

Import advice for overseas artists and makers

What is your export plan?

For any artist or maker wishing to export their work, it is recommended that they have a financial plan, as exporting takes time and money to recoup the rewards. It is recommended your business is established in your own country before exporting. For two reasons, your brand in your own country can provide supportive evidence for new business territories, giving confidence to overseas buyers in your brand before investing and secondly, it is good to have established a good cash flow for your business to operate.

In creating this document, we have reached out to a specialist art shipping company, [Ebiss](#); to VAT experts [KPMG](#) and to artists who have imported into the UK. They have kindly offered their experience and perspective to help you with your own exporting journeys.

What do you need to consider for exporting?

When exporting, from whichever your country of origin you are based, there are basic principles you need to factor in:

You will need

- EORI number - the identifier number for who is shipping and who is receiving
- Commercial invoice – full details of the items being exporting, including description, dimensions of crate and goods, HIC Commodity Code, Country of Origin,
- Packing list - inventory
- Destination contact name and address – they will also need an EORI number and they will be the responsible for receipt of goods subject to duties and taxes if this has not already been settled before shipping.
- HIC (Commodity code) – relates to the universal code of the item that is being exported
- Incoterms – the rules in which define who is responsible for your shipping.

There is a lot of advice in the [International Toolkit](#), produced by Caroline Jackman for the UK Crafts Council. For global trade, many of the policies and procedures are the same across all borders. Wherever you are exporting from, it is recommended you refer to your own government's export trade service for advice. In the UK, this is the [British Chambers of Commerce](#) and the [Department for Business and Trade](#).

Where to start

When shipping overseas, wherever you are based, here are some steps we recommend you take, this will ease the logistical challenge.

1. **Give yourself time**, as much as you can to plan. For an event such as Ceramic Art London, a selling fair, you will be allocated a stand size. Set aside some initial 'planning logistics' days. This is what you can do:
 - a. **Mark out the size of your actual stand**, this can simply be by using tape on the floor. This will give you a clear idea of the footprint.
 - b. **Plan your stand**, how do you want to display your work? When shipping to another country, factoring in how to get your plinths, boards or tables to your stand is key. Tom Hancock, who exhibited at Maison et Objet earlier this year used his crates as his plinths, which really suited his stand and work aesthetic. Stuart Akroyd, glass artist, designs his plinths to slot into each other like the concept of a Russian Doll. Think about the display, the scale, the weight, and the material of the plinths. Look at alternative options, to hire plinths or purchase plinths, shelves or a stand from a company in country that can deliver to the site or warehouse of the event, is this cheaper than shipping?
 - c. **How much work?** Working out your timeframe and stand will also gauge how much work you can produce and take. If you are attending Ceramic Art London, you will also want stock items to replace items that sell; can you factor in storage in the display plinths as well?
 - d. **Weigh your work.** To prepare for shipping quotes, weigh the work, and remember to weigh it packaged as well. For example, if you are planning to ship 30 pieces and they are a similar size, and 5 pieces can be packaged in one crate, then you will only need to package and weigh one crate to give you an idea of what your work will weigh in total, including the dimensions.
 - e. **Record the data;** this is such good practice for your business. Get into the habit of recording your work as you produce it. Set up a spreadsheet in excel (or something similar) and record: title, medium, size in cm (depth, width, height); weight in kg, weight packaged, dimensions packaged, artist price value, retail price value, replacement price value. It can also be useful to record different currencies, such as \$, £ and €.
2. **Plan your finances.** I think it is reasonable to allow £800 - £1500 (€900 - €1700) cost for shipping work, this does not include import VAT. Also be aware of other costs, such as your own travel and accommodation. *This document will help you understand what is involved in shipping your work.*
 - a. Remember your export plan, and your rationale for exporting: to raise your profile, to generate sales, to gain gallery or retail representation in another country. Exporting requires investment, therefore look at the return on your investment.

