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THE SUBTLE ART OF PACKAGING ARTWORKS

When shipping works of art, packaging is of primordial importance. Proper packaging enables major exhibitions to move from city to city, facilitates auctions and gallery sales, and allows buyers to forward purchases to destinations of their choosing. Packaging gives artworks wings with which to travel the globe.

At Natural Le Coultre, we have long understood the importance of getting packaging right. We adapt our services to owners' needs, valuations and insurance requirements. We are constantly mindful of climatic and shipping conditions. Packaging criteria are furthermore a subject of negotiation between owners of artworks and major exhibition venues.

Designing and making custom packaging is an art in itself, requiring first-rate expertise and skill as well as in-depth

experience with the types of situations in which a work of art may find itself as it travels the world. Some protective casing might only be used once, to meet the transitory requirements of a given event, and then discarded. Art for art's sake, you might say.

The June edition of our newsletter will give you insight into the different facets of our business. First up, Philippe Knecht, our exhibitions chief, explains the essentials of the packaging business, sharing his experience in making large-scale exhibitions happen. Afterwards, Claude Herrmann, our operations manager in Luxembourg, spells out the advantages of having direct tarmac access. Finally, Christian Pauli walks us through the different stages of logistics supervision at Singapore airport.

Summer greetings.

F. Momente, *Managing Director*
Fine Art Transports Natural Le Coultre,
Geneva



**NATURAL
LE COULTRE**



CUSTOM PACKAGING: THE ONLY RIGHT CHOICE

Interview with Philippe Knecht, exhibitions chief at Natural Le Coultre.

PHILIPPE KNECHT

Managing Director of Expositions Natural Le Coultre SA, a company of the Natural Le Coultre network, and expert in public and private exhibition logistics, chiefly for museums and foundations.



How important to you is packaging in regard to exhibitions, including how artworks are shipped and stored?

P. Knecht: Packaging is an integral part of our business. We pay extremely close attention to all the parameters that in one way or another influence the protection of artworks entrusted to us, such as choice of materials, appropriate dimensions, the number of times packaging will be used as well as the number of artworks that can be packed into a single crate and how they are positioned. We analyse all these factors in detail, tailoring them to whichever work of art is being transported to whichever exhibition. The host organisation's budget – which encompasses both transportation and installation – must be taken into account. Customised service is the usual practice because lenders want their works of art to transit in the best possible conditions.

Do you often have to act as a mediator? Is the chosen packaging solution always on a par with the exhibition artwork's value?

P. Knecht: We offer more than simply packaging solutions and transportation logistics. We are attentive to whatever requests are made by lenders of artwork, and we also have to meet the requirements laid down by the

organiser and the curator appointed as exhibition host. Depending on the artwork's value, lenders may decide to enlist the services of a conveyor to guarantee due care and attention at every stage of the process. Common sense usually prevails, meaning that lawsuits are rare. Museums hosting exhibitions will one day lend out their own works of art, if they have not done so already. They therefore understand the issues at hand.

What type of packaging do you use? How is a suitable solution chosen?

P. Knecht: Packaging is suitable if it is properly adapted to the above parameters and if it meets the needs of our clients, whose situations we consider on an individual basis. Standard rigid packaging may suffice when transporting a single work of art by road over a short distance – no need for museum casing. When artworks are shipped by air freight, however, we systematically manufacture top-of-the-range flight crates. At Natural Le Coultre, we espouse an unwavering commitment to the quality standards that we have established for the most common scenarios, enabling us to submit bids in an efficient and timely manner. Once we have been awarded a contract, we then work with each party to analyse the job in detail – which is vital if operations are to run smoothly. .../...



If there is an accident during the transportation stage and an object is damaged, who pays the bill?

P. Knecht: Generally speaking, the borrower of the artwork, i.e. the host venue, is financially liable for any damage incurred; they will have contracted an insurance policy to cover such risks. Sometimes owners of artwork will require event organisers to subscribe to a particular policy because they know the insurer, who in turn knows the worth of such or such a painting. Agreements are always easier to reach if everyone involved is well-informed.

Is different packaging used when works are simply stored?

P. Knecht: Packaging is less of an issue in storage operations. Either owners already have their own appropriate protection, or they agree to let us custom-build them a crate in proportion to the artwork's value. However, a work of art still needs to be transported before it can be stored. If it originates from a museum and already has its own crate, our only job is to put it in

place – once we have checked that the packaging materials are in good condition and able to withstand the passage of time at our guaranteed temperature and humidity levels.

What has changed over the last decade in the field of packaging?

P. Knecht: The materials we use have changed. They are more resilient and durable thanks to the use of new wood coatings. More rigid foam packing and special reinforced cardboard packaging are also employed... I could go on. Some clients will also ask for special procedures. Meanwhile, all kinds of complex new formalities have sprung up that today require us to be constantly tightening up the organisational side of our logistics. Last but not least, our clients – artwork lenders and exhibition venues alike – have become used to the highest standards in logistics, which is where Natural Le Coultre excels. We pride ourselves on the trust invested in us, and we earn it.



NEW ON THE MARKET: SGS “ART SERVICES”



Since 2015, Art services from SGS deliver reliable and independent scientific analyses and condition reports for artworks and cultural objects to investors, collectors, museums, galleries and transportation companies.

Works of art are complex objects that can deteriorate or be damaged over time. When a collector buys an artwork or lends it to an exhibition, he needs to know about its state of conservation, potential degradation phenomena and actions to prevent them, previous restoration treatments, etc. All these factors have a strong influence on the future preservation of the object and, of course, on its value.

