



# ICEFAT NEWS

News from the International Convention of Exhibition and Fine Art Transporters — Newsletter No.2, 2011

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The American Association of Museums conference is now just a memory to most, and so our thoughts turn to the future.

Who is turning 35?

ICEFAT is! We are pleased to announce that this year's annual Convention to be held October 20-23 in Las Vegas, USA will mark the 35th anniversary of our organization.

Following our Convention, many of our Members will trek to Houston, Texas as ICEFAT and its member companies are once again pleased to announce our support for the Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums (RC-AAM), 4th International Registrars Symposium (IRS 2011) on November 4 - 6, 2011 in Houston, Texas. ICEFAT is proud to have played a significant role in every one of these symposia since their inception in New Orleans. This year we will have a record number of attendees present at this very important and informative meeting. Our Members look forward to learning more about the issues and challenges facing museum staff and registrars and to sharing their knowledge about the world of Fine Art shipping and logistics.

We all have a stake in protecting the world's culture and heritage, this ability is enhanced with the

## ISPM15 - DON'T BUG MY CRATES, DUDE!



Kim Powell, our very own erudite editor of ICEFAT News is too indignant to write this article. At a recent industry conference, she attended a session where there was a proliferation of incorrect data regarding wooden crates in Asia. One presenter had not been able to source ISPM (International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures) compliant cases there and had to have exhibition crates manufactured in Europe and then transported to Asia. Not only is this something that is environmentally unsound (that's a huge carbon footprint to transport those empty boxes), it's just not true.

First, a little background on ISPM. Daniel Mithran of International Art Services in Malaysia writes; "Fumigating wooden products was actually started by Australia over 25 years back. In the old days it was quite evident that wood products coming out of Third World Countries may have carried remnants [sic] of bark and also carried mites and borers and other parasites that could spread. Although heat treated wooden products are considered acceptable or safe, the best form of Phytosanitation is Fumigation with Methyl Bromide."

We have canvassed some of our member agents in Asia and received unanimous confirmation that they are all able to produce ISPM15 Museum and Exhibition crates. If not, they would effectively be excluded from international trade. Helu-Trans in Singapore, Dongbu Art in Korea, Michelle Art Services in Hong Kong and mainland China and Crown Van Lines in Taiwan; all wrote back indicating that their countries are all participants in this ISPM program and that they use one of three methods to fabricate ISPM15 complaint crates:

- Manufacture from certified heat treated lumber
- Fumigation of the crates prior to delivering them to the pack site
- Fabrication wholly from manufactured timber (ply, MDF etc)

So contentious was the issue of not being able to obtain compliant crates in Asia, that we even received a letter from a non-ICEFAT agent based on Beijing (Huaxie Fine Art Freight Services) who confirmed that they also supply fumigated crates for their international shipments.

exchange of knowledge. ICEFAT members are keenly aware of the importance of the trusted position placed upon us to provide the "Highest Standards in Fine Art Shipping" and the benefits to all, through supporting like minded organizations.

Live, learn and we will all surely grow.

*Mark Starling  
ICEFAT Chair*

## ICEFAT HONORS LOYAL MEMBERS

*20 year Members*

**Gondrand S.p.A. Milan, Turin, Rome, Venice & Naples, Italy**

**Since 1989**



Gondrand has been providing transport and logistics services throughout Italy since 1866 and, with dedicated Fine Art staff in all its Italian offices, is able to provide all the services you've come to expect from an ICEFAT agent.

"Our business has changed so much since the company was founded" said Giorgio Longinotti, Manager of Gondrand's fine art operations. "The methods of transport, the materials and equipment we can use, the communication. Who would think in 1866 that we would be sending our patrimony around the world on aeroplanes? Or that we would send a message to someone across the world and get an answer back in minutes? Even so, the same basic rules apply now as they did then: our clients want attention to every detail, careful handling and secure and reliable transport. We aim to give them exactly what they want."

As an early member of ICEFAT, Gondrand he worked for over 20 years to uphold the standards of our industry.

In order to set the record straight, I would like to confirm that all ICEFAT agents produce ISPM15 compliant cases; whether fumigated with accompanying certificate, or stamped with both an indication of heat treated wood as well as



the requisite "bug stamp" with a number identifying the program participant. If anyone finds themselves in an unfortunate situation where there are no available compliant cases, just reach out to the nearest ICEFAT agent in a neighboring country and they will be more than happy to organize the transport of suitable product.

