



Tate: Realising a virtual courier

January 2021

Tate has reviewed its courier guidelines and is carefully considering courier requirements for loans to our programmes and loans from the Collection. Moving forward Tate will adopt a virtual first approach to couriers required for artworks lent to our programme and artworks borrowed from the Collection. Tate will continue to uphold the principle of a presumption against a courier unless a need is proven, and this applies in relation to virtual couriering also.

This document is intended to offer guidance for ways of working to facilitate a virtual process to oversee the movement of an artwork on loan to Tate or lent from Tate's Collection. The detail given here provides an overview and offers ways of working which are intended to be readily adaptable rather than offering instruction.

The intention is that these ways of working will be applied, in whole or in part, in circumstances where a courier would have usually been required by Tate or an external lender. It is not the intention that this methodology will be used all lenders or required from all borrowers.

While the artwork is in transit:

Tate Registrars will coordinate regularly with lenders/borrowers to confirm all requirements regarding safe handling of the artwork in transit.

Risk management principles include:

- working exclusively with established and approved transport agents;
- agreeing all routing and handling in advance of transport;
- updating lender/borrower at all key transit moments, such as depalletisation or palletisation and when custody and/or liability transfers.

In addition, transport agents may provide additional periodic updates and images of safe handling.

As applicable, Tate will explore using tracking devices within the crates to provide location information for both Tate and the lender/borrower. Such tracking technology shall be provided by the transport agent.

Certain artworks may require enhanced monitoring for shock, vibration and environment

On site movement of the artwork

Increased levels of discussion will be required to ensure key knowledge and detail is shared and relationships of trust are built and maintained.



Advance planning and additional dialogue:

Tate Registrars will coordinate with lenders and borrowers to share and confirm all requirements and instructions for packing, handling and display. As applicable Tate Conservators, Art Installation Managers and Senior Technicians should also review installation plans with lenders and borrowers to formulate and agree a plan of installation and deinstallation. Depending on these requirements, the Registrars will agree a schedule for activity and transmission of information and documentation.

This could include:

- Video conferencing between conservators, technicians or registrars acting for lender and borrower in advance of the loan;
- Provision of more detailed documentation and technical plans, including enhanced documentation such as video instruction

Delivery and Collection: Loading Bays

Registrar at Tate or for the borrower will provide email confirmation of receipt from or delivery to the agent and, as required, provide accompanying still images.

If requested, the Registrar at Tate or for the borrower can provide a detailed description with images of the route of movement from the loading bay to the gallery space this is applicable both on receipt or on collection from Tate or the borrowers' premises.

Unpacking/packing

If requested, the Registrar at Tate or for the borrower, images or video of packing/unpacking to demonstrate safe handling can be provided. As standard, technicians will prepare and annotate documentation for each work that details packing and any comments or concerns regarding method and materials.

Condition checking

As is current practice, conservators or other designated parties will condition check works and will annotate and sign Tate and lender/borrower condition reports as checks are completed.

Condition reports will be scanned and the Registrar will forward to the lender or receive from the borrower.

Additional photo documentation of any object in regard to condition can be requested and will be provided to the lender or received from the borrower by the Registrar.

Where mobile condition checking is already used by lenders/borrowers this methodology will be used.



Documentation of movement of the object

For simplicity we understand that live interaction can be desirable and where possible accommodated. Tate and the borrower or lender should be as accommodating as possible to work with the simplest platform and ideally making use of readily available technology. In most instances this will be a mobile phone.

Video call software such as, WhatsApp, Zoom, Teams, FaceTime can all be considered dependent on what is most convenient or available for both parties.

Once the platform and the time of the appointment is confirmed the parties shall schedule the installation or deinstallation of the art object. It's important that where these calls are arranged all parties maintain the agreed schedule, just as would be the case if the events were taking place in person. Where schedules are challenging, and time differences don't allow for live conversations both parties should reasonably explore other methods.

It's key to note that intention of these conversations is only to provide an overview of the handling and to offer communication to provide reassurance. It may not be possible to capture the whole duration of the installation/deinstallation and where possible both parties may agree a specific moment they way to view.

Due to social distancing measures a limited member of the team may be attending the movement of the art works as such all questions in relation to condition of the art object or handling should be made separately and will be answered in advance. These calls are not intended to provide a detailed overview of the condition of the work, this detail remains included in the Condition Report.

At Tate, although we can offer live interaction our preference remains for recorded footage. This is because video conferencing tools are not secure and image quality and WIFI or cellular connectivity is often poor or patchy. Of additional concern are scheduling issues with various time-zones, increased risk of distraction on the part of art handlers and other staff, and potential for misunderstandings between lender and borrower.

Such recordings are undertaken by trained staff, and it shall be clearly communicated to the installation team that the recording is equivalent to on-site physical courier and comportment should reflect this. Recording will document all instances of handling but will necessarily be condensed during editing; raw footage will not be shared.

The equipment recommended to undertake this could include the following options. A wide range of equipment has been suggested to offer options for accessible solutions:

- Smart phones with cameras capable of filming and image capture to resolutions of 4K or 1080p with optical image stabilization;
- GoPro or similar action cameras capable of filming and image capture to the resolutions mentioned above;
- Digital single-lens reflex camera capable of filming and image capture to the resolutions mentioned above.



The software to edit the video and compress the file could include the following options. Again a range of software has been suggested to offer options for accessible solutions:

- MacOS – iMovie (free), Adobe Premiere Elements 2020 (paid)
- Windows – VideoPad (free), HitFilm Express 14 (free), Adobe Premiere Elements 2020 (paid)

Video images will be edited, compressed and uploaded to Vimeo and a temporary link will be shared with the Lender/Borrower. A Vimeo channel will be set up for this purpose. The video will be available to view for a fixed period and will not be shared in a format intended to be downloadable. Video of handling is the only documentation that will be provided in this protected way as opposed to being shared outright with the lender or received from the borrower.