

PACKAGING AND FREIGHT FOR CERAMICS - part three

– Article by Sandra Black

Shipping work overseas

So you have been invited to exhibit or send work overseas to a client. How do you approach this to get your work safely and securely over there?

Exporting overseas requires a fair amount of research. Apart from getting reasonable quotes for freight, you need to research import duties and taxes for each country which are charged at point of entry.

You also need to find out how to describe your work i.e. art object, pottery, vessel, sculpture etcetera as there may be special regulations or identification codes to use. Each description can attract different duties so you must check this out.

Your gallery should be able to help out at this point and send you the information you need to know. Austrade may also be able to give advice as they often assist financially to help Australian galleries and artists to send work abroad. Choosing a freight company is probably best done by speaking to fellow artists or galleries for their recommendations. After that phone around get some quotes. Who you choose will probably be based on how much work you are sending and where.

Choosing your Freight Handler

For small items and one off pieces to an overseas gallery, competition or client your best option would probably be Australia Post. Well packed and sent via Air you can get reasonable rates and some basic insurance. Different customs forms are also available for you to fill in depending on the value of goods. Australia post also produces a hand book so you can do price comparisons before posting. If sending to a private client you need to include freight and insurance in the cost of your artwork. If sending larger amounts for an exhibition you would probably do best to go through a freight forwarding company. I have chosen to work with Sadliers International as I followed a particular company representative over a number of years and received good rates as a result of that loyalty. While air freight companies may be a bit more expensive, you can track your works and know that the handling will be a lot more carefully done.

The freight company will also help deal with customs, clearance and delivery at the other end. Sadliers International is based at Perth Air Freight Terminal in Sugarbird Lady Road at Perth International airport but also has offices around Australia. They have a Sea freight division as well. Delivery of smaller boxes of works to the airport can be done by you to save on a courier but also to be sure every thing is in place for customs clearance and to arrange any special handling needs. You always have a choice of rates but if you give yourself time you can get cheaper rates on standby. Generally I have found the work has been delivered within 2-5 days. There are other companies that will come and pick up from the door but again you should shop around for quotes. Before choosing a company you should weigh and measure your boxes for both the actual and volumetric weight and seek a quote based on that. You will be charged on whatever is greatest. Generally there is a documentation charge for customs and a separate charge on top of that for the actual weight of the consignment.

Overseas freight charges are GST free.

Having chosen your freight company you then need to do your documentation. Label each work with a number only. Do not write the selling price on the base in case the box is opened by customs and a price discrepancy is noted. Each box should be labelled and numbered eg Box 2 of 5.

- A list of contents needs to be placed both inside the box and also attached to the outside of the box.
- Prices should be wholesale only and in Australian dollars. Remember duty and taxes are paid on the stated value of the goods. You will need also to give your shipping agent two copies of your invoice (price list) for documentation for customs and export. Do not include GST as no GST is charged on exports.
- It is also advisable nowadays to photograph each work being sent for the following reasons:
- Most galleries will put images on their website for potential clients plus if work is lost or stolen you have the image as a record
- Increasingly now for international events such as SOFA, Chicago or COLLECT at the V&A in London the galleries require images of the works prior to shipping for customs documentation.
- Having images will also help you if works are lost or damaged in transit.
- Once your documentation is done send to your gallery via fax or email a copy of the wholesale price list in Australian dollars and the retail price list in the currency of the country you are selling in. Your gallery will be paying the import duties so wont be happy if you put on the retail value. They can also claim back those duties on the return of unsold works.
- Remember you need to put the price of your work up to cover the extra costs of shipping, packaging, documentation, and high commissions .Overseas markets are generally use to paying much higher prices for art works.
- Insurance can be problematic as many companies now refuse to cover glass and ceramics. Your best insurance is your packaging. You may be able to get cover for loss of the shipment but not for breakage. Again check with the freight company as each one is different. Some may offer to package your work as part of their service but I would advise caution. You know your own work best so learn to do it yourself.
- Once your work is documented by the freight company ask them to send you the details of the airway shipping bill so you can inform your gallery or client of when they can expect it and who will be handling it at their end. International freight companies network with each other for deliveries and handling of customs.
- Once your show is over then decisions have to be made as to the return of the work. Return freight will usually be a lot more expensive due to exchange rates. In some countries such as Japan it can be 3-4 times as expensive as Australia. Where you have a large amount coming back it will generally be cheaper to do sea freight if you can afford to wait 6-8 weeks or more. Alternatively you can look at leaving your work with the gallery to generate sales further on. This is usually the option preferred by most galleries. On the return of your goods you will be required to clear it again through Australian customs. To do this you need to take a copy of your original shipping documents including the airway bill, gallery wholesale price

list and also take images of the works if required to unpack your goods in front of customs officers.

Further hints and options *A word of WARNING!

Do not package your works in old fruit /vegetable boxes. This is ok to use locally but quarantine will impound and unpack your works creating delays for delivery and potentially damaging more delicate works. Use only new or recycled boxes that haven't contained any food stuffs If travelling with some of your works overseas as hand luggage be sure that you have the correct visas to enter that country. Always get a business visa if you are exhibiting and selling in countries such as the USA or Canada. Also carry with you to present to customs/immigration letters of invitation from your gallery or other institutions that you may have dealings with eg a University that has invited you to give a lecture about your show. These must be signed originals

Don't mention the word sell to customs/immigration at point of entry if you have only a tourist visa. You will be put on a return flight to home

Depending on the value of the goods you are carrying you can declare them at wholesale value and pay duty, call them gifts or in some countries such as the USA if under US\$1,000.00 you can call them samples that are not for sale

These days with increased border security it is wise to do the right thing. Do your homework first by contacting the embassies or consulates of the countries you plan to exhibit in or visit to do business. Travel agents can also give you visa advice but won't necessarily know anything about doing business in the country you wish to visit.

ATA Carnet

What is it?

On occasions you may be asked to participate in an event where your work will not be available for sale. These can be travelling exhibitions, trade displays; a world fair event etc. It may be an item that is special to you or belongs to someone else and can't be sold. "The ATA Carnet is an international customs document that permits duty free temporary imports of goods into Australia or another country for up to one year. The initials "ATA" are an acronym of the French and English words "Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission". The ATA Carnet operates under international Customs conventions administered by the World Customs Organizations (WCO) and the World ATA Carnet Council manages the system in cooperation with the WCO. A Carnet dispenses of the need for raising bonds or depositing duty at the Customs posts in different countries. The Carnet contains the appropriate Customs clearance documentation, and generally this method is preferred by Customs authorities.

Currently there are some 59 countries and their territories participating in this agreement

."*** Information taken from the website of VECCI, Carnet Department in Victoria.

In 2002 I participated in using this system to send with Anne Farren, textile artist and Tousui Tanaka, sumie artist an exhibition "3 Elements" to the Australian Embassy in Tokyo.

The Carnet is obtained from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in each state. You would be advised to seek an appointment to discuss the requirements if you haven't done one of these before. You are required to fully document the works going overseas, pay a carnet fee of around \$363.00 for the document and leave a deposit of 50% of the stated value of the work.

This is to guarantee the return of the goods. This fee is refunded to you on return of the goods to Australia. Once you have done the documentation, paid the fee, you have to appoint your freight courier as your agent and they will take care of the customs clearances for you. By doing this you can pass the goods quickly through customs to your event. I won't go into the details fully but you need to be aware that pre planning is vital. This is not something to do at the last moment as the documentation and packaging is very time consuming.

I hope you have found these articles useful.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any queries.

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