



Two Peas in a Crate: Crossover between Museum Registration and Fine Art Shipping

This session was a panel discussion moderated by **Naomi Abe**, Registrar for the Villa, J. Paul Getty Museum comprised of four professionals who have successfully “leapfrogged” between careers as art shippers and registrars. These panelists included: **Amy Linker**, the Museum Registrar at the CCS Bard Hessel Museum; **Sirena Maxfield**, Exhibition Coordinator, Masterpiece International; **Maggie Radd**, Director of Registration and Exhibitions, The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust; and **Kim Schantz**, the Senior Project Manager, Museum Services, at Atelier 4 Inc. The overall goals of the session were to explain how the panelists’ skills translated from one community to the other and how to use their knowledge gained through this crossover expertise to strengthen the relationship between registrar and shipper.

The panelists each spoke to their specific experiences working in both museum registration and shipping. It was repeatedly emphasized that communication is the most important aspect of the relationship between the museum registrar and the shipper. It was made clear to the session attendees that it is imperative that both parties work to maintain an open dialogue as it is beneficial to navigating challenges that might arise during the project, specifically changes in workflow, budget, or object checklists.

Each panelist described how their experience as a registrar helps inform their role as a shipper or vice versa. It was explained that as a registrar with shipper experience, it is easier to anticipate complications that may arise including but not limited to acts of god and other logistical issues with mixed media, or even the political climate of international countries. On the other hand, a shipper with registration experience understands that museums are always trying to do more with less and thus projects are usually in a state of flux as both funding and staff availability tends to shift. All participants agreed that regardless of the situation, both shippers and registrars work magic to bring the public innovative and compelling exhibitions.

However, it was also relayed that this type of crossover training, can also be tricky to navigate. Individuals who shift between registration and shipping may find that they need to make an extra effort to draw boundaries in understanding their current role. For example, when working with museum registrars, shippers may need to remind themselves that while they have been a registrar in the past, it is not their current role. Thus, while they have a special ability to be an understanding and supportive shipper, they cannot pass judgement or simply do the job of the registrar as the relationship needs to remain balanced.

It was beneficial to see a group of individuals who had similar backgrounds discuss navigating the relationship between the shipper and the registrar. The panel format fit the session as each panelist was given the opportunity to describe their specific



experiences while common themes emerged. The session left attendees with a fresh perspective of two sides of the industry that have markedly different responsibilities but are similarly rewarding.

Submitted by Karen DuBroff, Associate Registrar, Natural History Museum of Utah