

LOGISTICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES OF ART TRANSPORTATION

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Abstract

Business logistics encompasses diverse branches and specializations, including the transport of artworks of all kinds, especially those of historical or material value.

The transport of artworks is a sensitive and delicate field, linked to several factors, most importantly the material and composition of the artwork, as well as its social and cultural significance. This area deviates from the conventional approach to logistics. Transporting artworks necessitates careful consideration of packaging methods, protection from environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity, and ensuring the necessary security, particularly for high-value pieces, through direct coordination between sender and recipient.

This article aims to highlight the challenges inherent in this logistical field and its organization through a theoretical approach based on several relevant references. It addresses challenges, management, risks, and security and safety. This article seeks to reveal the importance of this type of transport within the business logistics sector and how to understand the practical coordination between risks, organization, safety, challenges, and difficulties. This will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the field and enhance practical skills to guarantee higher quality within logistics. As well as detailed insights, this paper proposes practical suggestions for ensuring better risk management in art transportation.

Keywords: artwork transportation, organizational challenge, cultural logistics, risk management.

Introduction

The art world has undergone multiple cultural revolutions since the end of the last century, and this is reflected in the growing global demand for art. This, in turn, has increased supply and demand at the logistical level, opening new avenues for diverse transportation operations for all materials and fields. However, the transportation of artworks is actually a new and unconventional field, as it involves specific and special criteria that must be met to transport the artworks or an antique from one museum to another.

It can be said that the art logistics sector is a difficult field even in the best of circumstances (Xiong, 2024). Transporting artworks is not limited to simply moving them from one place to another, as a single mistake can cause damage that can never be repaired or even compensated for (Shippers, 2024). Examples of such works include the valuable painting La Gioconda in the Louvre Museum, the Venus of Willendorf statue, and Sandro Botticelli's Primavera. Therefore, the value of the artworks is not only material but also cultural and historical.

For this reason, transport companies and the logistics sector as a whole face an important and sensitive challenge that could put them at the top or bottom of the list, as art has come to influence culture and the industrial cycle, generating financial returns and creating greater opportunities for investment, expansion and construction (Xiong, 2024).

Research aims to examine the logistical and organisational challenges faced by logistics companies and museums during the transport process and to suggest how to manage risks.

The following **objectives** have been set to achieve the goals:

1. To present the logistical challenges.
2. To identify the elements and organisational challenges.
3. To highlight the importance of the impact of these challenges on the logistics field and the technical logistics services sector, as well as the importance of risk management.

Research object - logistical and organizational challenges of art transportation.

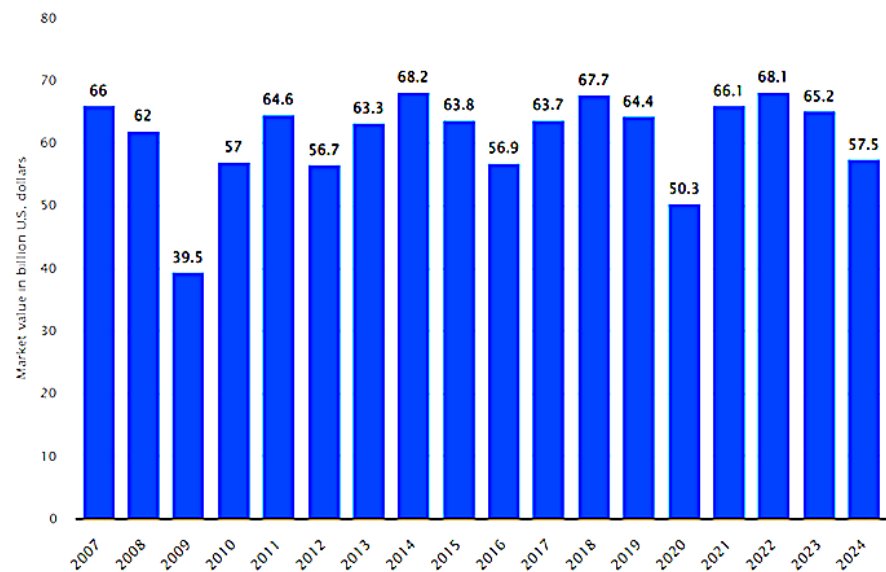
This article adopts a **qualitative methodology** to analyse organisational and logistical challenges, highlighting risk management and safety. This analysis is based on literary studies, articles, research and academic journals directly related to cultural aspects and the field of business logistics, sourced from electronic databases and official museum websites. The time period defined was between 2019 and 2026. These references provide an understanding of the general situation regarding the transport of works of art and the associated difficulties, enabling conclusions to be drawn that serve the purpose of the topic.