The above flags represent all the nations participating in ISPM 15.

Jonathan Schwartz, Atelier4 Inc,  
New York

## GREEN POINT

### PLASTIC CAPS & PLASTIC BOTTLES ARE NOT THE SAME

Plastic drink bottles and their caps are typically not made from the same kind of plastic and therefore should not be mixed together for recycling.

Soda and water bottles are usually made from Type 1 plastic, while bottle caps are made from Type 5 plastic. When the two types of materials are mixed together, one contaminates the other.

Some recycling programs still do not recycle Type 5 plastics.

If a bottle is put into a recycling bin with its cap on, usually the entire bottle is thrown out at the recycling plant. It is too time consuming for workers to remove caps, so they are not recycled. Whilst this may be cost effective for the recycling company, consumers are often shocked to discover that their good intentions end up in landfill!



PACART, Toronto & Montréal,  
Canada

Since 1989



PACART's humble beginning started in 1968 as "PACIFIC ART SERVICES" located in Vancouver, British Columbia. In the 1980's PACART expanded to Calgary, Alberta and Toronto, Ontario. During this time the name "PACART" was trademarked to give the company nationwide visibility.

One of PACART's owners and Managing Director, Mark Starling says "our next logical step was to become the Canadian strategic business partner in the international fine art transport market". In 1989, PACART had the good fortune to be asked to join the ICEFAT family of highly skilled companies, providing fine art and exhibition shipping solutions around the globe. Mark tells us "Our ICEFAT membership has solidified PACART's position in the international marketplace" noting that PACART's international department now accounts for one third of its annual sales. Ten years later in 1998, PACART expanded into Canada's other major cultural centre, Montréal, Quebec, where PACART provides a full range of services from this important cultural centre.

PACART's commitment, together with Mark's strong personal interest in promoting ICEFAT's goals and objectives, has led him to be very active within the organization. He has been a member of the ICEFAT Steering Committee for 9 years, assuming the role of Chairman for the past 7 years. Mark concludes by saying "I look forward to advancing the ideologies of ICEFAT, the world's only formal association of fine art handling & logistics companies".

ICEFAT's commitment to the highest standards in our industry mirrors the corporate philosophy of PACART, this 4th generation family run business.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF ART TRANSPORT

Whilst it has never been a secret that art is fragile and irreplaceable, for centuries the packing and transport of artworks was a rather haphazard affair. Those involved relied heavily on common sense to protect objects while on display or in transit.

The common goal of museum professionals - in particular Conservators, Registrars and Preparators (the US name for art handlers) and art handling companies - is to manage risks and mitigate hazards which may threaten the safety of art and artefacts. These professions think first in terms of preventive conservation – reducing risks to collections.

Whilst the idea of preventive conservation is ever evolving there is no cut-and-dried definition – but all involved would agree that it "seeks to delay the natural or accidental degradation of cultural objects through pro-active measures that address safe conditions for management, storage, use, transportation or exhibition of collection items." <sup>1</sup> The field of preventive conservation extends from maintaining proper environmental controls and screening for pests, to handling, packing, storage and transport techniques.

Proper art handling is the cornerstone on which the concept of preventive conservation is built. Art handlers or preparators are the blue-collar workers of the art world. Museums and collectors rely on art handlers to prepare works for exhibition and storage; for crating and transit; and for mitigating damage when disasters strike

In the 1980's a group of museum professionals got together and "made an effort to codify the tricks of their trade."<sup>2</sup> In 1991, the Tate Gallery's Conservation Department, in conjunction with the Canadian Conservation Institute; the Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution (USA); and the National Gallery of Art (USA) organized the international conference "Art in transit: studies in the transport of paintings" which presented the results of rigorous research and testing into the packing and transport of paintings. Two publications were released in conjunction with the Conference - the first of their kind to explain both the science and practical application of the testing results. These books remain the reference of choice for most professional art packers and handlers today.<sup>3</sup>

In good times and in bad, when a work of art is sold it has to travel somewhere – from the old owner to the auction house or gallery; or to the new owner. Some collectors will move artwork on the cheap or attempt to do it themselves – I have seen a \$100,000+ painting put on the backseat of the car. Underfunded Museums and Historic Houses can be tempted to give this a try, too. This can be very hard on the art. Most Conservators will tell you that a great deal of the work they do is on transport related damages. Proper art handling is very important and yet so often neglected or taken for granted.

