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transportation



Transporting an artwork by ship can reduce its carbon impact by up to 95% compared to air freight. So, considering ways of reducing the impact of transporting artwork can really make a difference for the climate crisis. In her **monthly column for The Art Newspaper** about how the art world is responding to the environmental and climate crisis, Louisa Buck explores some of the opportunities and challenges of global shipping. As she says, **a shift in mindset is really what is**

required in order to slow down, get organised and think seriously about how necessary it is to be speedy.

Everyone now knows that air travel is not good for the planet. And it's therefore no surprise to learn that the **international transportation of artworks as air freight is one of the art world's major generators of greenhouse gas emissions**. Then, in addition, there is also all the waste generated by the huge volume of single use materials—especially plastics—used to pack all these artworks in transit.

This environmentally unfriendly double whammy that has led to a number of initiatives to try and reduce the environmental impact of all these plastic-wrapped, globe-trotting artworks and to encourage greener alternatives. No easy task, especially now that shipping is revving up in the wake of the pandemic. **"The first thing is to try and do less of it,"** declares Tom Woolston, the global head of operations at Christie's, who admits that "shipping is our second biggest source of emissions after our buildings". And while auction houses ramped up their digital action during Covid and continue to hold more online sales and viewings, there's an equal awareness that screens are no substitute for an encounter with actual art.

A more sustainable alternative to air freight is to ship by sea. **"Transporting artworks by air has on average 60 times the climate impact of moving the same distance by sea,"** says Heath Lowndes, the managing director of the Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC), the international charity devoted to decarbonising the art world and promoting zero waste. Reducing the art world's dependency on air freight forms a central plank of the **GCC's Sustainable Shipping Campaign**, launched in May this year. This campaign sets targets for the majority of all international art freight to be transported by non air methods and with an overall reduction in volume by 2028. It also aims to make the majority of packing materials reusable or recyclable by 2026 and to phase out single-use plastics products with zero waste by 2030.

Read the full article in [The Art Newspaper here](#).

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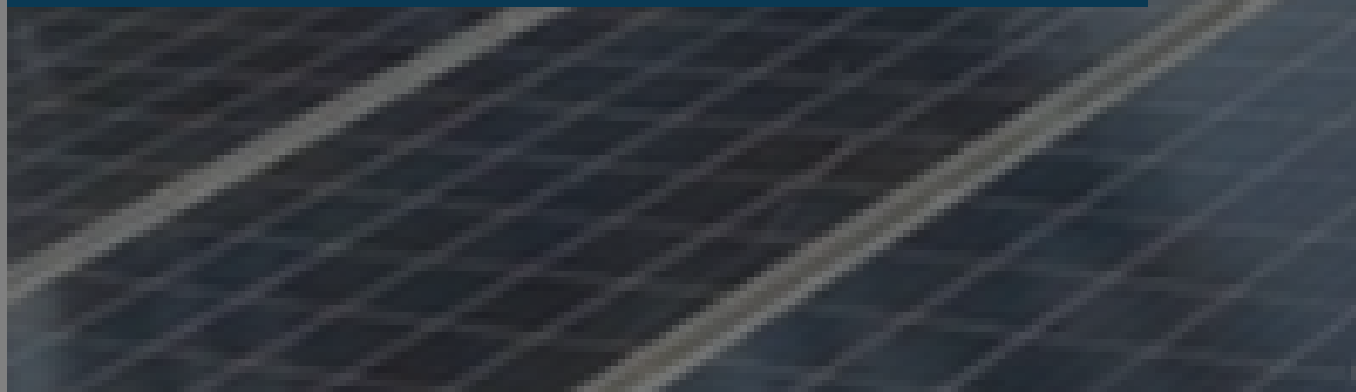
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