of artwork. Common errors we see when people try to ship and transport artwork without professional help include:

- Surface damage from pressure or abrasion, typically seen from too many pieces of art packed into one crate or not taking care to arrange the art properly.

Some pieces require that nothing comes in contact with their surface, even while they're on the move.

- Damage from having traveled in the wrong orientation—yes, this matters!
- Crates that are built without skids (feet) or handles, making them hard to move and easy to drop.
- Damage from long-term storage in wrapping that isn't archival. Art can stay in storage crates for years, so when we see household materials used by people in an effort to preserve their artwork, there can be staining, discoloring, and bonding with art—the exact opposite of preserving for safekeeping.

At Art Work FAS, all of our crate interiors are customized for the artwork that they contain. The most common interior setup for flatwork (2-D pieces), is a series of 2 inch thick, 3.5 inch wide foam bumpers around the interior of the crate. The packed artwork is then placed inside these bumpers. Common interior setups for 3-D pieces include packing into smaller inner boxes, packing into cavities cut out of sheets of soft foam, and brace packing. We also prepare crate interiors with full esterfoam lining, rigid foam insulation, and Tyvek or Marvelseal inner vapor barriers.

Let our team of vetted professionals assist with your art needs to avoid common mishaps such as surface damage, crate damage, or long-term damage. No matter the shape, size, and dimensions of your artwork, we know how to securely crate and pack it.



Step 3:

Find the Proper Climate for Storage

With clients looking to store artwork for days, weeks, months, and even years, it's imperative that storage facilities are secure in every sense. Every detail should be considered, including the characteristics of each artwork, the length of storage time needed, and the level of access needed based on the activity of your collection. When it comes to protecting and caring for art, climate plays a vital role. Every medium requires a specific habitat to preserve the integrity of the art.

Climate Storage Options

Depending on your piece or pieces, you will need to decide on climate-controlled storage or non-climate storage.

With climate-controlled storage, both temperature and humidity levels are regulated. Climate controlled storage works well for a variety of mediums, sizes, and quantities of artwork. The industry standard for climate storage is a year-long temperature between

70 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit. The humidity levels should be consistently monitored as well and maintained at around 50%. Your storage facility's team should always stay up-to-date with current research on how to best conserve art of different materials.

Non-climate, or heated storage, may be a good option for outdoor sculptures, exhibition furniture, or works that will be crated and stable enough for the regular climate in the area that you're storing them. For example, Art Work FAS is located in the Pacific Northwest, so pieces that aren't extra sensitive can be stored in a non-climate controlled environment since we have a very temperate climate. If you're storing art in an area that has more extreme temperatures or humidity fluctuations, non-climate controlled storage won't be the best route to take for storage.

Temperature Control

Temperature and humidity go hand-in-hand, and extreme changes in either or both of these factors can contribute to or hasten material deterioration. All materials are subject to deterioration, such as cracking, warping, molding, melting (particularly for encaustics or

wax works), and peeling. Extreme humidity is of particular concern with materials that easily absorb moisture such as paper, wood, textiles, woven pieces, and organic materials (bones or fur). Adhesives can also loosen and release with extreme climate changes which could lead to the need to reframe works with hinged mounting or those that are "floating" within a frame.

While a conservator can repair and restore many types of damaged works to varying degrees, there are always cases of items that will be damaged beyond repair. It's always in the best interest of any piece to be proactive and take appropriate precautions in advance.

Other Benefits

In addition to climate control, there are various benefits of storing fine art in a storage facility: light (UV) protection, pest control, professional handling, appropriate packing, protection from dust and pollen, particulate control, and added security. The management of all environmental factors along with safe handling helps to ensure works of any material will be kept safe for the future.





Step 4: Preserve & Protect Your Art

The biggest mistakes people make when trying to ship and store artwork by themselves are using inadequate packing materials, protection, or the wrong hardware.

With extensive field experience, Art Work Fine Art Services' team knows the ins-and-outs of how to protect your unique piece of art so that it will make it to the desired destination intact and ready to be put on display just as the artist intended. Below is a list of things to keep in mind as your collection begins to grow:

Install

Installation is perhaps the most stressful part of owning artwork. It's no secret that during this step, for the untrained or non-professional, anything can go wrong—from not using the right hardware to hang a piece to hanging it in an inherently unsafe place.

At Art Work FAS, we work to ensure the safest possible installation and have successfully done this for decades with thousands of pieces. We take into account the size, weight, and medium

of the artwork to determine the appropriate hardware needed to successfully and safely display a piece. If your collection grows or you need one piece or one hundred pieces relocated—we can handle that too.

Ship

When it comes to artwork, certain pieces can safely make it to their destination if they are effectively softpacked and transported via art carrier. Some pieces may also require custom crating as an added protection. If you have pieces arriving from overseas, make sure you have the proper crate size with wood, foam, and a vapor barrier. Artwork should also travel in a temperature-controlled, securely locked truck with GPS monitoring, no matter the size or medium.

Store

Whether it is stored short-term or long-term, art requires very specific storage in order to

preserve every detail of your fine art. Climate control, environmental control, how much pressure is on the artwork, and even the orientation that pieces are stored at may seem like minute details, but they can make a world of difference.

Art Services with Our Team

No matter what your artwork needs, the Art Work Fine Art Services' team is here and ready to create a unique plan for you. During your consultation, we will discuss storage, shipping, and the installation of your one-of-a-kind piece. For storage, our team will learn more about your artwork quantities, sizes, and mediums. If you are inquiring with us about shipping, our team will discuss your destination. If you are interested in using Art Work Fine Art Services to install your art, we will discuss the medium/media on which your art will be displayed (concrete walls, drywall, sheetrock, wood paneling, etc.).





About Art Work FAS

For nearly 30 years, Art Work Fine Art Services has served as the trusted logistics partner of some of America's most highly-regarded museums, galleries, collectors, and artists. We specialize in expert handling and work passionately and painstakingly to customize unique and creative solutions for door-to-door domestic and international shipping, warehousing, and preservation of your artwork. Over the years, we have reliably crated, stored, transported, and cared for thousands of pieces of artwork, ensuring safe delivery and reliable installation.

Art Work FAS supports our local art communities with offices in Portland and Seattle, but we also work with clientele in California's Bay Area and Silicon Valley, as well as in Los Angeles, New York City, and across the Rocky Mountains.

To request an estimate or find out more about the services our team at Art Work Fine Art Services offers, visit artworkfas.com.

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