

Ask the Artsperts

by Kristine Meek and Juliana Meek
Harmon-Meek Gallery, Naples, FL

Shipping Art

Dear Artsperts:

I have a painting I need to ship back north for the summer. How do I go about shipping it?

*Signed,
Shipped Out of State*

Dear Shipped,

A few details about the work being shipped must be taken into account first including: the rarity, value, fragility, timeliness of shipment and budget. Of course if the work of art is not valuable and there is no glass on the frame you can bubblewrap it and place it into a box within a larger box and ship it via the postal service or FedEx if it is not beyond the dimensions of width and girth allowed by both services.

But for this answer we are assuming that the artwork has value and fragile aspects. The slowest and safest way to transport art is via a professional art delivery service. This is also the most expensive means. Art handlers offer door to door service and will pack the work for you. It will be transported via their own climate controlled secured truck with two people staying with the truck. This is the service that museums and galleries use to ship entire exhibitions or one work that is large, fragile and/or valuable. Locally Murray Colette at Murray Art Move is a good choice and then there are many national firms such as US-ART and Wren Art Transport.

Your next option is to use a freight forwarder who will come to your home and prepack the item for safe conveyance to their business to box or wood crate the artwork for shipment via a number of different options from FedEx to common carrier. Tim Steady at Cleveland Bass has been doing this in Naples for thirty years. William Hough and Ray the Mover can also provide this service.

There are many packaging and shipping services throughout the area in which you can take the artwork (assuming it will fit in your vehicle) to them and they will pack and ship for you. The main problem with these services is that they love to use Styrofoam “peanuts” which are a nuisance to clean up after unpacking at the destination. We suggest that they use bubblewrap instead, and if the work is on canvas – use a glassine sheet between the canvas and the plastic wrap. We also recommend double boxing the works so that if the outer box is punctured the inter box and work may still be protected.

If you plan to ship the work back to Naples in the fall, we recommend ordering a reusable Airfloat Strongbox. The company will ship the size box you need which has an egg-carton foam rubber interior. The interior is scored so that you can simply tear an opening for the painting leaving a cavity for the artwork to fit into. The heavy cardboard box can withstand almost anything but they also offer boxes with an inner lining of plastic sheeting for added safety. Then simply call FedEx for them to pick up at your residence.

Glass presents additional concerns so it should be taped with removable masking tape in a crisscross pattern so that if it should break the shards of glass will remain intact and not damage the paper of the artwork. If the work of art has value perhaps it would be a great time to switch it out with Optium Acrylic which is unbreakable (as well as UV coated, reflection proof, anti-static and anti-scratch).

Insurance on all these different methods have different criteria and limits. Check with your homeowners policy to see what they will do to insure the item for you and then you will have more options with respect to the carrier you elect to use.

*Sincerely,
The Artsperts*



William Meek with professional art handlers receiving a shipment from Hunt Slonem's studio in Brooklyn, New York.



A Hunt Slonem oil on canvas painting in an antique frame is shown in a Airfloat Strongbox with foam and added plastic interior.