'My husband and I had participated twice in Ceramics Art London, we had carried the art works in our baggage, helping us avoid any shipping costs. Our flight and hotel was £2184.00. As we chose this option, we had to think about alternatives for the display units for our stand. There was no rental option available from CAL, so we chose to buy IKEA desk/ shelf when we arrived in London, then gave them away to someone who lives in U.K before returning back to Japan.' Miho and Shoichiro Inagaki, Japan

3. **Contact your in-country customs advice service.** For the UK, this is British Chambers of Commerce and the Department of Business and Trade.
 - a. Look to your peers for advice
 - b. Look to the Crafts Council [International Toolkit](#) and their [Temporary Export Guide](#) for universal advice for exporting.
4. **Contact shippers for quotes.** Ideally contact up to three companies to allow comparisons. See below for advice on types of shippers and insurance.

- a. You have planned your stand; you have an idea of what you are taking and the investment needed. You have contacted your in-country trade advisors, now is the time to contact a shipper for a quote.
 - b. Allow 2 months. If you contact shippers two months in advance, this will give you time to gain quotes and have time to schedule the least expensive options.
 - c. Remember, you can transport the work yourself, however, this requires a lot of work for you to do and understand the bureaucratic customs requirements.
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Where are you exporting to?

It is recommended to gain as much information as you can about the country you are exporting to. Reaching out to your peers, event organisers and export advisors to help you gain a better understanding of the potential costs, paperwork and timeframes that are best suited for your opportunity and is the most viable option for you financially.

In addition, it is recommended you understand why you are exporting:

1. online sale direct to a buyer.
2. taking part in a selling exhibition with a gallery or fair.
3. temporary exporting your work for a non-selling event (trade show or non-selling exhibition).
4. shipping your work for wholesale.

Each country will have their own unique taxes, duties and customs paperwork requirements. Each opportunity will require you to fulfill specific procedures and costs. In addition, you need to factor in where you are sending the work from, to understand your own country's export requirements and options open to you to send your work (in baggage, shipping company or courier).

'We got to opportunity to exhibit un the Florence Biennale in Italy. Though we wanted to sell, the organizers insisted a strict rule for exhibitors when art works were imported and exported in / out Italy and requested we import from to Japan to Italy under a Temporary Import. We were required to adhere to Italian law called "MiBACT" (The Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and for Tourism). This required us to use a Carnet (Temporary Export). This was new to us, and we had specific timelines to work to, so we sent them by the specific courier who organizer recommended. The Carnet does not allow to sell art works. When we exported from Italy, we had to pay the organizer to certify that our artworks were not archaeological goods. The whole exporting process took time and money.' Miho and Shoichiro Inagaki, Japan

Where are you coming from?

Makers coming from Northern Ireland looking to exhibit in England will find that nothing essentially has changed. There is no additional paperwork or taxes, as Northern Ireland remains in the UK. However, the costs of shipping have increased. This is due to, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland changing in January 2021 and the regularity of art shuttle services available across the border has reduced. While England remains a good market for Northern Irish makers; shipping costs have increased and this needs to be factored in to any business plan.

'I now tend to use two options. One is guaranteed next day delivery with a courier service such as Parcelforce or Pack & Send or the second option is packing up my work and driving it over to England via ferry. This option costs £500.00, whereas a specialist shipper would be considerably more.' [Anne Butler](#), ceramicist, Northern Ireland

Makers coming from the Republic of Ireland wishing to show in England face a customs border after the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Sending artwork to England requires a complete full customs

declaration; essentially this requires makers in the Republic of Ireland to face the same procedures as exporting anywhere outside of the EU.

Makers coming from the rest of the world will need to complete full customs declaration and pay duties and taxes.

'When I knew I was shipping work to London for Collect 2023, I started to read all the documentation and I was just lost, it was all jargon. So I decided to go with a shipping company. I contacted Mailboxes, I ran a trial in December to see if the work would arrive ok.

I paid for shipping the work and the gallery paid for 20% of the value declared. From the moment I went to Mailboxes, to the work arriving at the gallery in London, it took 5 days. As shipping proved straight forward, I went back to Mailboxes to ship the remainder of my work. I found there was less paperwork the second time, because I was 'in the system'. [Anne-Laure Cano](#), ceramicist, Spain.

What is a commodity code?

