

Handling and Packing Artwork with care

Materials Explained Cheat Sheet

- Plastic sheet (polyethylene/food grade)
 - Plastic sheeting that leaves no oily residue, is clear.
 - Used to wrap 2-D and 3-D artwork.
 - Creates a hydro/vapor barrier. Essentially keeps artwork dry
- Dartek (cast nylon film)
 - Transparent, soft, and able to conform to irregular surfaces
 - Provides excellent protection from gasses and oils (great vapor barrier)
- Tyvek (high density, spunbound, polyethylene fibers)
 - Water resistant, while remaining breathable, allowing vapors to pass through
 - Tear resistant, and more durable. Better for heavy, or organic materials (i.e.stone)
- Nomex (inert, soft, aramid fibers)
 - Resists most common acids and alkalis, and oils
 - similar to tyvek, it is soft, strong, and used more more robust/organic materials
- Glassine
 - Smooth, glossy, and translucent paper, essentially resistant to air, water, and grease. Food safe.
 - Good for WOP (works on paper), and a good alternative to plastic.
- Silicone release paper
 - Paper coated with a thin layer of silicone on one or both sides, that is non stick.
 - Good for use against not fully cured surfaces, or where rub/pull-off is possible from art media
 - It is expensive, and required a specific tape to secure (other tapes will not stick)
- Polyurethane foam (open cell)

- This is a soft and open cell foam. It is great for cushioning, insulating, and vibration reduction.
- It can become wet, due to its open cell form.
- Great for use as dunnage*, in packing of glass, ceramics, or heavier media.
- Ethafoam (closed cell polyethylene and dense)
 - It works by sealing air in pockets
 - Tough material, comes in different weights (essentially densities)
 - Great for supporting weight for extra-heavy items. Used often in art crates or slat crates
 - Hard material to find/source
- Foam Core
 - Dense polystyrene foam sandwiched between paper.
 - Great for false bottom packing, support boards, dividers, etc.
- Coroplast
 - Resembles cardboard, but is made of Polypropylene.
 - Waterproof, strong, and can be cut and shaped, just like cardboard
 - Great if you need a neutral material, with no off-gassing
- Cardboard
 - Corrugated paper, which creates structure, and form.
 - Can be used for making boxes, trays, slip cases*, dividers.
 - Extremely versatile and recycle-able.
 - Not great for long term storage, especially to WOP
- Archival cardboard
 - Same as cardboard in use, except it has neutral acidity.
 - Typically distinguishable due to its blue, or sometimes grey color.
- Tissue paper (both buffered and unbuffered)

- Great general packing material for small and medium objects.
- Buffered is slightly alkalid, helping for WOP and other media that might be slightly acidic
- Unbuffered is regular, slightly acidic if not neutral.
- Packing paper
 - This is a great replacement for packing peanuts (not mentioned in list, as more and more art shippers are moving away from this material)
 - Can be wadded up as support, and fill voids in multi-packed boxes, typically 3-D objects
 - Slightly acidic
- Plywood (MDO/AA veneered)
 - This is used for larger objects and crating.
 - By using plywood, you are letting any shippers know that there are no invasive pests/bugs in the material.
 - Handy to have, but required woodworking to cut and assemble.
 - MDO (Medium density overlay) is basically plywood with paper/hardboard faces.
 - AA ply, is saying that both faces of plywood are furniture grade veneer.
- Muslin
 - Unbleached. It is a soft, natural textile, which is great for high polished furniture.
 - It can be abrasive if the finish is mirror like polish and traveling great distance, at that point the only alternative is Chempack (essentially packing paper with a delicate, archival, pillowed layering of contact tissue)
- Packing blankets
 - no two are seemingly the same. Do not try to wash them, especially the Harbor Freight ones, as they disintegrate in the washing machine (i've tried and paid the price)
 - The basic ones are felt, held together by stitching.
 - The more common, nicer ones, are felt, quilted into a blanket.

- Great for heavier or larger objects that need more surface coverage.
- Heavy items can be lowered or raised from boxes or crates with the blanket itself, and another person or two.