Research results and discussion

Fine arts logistics services. Before addressing the logistical or organisational challenges, let's first explain what Art transport logistics is essentially entail. They can be defined as follows: the transport of artwork from one place to another, whether between exhibitions, museums or even for private collectors (Transworld, 2022). However, it is certainly not limited to this. When discussing logistics services, reference is made to the storage, transport, packaging, supply

chain, protection, security, time management, customs procedures, and so on. This includes all types of art, from sculptures and paintings to ceramics and other types, as well as antiques and artefacts that are rare and of cultural and historical value (Transworld, 2022).

In recent years, the arts sector has undergone significant development due to the globalisation of art and the opening up of the world as a whole. Art travels across countries and continents, as can be seen in the Figure 1.



Source: Statista Research Department (2025)

Fig. 1. Sales value of the art market worldwide 2007-2024, in billion U.S. dollars

This growth is reflected in the arts logistics sector, where demand is increasing, prompting logistics companies to expand their services and meet consumer and customer demands. This growth has long-term prospects, with the fine arts logistics services market expected to grow from US\$3.54 billion in 2025 to US\$5.3 billion by 2034 (The Insight Partners, 2025). The Figure 2 supports this statement.



Source: The Insight Partners (2025)

Fig. 2. Forecasted Fine Art Logistics Market Players Density

Logistical challenges. Amidst the demand and increase in art logistics services, attention is turning to the challenges facing this field. beginning with logistical challenges., which are among the most prominent challenges facing the field, namely the fragility of artworks and their constituent characteristics. These include the dimensions of the work, its size and age, which determine its cultural or historical value, as well as its material value (Caban-Piaskowska, 2019).

One might ask how to protect this value, and here packaging can be pointed to as the first obstacle, as the basic logistics of transporting an artwork is its packaging, not according to traditional rules but according to specific codified standards and calculations for all the details of the work. The work may be exposed to shocks that could damage or break part of it, or cause irreparable damage, which would be a huge loss for all parties except the transport company or the customer/sender. Therefore, it is suggested to address the importance of packaging in special boxes. The quality of the cardboard or paper used for this purpose should be part of the advance planning for the transport process (Fine Art Shippers, 2024).

In this context, it can be referred to the example of Andre Rahoul's work, which was damaged by the wind and torn when it was taken from the exhibition hall to the truck. This was the result of not using the right packaging to provide adequate protection (Fine Art Shippers, 2024).

One of the most important logistical challenges facing the transport of works of art and antiquities is security and insurance risks, which require particular care at the intercontinental level. If the artwork or artefact is of high value, it is recommended that security is tightened, with special shipments, advanced alarm systems, GPS devices, and constant monitoring and vigilance. In certain cases, international security agencies and Interpol are involved to protect against theft, vandalism, and sometimes destruction (Hamilton, 2024)

This challenge leads us to another challenge, which is insuring the artwork or artefacts. Insurance is essential and provides direct protection for the artwork and its owner, whether it is state-owned or privately owned. Artwork insurance covers intercontinental transport, and without it, the consequences can be unpleasant, especially if the artwork or artefact is of high value and great importance. Insurance provides security and compensation. It also provides compensation in the event of an emergency involving the artwork. Therefore, this study suggests logistics companies to focus on this matter otherwise, it may cost companies dearly if it is not given sufficient attention (Once Insurance, 2024).

It is possible to mention another aspect of the logistical challenges, which is storage. This is an indispensable stage, both before and after transport, which requires a high level of vigilance to preserve the integrity of the artwork or archaeological artefact. This section addresses lighting, temperature, humidity and the need to control the surrounding climatic conditions, as well as providing security protection in the form of surveillance and an internal security system equipped with surveillance cameras. Any stage of storage requires control of environmental and security conditions to create a secure space for works of art or antiquities that ensures the safety of all parties: the museum, the exhibition, the company responsible for transporting the artwork, the client, and in many cases the artwork collector (Cozzolino, 2021).

One last point in this section is customs procedures, which are an important factor and where time is also a factor, since the artwork is. When transporting from one country to another, there are laws set by each country in this area, where everything is done legally according to the applicable protocol, in addition to the necessary documents for the purpose. The more complete the documents are, the faster and easier the transport process will be, saving time.