HS Codes are part of the Harmonised System: a universal six-digit classification of trade products. These codes are used by customs authorities across the globe to identify and tax products and are included on every export document and commercial invoice.

A Commodity Code, also known as Tariff Code is a similar system used by EU and UK customs to describe goods being imported. Unlike HS codes, commodity codes contain 10 or more digits. Luckily, the first six digits are the item's HS code; only the final four digits are different. Using the correct HS and commodity codes is essential if you want your goods to move smoothly through customs.

The UK government has a Commodity Code identifier that is relatively user friendly:

<https://www.gov.uk/trade-tariff>

How do you know what commodity code to use?

If you have used the Commodity Code for an original piece of artwork (sculpture), make sure you use this description on the commercial invoice to be guaranteed the reduced rate of VAT, which is 5% for coming into the UK. Ebiss have found that without this specification then customs would charge 20% import VAT.

How to understand the taxable rates, check out this website: <https://www.artmazon.com/import-duty-and-taxes-for-art>

'I ship under the Commodity Code 9703.90.00 (Original Sculptures And Statuary, In Any Material)' [Toni Losey](#), ceramicist, Canada

Exporting ceramics specifically

Exporting ceramics as an original piece of art can attract a reduced rate of 5% of import VAT, instead of standard 20%. Ceramics can be classified in a broad range way due to the variety of products that can be created out of clay. A Commodity Code would be different for domestic items like mugs or kitchenware than it would be for sculpture or decorative work.

Does your description match your Commodity Code? It is worth seeking advice from your chosen shipper for clarification when shipping your goods.

'Choosing the commodity code depended on how I define the work, is it a work of art or is it ceramics to decorate your house? I went with the shippers recommendation of what they knew would work better. My work was classified as a decorative object. The shippers indicated that this code gave them less issues in customs than using the commodity code for an original artwork. The shippers also recommended that I declare a lower value, below 700 euros for my

artworks. For me, I think the code was particularly useful because I am not registered as a sole trader in Spain.' Anne-Laure Cano, Spain

Product description is important

Your commercial invoice requires a product description. The people reading this product description will be customs officials, and you can assume that they have no experience with the art or craft world. Therefore, be specific and clear what your work is for your description. Even consider different titles so nothing could be misinterpreted.

'...the first thing they asked me for was all the documentation that I presented when they came to pick up the boxes, of which I delivered 5 copies of each document. Then they repeatedly asked me for a Cites certificate, which is a document that authorizes the export and import trade of products from protected animal or plant specimens though this was nothing to do with what I sent. Perhaps the title of the works as Fossilized Temporality or Fossil Transmutation, or the organic aspect of the pieces led to the requirement for this certificate.'
[Ícaro Maiterena](#), ceramicist, Spain

You are the author of your own artwork

Providing a declaration that you are the author (creator) of your own artwork is particularly important if you are arranging or doing the shipping yourself. Alice Walton provides a good example of this in the [Temporary Export Guide on page 57](#).

'...in France, for artists who exhibited their own pieces outside Europe, there is an option to temporary export. It is named : "Temporary export of works of art by their authors » (this is the translation of the french document's name).' [Barbara Lormelle](#), ceramicist, France

How is the paperwork managed by a shipper?

For shipping with Ebiss, they will handle all the logistics, and the artist is only required to complete the commercial invoice. If the artist or maker has chosen to ship themselves and use a courier service, then they are required to complete the full customs procedures and paperwork

99 times out of 100, if all the paperwork is correct, the descriptions are correct and the values look appropriate, the package does not get checked at customs

It is expensive to ship, especially with import VAT, do I declare the full value?

Many artists and makers declare the remake value or artists value rather than the retail value. The lower the value, the lower the VAT will be. However, you do not want to undervalue your work. Something to consider: the value you declare will be the value of the insurance, can you replace this item if it gets lost or broken?

If your intent is to sell work, it is recommended that you place the work into free circulation when imported. This means that you pay import VAT on all items declared and the VAT rate is the declared value of items. The reason for this is you are bringing goods into the UK for a business purpose.