For all these needs, SGS has developed dedicated condition reporting solutions, as well as technical and analytical services. These reports are crucial tools for conservation monitoring as well as for authentication purposes. With a base in the Geneva Freeport, SGS is the only service provider in this category with a global footprint, allowing us to trace the identity and monitor the state of conservation of artworks during international transactions or logistical operations.

SGS is the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company, employing more than 85,000 people and operating from 1,800 laboratories and offices in 170 countries. We are active in most business and industrial sectors.



TARMAC SUPERVISION: AN INDISPENSABLE TASK

C. Pauli, *Managing Director*
Fine Art Logistics Natural Le Coultre,
Singapore

Transporting valuables is a complex operation, requiring the utmost care at all times. Contrary to cash-in-transit services, which are subject to strict rules (e.g. an armoured car and armed security guards are mandatory for all sums exceeding USD 30,000), no legal requirements exist concerning the transportation of valuables – including works of art. Principals are responsible for making the decisions that will ensure the safe transfer of their assets. They may opt to organise insurance and logistics for themselves, contract industry specialists, or enlist a conveyor to accompany a shipment from start to finish. Museums will often require this third service as a maximum-security guarantee for the artworks they own.

Art and valuables logistics have been our core business for years. We can count on a global network to ensure that works of art and other valuables are transported safely. Working adjacent to Changi Airport Singapore, one of Asia's key airfreight hubs, our expert team handles shipments in addition to providing full supervision of tarmac operations. This is vital if we want to monitor the valuables entrusted to us properly.

The tarmac is defined as the areas of an airport covered with tar and macadam, especially the zones where boarding and landing of goods and passengers from their planes are executed. To gain access to the airport tarmac, and therefore to the aircraft and their cargos, personnel have to have a special pass. For instance, they cannot have a criminal record and they must pass the requisite official exams. Tarmac vehicle drivers must also be in possession of an Airside Driving Permit (ADP).

When supervising tarmac operations for valuables arriving, leaving or transiting, we always assign one of our logistics specialists to implement a set series of controls on site (see Tarmac supervision in detail). If delayed or forced to stop, vehicles must relocate to a secured and monitored waiting bay. In addition, special security staff trained in mobile operations can be commissioned to escort vehicles.

In Singapore (our headquarters for large-scale operations in Asia), we handle everything ourselves, from A to Z.../...



IN DETAIL

Day before shipment

- ✓ Confirm flight departure and tag the item/crate for transportation with an ID CODE.
- ✓ Ensure that the conveyor, if applicable, has a seat on the same flight.

Day of shipment

- ✓ Supervise palleting operations at first loading location.
- ✓ As soon as possible provide the principal with the flight number, departure time and location of the item inside the aircraft (including pallet number).
- ✓ Check shipment and monitor from loading until take-off.
- ✓ Monitor the goods handling services provided by the airline (including use of containers where applicable), ensuring that only low-speed forklift trucks are used and transport protection nets are fitted to the cargo hold.

Day of reception

- ✓ Check flight and reservation before unloading.
- ✓ Identify crate markings and reconcile with shipping forms.
- ✓ Monitor transshipment from the aircraft, including any packing into containers, and the handover to the transportation firm.

We carry out these same procedures whenever transporting valuables through other airports.

DIRECT TARMAC ACCESS: ACCESS: A LUXEMBOURG EXCLUSIVE

C. Herrmann, *Executive Manager*
Fine Art Logistics Natural Le Coultre,
Luxembourg



In our globalised world, more and more works of art transit by air as they are ferried back and forth, to and from museums, galleries, art fairs and auctions. However, artworks are most at risk not in the hold of a plane but rather while being transported and handled prior to take-off and after landing.

Storage facilities located in the vicinity of airports may lessen the risk, but unavoidably there will be a short haulage distance. At Luxembourg Freeport, we have a distinctive solution: direct tarmac access.

Direct access to the airport tarmac from LE FREEPORT | Luxembourg makes the whole job considerably easier, avoiding all

the bother of road transit between the storage facility and the airport. Gone are the extra paperwork and customs bonds, transhipments from lorries, the traffic jams, the delays and all the other cost overruns.

Aircraft containers and pallets are consolidated and deconsolidated directly at the Luxembourg Freeport tarmac dock, which is set to the same temperature and humidity conditions as our specially adapted artwork storage facilities.

Faster, safer, cheaper and environmentally friendly. Many have already opted for this solution. Why not try it yourself the next time you need to ship valuables?

ART FAIRS

MASTERPIECE LONDON

2016, 30 June – 6 July

ART-O-RAMA MARSEILLE

2016, 28-30 August

ABC ART BERLIN CONTEMPORARY

2016, 17-20 September

EXPO CHICAGO

2016, 22-25 September

ARTRIO

2016, 28 September – 2 October

EXHIBITIONS

REMBRANDT À GENÈVE

*Château de Penthes
Pregny-Chambésy, Genève*

2016, 23 June – 18 September

PICASSO L'ŒUVRE ULTIME HOMMAGE À JACQUELINE

*Fondation Pierre Gianadda
Martigny*

2016, 18 June – 20 November

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RIEN N'EST PLUS PRÉCIEUX À NOS YEUX QUE VOS ŒUVRES D'ART

Leader mondial suisse pour le stockage, la prise en charge et l'expédition des œuvres d'art, nous vous apportons un niveau de sécurité inégalé pour toutes vos collections.

Expositions Natural Le Coultre à Genève est le partenaire reconnu des musées, des galeries et des collectionneurs pour la présentation, l'emballage, le transport et l'entreposage de toutes vos pièces de valeur.

www.nlc.ch



EXPOSITIONS
NATURAL LE COULTRE