

# **GCC launches Sustainable Shipping Campaign: calling for collective action to accelerate the art sector's transition to environmentally responsible freight operations.**

**Press Release: 26 May 2022**

## **Campaign Summary**

- GCC's campaign sets Sector-wide Targets, as well as specific Campaign Actions for Galleries, Institutions, Art Fairs, Artists, Auction Houses, Collectors, and Shippers.
- In a major breakthrough; GCC has worked with representatives of Lloyds Market Association (LMA) Joint Specie Committee to develop best practice guidelines for insurance of artwork travelling via sea freight, hopefully leading to greater adoption of the method.
- GCC is collaborating with leading arts organisations and key industry suppliers to set standards and help deliver new products and services.
- GCC will produce new resources, commission relevant reports and host events and workshops in order to support members implement best practice and reach the campaign targets.
- At the request of members, GCC will introduce a new system to indicate which products and services, provided by shippers, are conducive to GCC's 2030 CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction targets.

**[Download campaign overview PDF](#)**

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After two years of research and data collection, in collaboration with representatives of all components of the sector and supply chain and environmental advisors, GCC has developed a comprehensive international sustainable shipping campaign to address the issues surrounding artwork transportation, set new standards and in doing so motivate the art world to take collective action. **Cross-sector alignment, innovation and cooperation are essential to the success of the campaign.**

Transporting an artwork by air has on average sixty times the climate impact of moving it the same distance by sea. For a typical arts organisation, air freight may be the most environmentally impactful activity they will undertake\*. In addition to emissions, large volumes of single-use plastics are consumed by the packaging of artworks for shipments, contributing to the waste crisis and destruction of natural habitats.

GCC has over 800 members internationally who have agreed to the target of a 50% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions by 2030 – in line with the Paris Agreement. These members have *already*

committed to making urgent changes, and what GCC hopes to do with the Sustainable Shipping Campaign is empower them to reach these targets.

## Sector-wide Campaign Targets:

1. A majority of all international art freight to be transported via non-air methods<sup>1</sup> – with an overall reduction in volume<sup>2</sup> – by 2028<sup>3</sup>.
2. The majority of packing materials in circulation to be reusable or curbside recyclable<sup>4</sup> by 2026 as well as an immediate phase-out of single-use plastic products with zero-waste<sup>5</sup> by 2030.
3. All local deliveries<sup>6</sup> to be low or zero emissions by 2025<sup>7</sup>.
4. By 2024: all freight companies and sales teams to provide standardised emissions data:
  - a. for estimates on all quotations so that clients can make informed decisions on shipping options based on environmental impacts as well as cost and time<sup>8</sup>.
  - b. on all invoices following order confirmation, allowing clients to efficiently collect the data for their own carbon reporting<sup>9</sup>.

Targets footnotes

These are ambitious goals, and it will be a challenge for the sector to reach them but the targets have been developed in consultation with environmental advisors and in the face of the climate catastrophe they are necessary. The campaign targets have been spread over 5 years to encourage a meaningful transition to environmentally responsible freight operations within the sector.

There are many solutions to the problems we face. In addition to alternative shipping methods, GCC's campaign emphasises the importance of the overall reduction of artwork transportation through conscientious planning and programming.

GCC is actively engaged in initiatives with several industry leaders to accelerate the transition to environmentally responsible freight operations and demonstrate the change in action. One example of this was the recently announced Christie's and Crozier partnership to deliver regular sea freight shuttles between London, New York and Hong Kong. Further details of GCC's collaborative projects will be announced in due course.

**Frances Morris**, Director of Tate Modern, said: *"GCC's campaign is urgent and welcome. We must challenge conventional art transportation methods in light of the huge environmental impact of air freight. This mirrors Tate's own commitment to challenging all our existing models of activity to radically reduce carbon emissions. Now is the time for individuals and institutions across the sector to come together to reduce the environmental impact of the arts."*

**Tom Woolston**, Christie's Head of Operations and Sustainability Programme Lead, said: *"The most recent Art Basel / USB Art Market report stated that 68% of collectors wanted*

*to use alternative delivery methods to reduce carbon emissions, so we know the will is there and we also know the way to do it is by using lower carbon modes of transport such as sea freight and addressing how objects are packaged. We need to work together to change our collective behaviours and embrace more sustainable standards and Christie's are excited to collaborate with others across the sector to achieve this."*

This is a moment of transition, and the launch of GCC's Sustainable Shipping Campaign is the beginning of much vital work. There are many obstacles\*\* and change won't happen overnight, but GCC is confident that by unifying the sector and collectively working to overcome these hurdles, these targets are achievable.

The Sustainable Shipping Campaign aims to alter long term habits and provide a vision for future practice. It is important to remember that change is a process, not a one time action, and can be incremental. It does, however, need to begin now.

As indicated in the recent [IPCC Mitigation of Climate Change Report](#); it is still possible to meet the target of limiting global warming to 1.5C - if we take urgent steps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in problematic areas such as transportation, within the next decade.

**To formally launch the campaign, GCC will be hosting an online event on June 7th at 9amPT/12pmET/5pmBST/6pmCET.** The open event will provide further details and outline the aims and actions of the campaign and will allow time for questions to be answered by the wider community. Further event details will be announced soon. To attend, [please register via this link](#).

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**About GCC:** Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC) is an international charity and membership organisation providing environmental sustainability guidelines for the art sector.

The coalition's primary target is to facilitate a reduction of the visual art sector's greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 50% by 2030 (in line with the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global warming to below 1.5°C) as well as promoting zero-waste practices.

GCC has over 800 members in 20 countries, including artists, museums, non-profits, art sector businesses and commercial galleries. Membership is free and open to all.

[info@galleryclimatecoalition.org](mailto:info@galleryclimatecoalition.org) | [Website](#) | [Linkedin](#) | [Instagram](#)

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\* For every tonne of artwork, air freight produces around 10 times more CO<sub>2</sub>e than freight the same distance by road, and around 60 times more CO<sub>2</sub>e than the same distance by sea (Source: [UK government carbon reporting factors](#)). Currently, air freight makes up 75% - 95% of the total amount shipped (in tonne-km) by a typical commercial art gallery (the remainder is a mix of road and sea freight). As a result, air freight alone makes up around half of all the emissions from GCC members' operations (based on member footprints calculated to date).

\*\* GCC acknowledges that due to disruptions caused by Brexit, Covid-19, the Suez canal blockage and conflict in Eastern Europe there are currently major disruptions to global freight services resulting in delays and additional costs. These are (hopefully) temporary complications, which once resolved will allow a return to the cost-saving advantages of non-air freight methods.