In the UK, for an artist to ship to another country, placed in free circulation, the items are subject to Import VAT. If the work does not sell, and the only option is to reimport back into your country, you will need to pay import VAT on items unsold. You can claim import VAT if you are VAT registered, and we recommend you speak to your tax advisor about this. There is a threshold for UK businesses for VAT registration of £85k; if you are regularly exporting to a specific country and are not VAT registered, you may find this beneficial. It is worth speaking with your tax advisor about this.

For artists shipping from anywhere in the world to the UK, it is recommended you check first about your country's VAT system or Sales Tax System to understand what is right for you and your business.

However, please be aware you will need to pay Import VAT entering the UK and may well be subject to paying import taxes on return of unsold goods if you are non VAT registered.

For declaring value of goods for free circulation, it seems reasonable then that work is declared at artist value, not retail value, as the item has not sold, it only has a prospect of selling. It is worth speaking with your in-country export advisors and shipping company about this, as there are different options (see below reference to export licences).

Who pays the import VAT?

Most import VAT is 20% and this is paid at customs by the recipient. If you are sending work to a buyer or gallery, agree in advance who will pay the import VAT. If you are selling the work yourself, such as at CAL, you will need to pay. Check with your export advisor or shipper if you can pay VAT in advance or the costs and paperwork associated with Temporary Import Bonds; for artists based in France, this is a viable option over ATA Carnet and Free Circulation.

How do I package my work?

It is recommended to package in a crate or 3 ply cardboard. Essentially you are packaging your work to avoid movement and concussion in transit; double boxing and foam can help. More environmental options are available or reuse old packaging; nothing goes to waste!

It is always advisable to have a secure box with clear labelling on the outside of the box and have a packing list accessible on the outside to avoid people unwrapping our work. Spending that little bit extra and being thorough will help your work arrive safely.

Crafts Council have a resource on how best to package your work:

<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/sector-support/craft-business-resources/packaging-your-work>

'I choose to package everything myself and go that extra mile in purchasing quality crates that are suitable for international shipping' Toni Losey, Canada

Should I insure my work?

Yes, it is recommended that the work is insured for shipping. If you are packaging the work yourself, it is recommended that you document the process (for example, take photos to show the work in tact and the packaging layers) and include full handling instructions.

For Ebiss, they will only insure work if they have packaged the work themselves.

'I packaged my work myself, and it was insured at the declared value for export by my shippers: Mailboxes. For me this was a lower value than artist price' Anne-Laure Cano, Spain

Who will be handling my work if I go with a shipper?

Ebiss are specialists in this field and they guarantee it is well packaged and will insure the work for declared value. If the artist packages the work themselves Ebiss do not insure the work, but they will ship.

Ebiss is a part of a network of specialist freight services, they work with other specialist art shippers and have a reciprocal arrangement to ensure that work is packaged and shipped correctly from across the globe. This makes the packaging and transport of goods possible.

The parcel services, such as DHL, Fedex, UPS are not specialist art shippers. It is vital that your work is packaged correctly to avoid any potential breakage. Label on the outside with handling instructions and attach packing list to avoid unpacking by handlers. Like specialist shippers, parcel services do not have respective extensive services all over the world, and rely on other parcel services

to ensure global shipping. For example, Fedex have strong infrastructure between UK and USA, but rely on other parcel service companies for the rest of the world.

What licence do I need to export?

When exporting, you have three options on how to place your products in market, here are the options:

- **Temporary import bond** -This allows you to pay for a licence to export with the potential to sell. This is useful for high end objects, for example, MAAK auction house exports a Lucie Rie piece, it is for sale, but a high value item and may not reach the reserve price and therefore not sell. The cost of releasing the import bond would be negligible to the sum a Lucie Rie would command, but the fee to release the bond would be significant sum for a ceramic object sold at Ceramic Art London.

'I used [HMC Logistics](#), I got an all-in price. goods were delivered under temporary export, we never got any vat invoice or something alike, just paid the total we had been asked for. There were no unexpected costs or unexpected bureaucratic barriers' [Claudia Carpenito](#), ceramicist, France.