Cooperation between customs authorities and cultural institutions is extremely important in terms of the authenticity of the artwork or artefacts being transported and ensuring the credibility of the transport company and the art logistics sector as a whole (Hamilton, 2024).

Organizational challenges and risk management. Organizational challenges parallel logistical challenges, and these challenges differ from conventional organizational challenges. For the art logistics sector, these challenges begin with the planning process, followed by coordination. This involves all parties involved in the transport process, starting with the museum, gallery, or private owner of the artwork, through the customs clearance company, the client, and the final destination of the artwork. Any disruption in this context can have many consequences, the most important of which are time management and damage to the artwork, as well as to the transport company (Venne, 2021).

In this context, the need to build the expertise of the parties involved in this field and how to coordinate between them. After all, this field has become a powerful force in the market and the logistics field as a whole. And this growth requires expertise capable of facilitating smooth planning, implementation and coordination between all parties, and maintaining the quality of services provided (Liubalina, 2025).

In this section, another point is addressed, namely the absence of standardised criteria (Caban-Piaskowska, 2019), which is well known in the field of technical transport systems and is due to the multiplicity of policies adopted by cultural institutions and the state. In a previous section, Reference was also made to customs procedures, which vary from one country to another according to the laws in force in this domain. This further complicates the supply chain, as do insurance regulations, the documents required by transport companies, customs regulations, and various trade agreements, depending on the countries involved. Reference is also made to the authenticity of the artwork and the documents that confirm its authenticity, road safety, and the security system to ensure that the work arrives on time and safely. It is supported with an example from the US Department of Transportation that 34% of companies and customers face a lot of delays and time loss due to customs laws and the documents they require, which disrupt the normal flow of work (Business Research Insights, 2026). This difference is, in turn, the absence of uniform standards to enhance supplies (Hamilton, 2024).

In final element, one that is no less important than the others: crisis and emergency management and risk management. Here, it is noted that even with careful organisation and planning, problems may arise, so relying on a plan to address these risks is considered one of the fundamentals of the logistics business. Strategies developed early on help reduce damage and deal with damage to artwork immediately. Developing these plans contributes to business continuity, ensuring that work continues during crises and preserving the reputation of the transport company and its relationships with all parties and customers (Jarašūnienė and Gelžinis, 2025). At this point, the following figure support what has been mentioned and simplify the idea (see figure 3).

The Figure 3 illustrates the risk management process across all its stages; it is not a piecemeal process, but rather a comprehensive one that extends to all logistical stages, from the supply chain to planning and transport, and even to coordination between parties. This is particularly important in the art sector, given the sensitivity of artistic works and the need to ensure their safety. It follows that the growth of the art market and its rising prominence in the economy further highlight the urgent need for effective strategies to address risks (Ogunsanwo & Oyelekan, 2024)



Source: Venne (2021), Everstream Analytics,

Fig. 3. Agile Supply Chain Risk Management brings the whole organization together

Risk management is an indispensable element in the logistics field, requiring careful planning as a first step and different strategies to ensure the safe arrival of the artwork at its final destination. There is advance planning to deal with any incidents and avoid heavy losses, by preparing parallel plans and responding quickly to risks, which helps to minimise them. (Gurtu, A& Johny,2021).

Conclusions

1. Transporting fine art is a difficult task for transport companies due to the fragility of the artwork or the historical value of the artefacts. It can be described as a complex process that requires careful planning before commencement.
2. The transportation process is not a traditional process of moving something from one place to another, but rather a series of important procedures, including packaging that meets the safety standards for artwork, as well as storage, which requires caution and climate control.
3. The art transport service sector requires the coordination and cooperation of all parties involved in the process, from the cultural institution to the transport company, to facilitate customs procedures and ensure the transport process, not only to protect the items from breakage or damage, but also to ensure their security when transported over long distances in trucks, where they are vulnerable to theft.
4. The loss of a work of art or a valuable artefact is not an individual loss, but a collective loss for the museum or exhibition, the country, the reputation of the transport company and its impact on the logistics sector as a whole, as well as the loss of the cultural value of the piece.
5. Organisational and logistical challenges are parallel elements rooted in the logistics sector in all respects. These challenges are balanced by rapid risk management and good coordination between all parties.
6. The study recommends improving risk management, which is supported by better planning, the use of specialised packaging, better coordination and insurance, and integration of advanced technologies such as GPS devices and constant monitoring.

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