

HOW TO PACK YOUR PASTEL PAINTINGS FOR SHIPPING

good tips for any other paintings, too!

BEFORE YOU SHIP

Make certain that your framer has used a “spacer” between the mat and glass to catch any loose particles that may shake loose. It will prevent most problems with “dusting” on the mats or glass. A good framer will put a spacer the same size of the mat’s outer dimensions but about 3/8” to 1/2” in from the mat opening. Foam core is acid free, so that isn’t a worry. I always spray my pieces with Lascaux fixative before I frame. Fixative is a personal choice, however.

CUSTOM BOXES

If you can afford an airfloat box, by all means buy one, but make certain your recipient will return it! They’re too expensive to lose. Another outlet for decent boxes are the U-Haul mirror boxes, or the Uline company (www.uline.com). Most framers will have boxes from matboard or foamcore, but don’t use them more than once -one way if possible - they really don’t hold up to much travel.

HANDLING THE GLASS ISSUE

Some people get a removable film to go over the glass in case of breakage in transit. It keeps the glass together and prevents damage to the painting. I used to use blue painter’s masking tape to completely cover the glass before shipping, but some rolls adhere too well if the package goes through any hot weather. Now I simply place an extra piece of foam or heavy cardboard the size of the glass over the glass even before bubblewrapping the painting. Another issue is the affinity for the pastel to any "static cling". Before putting bubble wrap around your painting, remember to put a piece of cardboard or matboard over the glass -then wrap in bubble wrap. The reason behind this is that the cardboard prevents the plastic bubblewrap from building up a static on the outside of the glass that might suck any loose bits of pastel against the glass rather than letting them fall behind your mat "spacer". (weird, but true)

PACKING MATERIAL - NO PEANUTS!

I bubblewrap the painting in a way that is easy for the “unwrapper” to handle and then reuse for return shipping if necessary. I try to put the painting in a “box within a box” but with some larger pieces I just use the good bubble wrap - then sandwich the painting within two pieces of waffle foam like you can purchase for use on twin beds. Other good material is the firm foam sheet of material made to insulate garages. (home depot) Another packing material that works fairly well, but is heavier, is carpet pad. I make certain I have also used the waffle foam or other good protecting material on the bottom and sides of the box before putting the painting in, and after inserting the painting again on the top. Make sure it is snug and will not shift in transit. If you need to, crumple newspaper to fill the container. Don’t leave a lot of air space. **NEVER USE PACKING PEANUTS - MANY GALLERIES AND SHOWS WILL NOT EVEN DISPLAY YOUR PIECE - THEY’LL SHIP IT RIGHT BACK TO YOU IF THEY OPEN A PACKING CRATE AND SEE PEANUTS!**

PAPERWORK

Make certain that all necessary papers are included, your name, address, prices, titles, and entry forms or tags, and checks that cover fees or return shipping, etc.

On the outside of your box print “Property of ...” and print your name prominently, preferably in an upper left corner. If you’re sending more than one box, write “1 of __,” “2 of __,” etc., so the recipient knows if they have received all of your pieces if you are shipping multiple containers. I always mark my box “property of Mary Ann Cherry” to guarantee the correct boxes are returned with my work. Some shows also recommend a photo in each box of which piece belongs in it, but so far I haven’t become that organized. It’s a good idea, though! The name of the piece written somewhere logical might be a good idea.

SHIPPING

If it isn't specified in the prospectus or shipping instructions, ask your designated receiver how they prefer to have the package shipped to them. Make certain you give them a return shipping address label and if possible, a prepaid shipping label! If paintings have to be returned C.O.D. it costs a fortune.

At the very least, enclose a check for return shipping with the art paperwork. I personally use Fed-Ex ground, which is actually cheaper than UPS ground right now. It's easy to get an account by going to their office and giving them your charge card number...it minimizes waiting in line the next time you ship. The company actually fed-ex's you a great packet of all the labels and mailing forms you'll need - you fill them out and go drop your package on the counter - end of story. It's so easy! Sometimes it's best to make certain that your chosen shipper actually delivers to your destined area. Some towns have separated the "ground" and "express" business. It's very confusing, but they won't accept each other's packages. (Here in Idaho Falls, they do.) Most art shows are in large enough towns to avoid a lot of confusion on which shipping company will do the best job - in a large urban area they are all available, but remember - the art show may have a personal choice that works best for them - check your paperwork and see if it is specified before you ship.

*A note on general package shipping of personal items: It gets even more confusing in certain rural areas of Montana - the UPS delivers the Fed-Ex packages by mutual agreement, and in even more rural areas, Fed-Ex drops the packages off at the closest Post Office...(in other words, my xmas package to my Dad sat in the Post Office for two weeks until he went to get it himself - shipped Fed-Ex!!!) If you are at all uncertain, find out. I believe this info is easy to find on the web, but the office you normally use will know or check for you.