- **Free circulation** – this is best option if you are planning to sell. This is where you will pay import duties and taxes up front.

'I shipped my work using the option free circulation, meaning, I paid for shipping the work and the gallery paid for 20% of the value declared. I am looking at Temporary Import Bond as this might be a good option for me exporting from Spain.' Anne-Laure Cano, ceramicist, Spain.

- **Temporary export licence**, known as a carnet in the UK – ideal for trade shows. This allows permission to export and re import at no additional fee. If showing at a trade fair like Maison et Objet in Paris, this show does not allow you to sell work at your stand, so a Carnet would be the most viable option.

'I came directly with, in car. After going to customs, everyone told me to make an ATA carnet... But it's expensive, laborious, and it's not really suitable for the situation. I admit that I noted a bit lower value of the pieces into the ATA Carnet, because his price is proportional of this value, and it is quiet expensive....I presented the carnet at customs, none of the customs stamped it! Afterwards, I learned that there was a special document, in France, for artists who exhibited their own pieces outside Europe. It is named : "Temporary export of works of art by their authors » (this is the translation of the french document's name). It's the same principle (to be stamped by customs when entering and leaving England), but it's free. Barbara Lormelle, ceramicist, France

For more information about temporary exporting your work, download the new resource on Temporary Exporting your work, produced by Caroline Jackman for Crafts Council:

<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/sector-support/craft-business-resources/temporary-export>

Transporting the work yourself

Makers in Northern Ireland often choose to drive the work themselves via a ferry as this is cheaper and there is no border to factor in.

If you are crossing a border, carrying your work in your luggage; taking work via car or van on a ferry or Eurostar, you will need to complete a full customs declaration. It is recommended that you find the equivalent of a Chamber of Commerce to understand what procedures you need to follow.

'We chose to carry the artworks in our baggage. We prepare a Shipping Invoice of them as gifts for friends or samples of art works. For customs from Japan, we chose to declare low value prices for the artworks. Customs in Japan care about security inspection only, if there is

no security risk, they have no interest. This meant we were not charged in Customs at all.' Miho and Shoichiro Inagaki, Japan

There is a useful case study in the [Temporary Export Guide](#) by Alice Walton, who had a solo show in Switzerland, she chose to drive the work herself, taking her across two borders: UK to EU, EU to Switzerland.

Incoterms®

Incoterms® are the selling terms and that clearly state which tasks, costs and risks are associated with the buyer and the seller. These rules are accepted by governments and legal authorities around the world. Additionally, incorrect Incoterms® can result in costly errors or delays in international trade. A full description is available in the [International Toolkit](#) pages 78-79. For updated list visit: <https://incodocs.com/blog/incoterms-in-2023-guide/>.

Advice from Ebiss

Follow the rules, ask for advice to ensure paperwork is correct and be prepared to invest time and money. Once you have shipped your work once, it suddenly becomes a lot easier. Shipping between UK and EU is now based on the way the rest of the world has always operated, for example, if you are an artist in Spain and want to export to USA, full customs declaration is required, for UK, this is now the same process.

Case study #1: [Toni Losey, Canada](#)

Toni has shipped her work all over the world, including showing with Pik'd gallery at Somerset House in London for Collect 2023 and for Ceramic Art London 2022. Toni has kindly shared her experience.

Who do you use for shipping your work?

I have built a good relationship with DHL, I use them for all my shipping and to date organise my own shipping for private sales or exhibition opportunities. Recruiting a fine art shipper is not an option for me, as they simply don't provide a service in this area of Canada which is viable.

Do you do your own packaging or pay for a service?

I package everything myself and go that extra mile in purchasing quality crates that are suitable for international shipping. DHL will provide insurance for my pieces. I have only had two items lost over the years I have been shipping and both of those have been in smaller packages. I was paid full insurance value both times, though it was stressful at the time, I was pleased insurance covered the cost.

Who pays for the import VAT?

Some galleries will pay the import duties on my work, some won't. It's a big investment, but worth it.

Do you ship your work under a temporary licence?

No, I tend to ship my work with the intention of selling, so I pay customs and taxes to have my work in free circulation in another country.