Galleries and collectors are increasingly being drawn to the services provided by professional art handlers and art logistics companies.

There have been specialist art handling companies for quite a long time – including Andre Chenue in France since 1760 and Gander & White in the UK since 1934 – but it was not until the 1970's that art logistics developed

Rodolphe Haller, Geneva, Switzerland  
Since 1985



Rodolphe Haller was founded in 1925 by two brothers Otto and Rodolphe.

Obviously Rodolphe was the most active and his name remains today.

The company was first involved in general cargo, especially raw materials. During WWII, RH controlled the only surface/railway link from Switzerland to the ocean/seaport via Spain to Lisbon.

After 1945 RH opened an office in Antwerp and became the exclusive agent for Lykes Line. They specialized in traffic of very heavy pieces (up to 400 tons) from and to the US.

A replica of a MS operating on the Rhine River was found by our "in house" historian Mr Jean-Pierre Falter in the Museum of Transport in Lucerne bearing the name "Doris Haller" Rodolphe's daughter. (They don't want to give it back to us.)

In 1978 Daniel Dubois joined RH coming from SGS Fine Art Department and he started RH's operations in Fine Art Logistics and since then RH has been exclusively dedicated to Storage and Art Transport.

When Rodolphe Haller joined ICEFAT in 1985 there were 4 employees in Geneva. Today 27 persons are divided between warehouse and office – 6 trucks and 6,000 square metres of warehouse in Geneva Freeport.

Mr Daniel Dubois followed by Mr Alain Disch have been the regular attendees of the various ICEFAT meetings.

Rodolphe Haller is part of a group of companies based in Switzerland and France providing logistic services in Art Transport, jewelry and watches transport, and General Cargo.

seriously. Museums began applying standards and materials developed by the electronics industry and the military to package and transport their treasures.

Most fine art insurance policies will stipulate that items covered must be packed and shipped by "competent professionals".

But just what is a competent professional and where do you find one?

Around the same time as museum professionals started collaborating on what would become "Art in Transit", professional art logistics companies also started collaborating, and in 1977 at a meeting in Amsterdam, ICEFAT (International Convention of Exhibition and Fine Art Transporters) was founded. ICEFAT is a worldwide, democratic organization of independent art transportation companies. Its members specialize in handling and shipping art, artifacts and antiquities and all are dedicated to promoting the highest standards of professionalism in the fields of museum and gallery logistics. Its members meet annually to exchange ideas, agree on standards and foster relationships with each other.

To be accepted as a member of ICEFAT an applicant must have a minimum of five years' experience in the field of art logistics, be able to display financial stability and have the support of a number of museums in their region. For more information about ICEFAT members around the globe go to [www.icefat.org](http://www.icefat.org). The ICEFAT Members link will take you to contact details of all current members.

Among the many benefits of using professional art logistics companies is that they are adept at dealing with often confusing and counter-intuitive customs and permit issues, ensuring that your treasures spend as little time as possible in transit – and therefore at risk.

<sup>1</sup> [www.nebraskahistory.org/conservet/treasures/glossary.htm](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/conservet/treasures/glossary.htm)

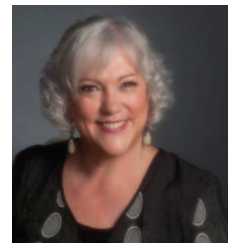
<sup>2</sup> [www.forbes.com/forbes-life-magazine/2007/0917/075.html](http://www.forbes.com/forbes-life-magazine/2007/0917/075.html)

<sup>3</sup> The two publications are:

- Marion F Micklenburg (Editor) ART IN TRANSIT: Studies in the transport of paintings. 1991. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC ISBN 10: 089468 163X, and
- Mervin Richard, Marion F Micklenburg & Ross Merrill (editors) ART IN TRANSIT: Handbook for Packing and Transporting Paintings. 1991. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

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