

# Consumer Tip Sheet – A Guide to Safely Move Artwork and Sculptures

Whether you are a collector moving from one home to another or you have been professionally entrusted with moving artwork safely, you have an extra set of concerns to address when it comes to moving sculptures and fine art. These items are typically heavy and delicate; any damage sustained will ruin their value irreparably.

Moving artwork is an art in itself, since each specific piece carries its own set of concerns that need to be accounted for. Moving a large marble sculpture is a very different experience when compared to moving a small but priceless painting, for example. There are, however, some tried-and-true methods for protecting the value of artwork that apply across the board:

## How to Move Priceless Artwork Safely

First, you will want to treat your artwork separately from the rest of your belongings. Accord the attention necessary to ensure that each piece is packed in a way that addresses its unique needs:

**Paintings need to be crated if you want to ensure absolute safety.** This essentially means building a wooden case around the painting and disassembling the case upon arrival. A tough wooden crate built around the painting, using its specific dimensions, will protect it against sliding furniture, changing humidity and other possibly damaging conditions.

Some moving companies may try to get away with less, but even if improper packing works 99 percent of the time, that last one percent can lead to a disastrous experience. Some paintings need to be placed in climate-controlled environments so as not to damage the delicate pigments used—consultation with a professional moving company is highly recommended.

Specialized, adjustable transportation frames for use with paintings are widely available and should be used when you're dealing with irreplaceable artwork.

**Sculptures come in all shapes and sizes, and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.** Crating is a typical and trustworthy solution for most delicate sculptures; once secured in a foam-padded crate, they are resistant to transportation damage in all but the most serious cases. Museum-quality travel crates typically feature built-in frameworks, padding, custom cribbing and cushioning.

When it comes to sculptures, the main consideration is often transport itself. Even relatively small sculptures can be awkward and cumbersome to move. Make sure you measure the object carefully and then determine whether it will fit through any doorways or entrances it has to travel through.

If the sculpture can be safely disassembled, it should be, but when manpower alone cannot reliably and safely get the sculpture to its new home, you may need to rent a crane to move it. Small moving cranes are generally inexpensive to rent and can make a big difference in your move. You'll also want to have a pair of high quality gloves on hand in order to prevent slipping or unintentional damage.

## When in Doubt, Consult an Expert

While moving one or two paintings safely is something that you should be able to take care of on your own, if you don't feel completely comfortable with the process, you should consult with a reputable moving company that has experience with paintings and sculptures. An expert appraisal can uncover obstacles you may not otherwise consider and help guide you toward performing your move safely.

When preparing for a move, you should prepare to address the issue of crating your delicate artwork items either with the help of a capable carpenter or a professional fine art moving company. The value of a professional consultation increases when it comes to long-distance moves or moves that involve multiple pieces of artwork.

*Thank you to the American Moving & Storage Association*