Have you shipped your work using a Carnet?



Photo: Megan Lacey

We have something similar in Canada, it's a CERS, where you can temporary export your work, if you are not intending to sell. I recently did this for an exhibition in South Korea and sent it at full value. This meant the temporary import license cost was higher than if I had declared the work at artist price, but I wanted to insure the work for the retail value.

Do you find exporting worth the investment?

I have relied on Canadian funding to support my exporting, because of the huge upfront costs. Exporting seems to be designed for bigger businesses, not sole traders like an artist. For shipping to the UK for a gallery, I do not need to be there as well, but for a fair like Ceramic Art London, I need to factor in the stand costs, travel, accommodation and subsistence as well as the shipping costs. Yes, I will be receiving all the returns of income if I sell, but there is a risk, as I may not sell enough to cover costs. But I now see that exporting has huge rewards if I leverage the opportunity in front of me. For Ceramic Art London in 2022, I had gone to the expense of shipping to the UK, so I kept the work in the UK. I managed to leverage showing opportunities with galleries, and since CAL I have sold the pieces, without the expense of shipping back to Canada and out again. I also gained a lot of recognition for my work and secured more opportunities. This expense would be the same no matter where I exported, I just look at the bigger return on investment that I can make and leverage what I can.

How to you manage the shipping deadlines that an event requires?

It's so important to have a destination to ship to. There are often small windows in which you need to deliver your work. If an organiser is not able to accommodate my work arriving earlier, I am prepared to pay extra to ship my work to a destination that would store it before the delivery schedule. I would much prefer to pay more knowing that my work will be there when I want it, than risk losing so much if it does not arrive.

What one piece of advice would you offer makers who wish to export?

The only way to do this is to jump in with both feet and take the risk on investment. It is scary when faced with the costs, but for me it was the only way to grow my international presence; its so worth the reward and much more exciting.

Case Study #2: Ícaro Maiterena, Spain

Top tips for exporting from Ícaro Maiterena, ceramicist based in Spain

Ícaro is a teacher and ceramicist and took part in Ceramic Art London in 2022. His work got stopped at customs and was not released in time for the fair. There are many things he would do differently; Ícaro shares his top tips.

The more professional you can become, the better your venture or the consolidation of your artistic career will go, and the fewer bureaucratic obstacles you will encounter.

In Spain, when participating in an international fair, it is recommended to be registered as a **self-employed worker** with the main activity that you are going to carry out, for me, this would be an artisan ceramicist. This is within the heading of the IAE (Tax on economic activities), there is Group 861: Painters, sculptors, ceramicists, craftsmen, engravers, fallas artists and similar artists. By registering as a self-employed worker under this heading, you also have the possibility of requesting your international VAT number, which will be required to carry out economic activities outside your



Photo: David Rudaz

country. Apart from this, you will have to manage with the country you go to if you have to register for another type of tax and how to manage it. Within the European Union it is easier.

Next step, go to the customs department of your tax agency and request an **EORI Number**, something that will be of great help when exporting to places for example the United Kingdom. Pay attention to the **DUA document** (Single Administrative Document) is a paper-based document used in import or export customs procedures and must be presented to the Customs authorities. The DUA provides information on the product to be imported or exported and serves as the basis for the tax declaration. The DUA is an essential document that must accompany the goods to comply with customs formalities in import and export operations outside the European Union.

If you were only going to exhibit at an exhibition and you do not intend to make sales, then one of the best options is to request the **ATA card**, which greatly speeds up customs procedures, there is no need to manage anything related to VAT, and you can use it during 12 months. Remember to return the pieces before this time, otherwise you will have problems.

Pay close attention to the name of what you are going to export, a title can be poetic but it can lead to confusion that causes you to carry out unnecessary procedures and delay your shipment, for example if you use fossilized temporality or fossil transmutation as a title, could mean your artwork is miss interpreted as something else entirely, such as an organic item that could lead to work being retained in customs and require a **CITES certificate** to export animals or plants or similar.

The description of what you are shipping needs to be specific. Ceramics is not the same as sculpture or same as porcelain, or stoneware or fired clay. **Commodity code** classifies your items. I have used this: HTS Code: 9703.00.0000 Original Sculptures And Statuary, In Any Material. Under Chapter 97 are objects of art or collectibles and antiques.

This bureaucracy can take you away from your creative work and can demoralize you when trying to undertake the adventure of going outside your country. It is always good to ask for help. **Seek advice** from those who have already gone through similar experiences, this will help you a lot and will give you the confidence you need to move forward. There are tax and tax management professionals, export and import professionals, and cultural management professionals who can advise and ease the financial burden.

Planning ahead

One of the things that is hard to plan in advance are the pieces that you want to show at an event, especially if you want to present a new series and you work tirelessly until the date is upon you. This can delay the preparation of the shipment. Try to plan this aspect well so that you do not find yourself on the day of the assembly of your stand without the work that you have prepared so carefully, because the shipment has been unexpectedly held in customs.

It is important to do a good field study of the fairs and shows that exist in the world and choose which one is the most suitable for you. Take your time to get to know these places up close and try to imagine how your work would fit there.

The design of the stand is one of the most important things, which will give more value to your work. There are more and more fairs or salons that take care of the image of the event in general and you have to pass arduous tests to be selected and be able to participate.

Regarding the shipping option, you have to assess whether it is ideal to send it by a specialized transport company, a more general one or if it is more convenient for you to take a trip with your van, that of a friend, or a rental one to the place of delivery.

The event

You have to keep in mind that on many occasions the assembly day is a certain day and the entrance to the space through the loading and unloading area is divided into a time slot according to each exhibitor, which often requires that the work be sent You have to do it to a large store first and specify that they bring it to

you at a very specific time and on a certain date to the place of exhibition. This data is so important when planning a shipment.

The time you spend planning ahead and carry out all the procedures in advance will allow you to arrive more rested at the fair.

Try to find a subsidy that will help you pay for the expenses that you will incur by participating in the fair such as payment for the stand, lighting, stand design, transportation, accommodation, advertising material, insurance.

The issue of civil liability insurance is also something important to take into account and without it you will not be able to participate in any event. Sometimes you can find associations of artists that include this insurance with the membership fee, but they are usually state-owned and do not help you when you move your work to different countries. The option that most often suits your needs is to take out civil liability insurance whose coverage you can modify according to the places where you go to work.

The issue of stand furniture also often causes headaches. And even more so if you still haven't had much experience in fairs and you don't have furniture designed to adapt it to different places and spaces as it would be ideal. There are fairs that get agreements to rent the furniture and others offer you the possibility of working with the company that assembles the stands to ask them for a special color on the walls or a special wall where you can nail to the walls or put wall brackets. ... All these things add to the budget of your general expense forecast. And transporting these items from one country to another can sometimes be very complicated. Building it yourself "in situ" is usually complicated by the short time it usually takes to assemble.

Other elements to consider are the packaging of sold pieces, and factoring in shipping costs to the client. The design and cost of brochures and business cards, plus having an up to date website with complimentary social networks active is also needed in your planning.

Not everything is selling at a fair. Ceramic Art London offers direct contact with your potential customers and a great opportunity to build your contacts with galleries and retailers. The months before and after a fair require communication with many people interested in your work. The relationship with the other exhibitors is also very rich. It is so important to emphasize the direct contact between the public and the craftsman.

Communication with the public at a fair is very important, if it is not your mother tongue that is spoken where you are going, try to assess the option of translations for your biography and artwork descriptions, and working with a translator or at least preparing a series of conversations and topics to talk about. You may not master language but visitors appreciate it if you include it.

Audiovisual documents can help, this could be a link on your website people can access via their mobile phone. Check with the fair organisers if there are any restrictions, as you do not want to disturb the rest of the exhibitors and visitors. This document can bring your work closer to the public, while at the same time making it understanding the work from other layers, can refer to the processes of your work and put them together with the finished and objectual work, granting that much-needed vision of the action and the metamorphosis of the process, also making visible the relationship between the material and the artisan and his way of communicating between.

Good luck

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