

Impossible Art Installations



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Cooke's Crating & Fine Arts Transportation

What are “Impossible Installations”?

- Installation Projects with a high degree of difficulty.
- At first there does not seem to be a solution.
- Requiring substantial planning, organizing, and often engineering.
- Involving potential risks & possibility of failure.
- Require substantial skill sets, knowledge, imagination and creativity.
- Often needing the capacity to cover large up front costs for labor, materials and equipment.

The original impossible project



Pyramid at Giza
4,600 years old

- 2.5 million stone blocks @ 5,000 lbs. each
- 20 years / 140,000,000 labor hours

What lessons learned from 46 centuries ago?

These organizing principles are still in use today:

- Planning & Engineering
- Financing
- Problem Solving
- Project Organization
- Project Completion

How are modern installation projects different?

- Computers & Engineers
- Equipment (cranes, gantries, trucks)
- Insurance Companies
- Internet: bad publicity potential. (Yelp, etc.)
- Attorneys



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Moving Gainsborough's Blue Boy



Moving Gainsborough's Blue Boy

Problems:

- Moving a famous masterpiece across the Huntington Campus on sidewalks

Solutions:

- Construct A-frame cart with pneumatic wheels













Installing LACMA's “La Gerbe” by Matisse



Installing LACMA's "La Gerbe" by Matisse

Problems:

- Matisse ceramic is extremely fragile
- Art weighs 2,000 lbs.
- Art measures 12 x 18 feet
- To be installed on a non-bearing wall with low ceiling heights

Solutions:

- Design and fabricate a steel support structure
- Prepare scaffolding to support rigging apparatus
- Hire a contractor to construct a wall to surround the Matisse



“La Gerbe” as installed in the outdoor courtyard of the Brody residence. Property of Los Angeles County Museum of Art





Los Angeles County Museum of Art





Fabricating the metal frame on site





Installing the I-Beams support





Scaffolding for the I-Beam support



Installing the I-Beams



Chain Hoists





Lifting the Matisse (reverse side)



A welder adjusting the steel support



Adjusting the steel support



Welding the Matisse to the steel frame





“La Gerbe” installed at LACMA

Alexander Calder: Max Palevsky Estate, Palm Springs



Alexander Calder

Problems:

- Weighs 6,000 lbs
- Over-width truck load
- Boulders and cactus cause difficult access
- Beyond the reach of regular cranes
- 115 degree heat

Solutions:

- Contract for custom crane services
- Move boulders and plants
- Build gravel roadway through desert terrain
- Obtain over-width permits for transit
- Fabricate support for flatbed trailer

























Richard Serra De-Installation



Serra De-Installation

Problems:

- 40 foot steel sculpture weighing 22,000 lbs.
- Located in a canyon 30 feet below street level
- Inaccessible behind trees and power lines
- One half of sculpture buried
- Fragile surface patina

Solutions:

- Design and fabricate steel support with skids
- Excavate the sculpture
- Raise with jacks and wooden shoring
- Construct pathway up hillside
- Pull sculpture up hillside with cables and pulleys



















Three men pivoting 22,000 lbs by hand!
(9980 kilos)

















**IMPOSSIBLE + CREATIVITY + PLANNING +
ORGANIZING + SKILL + HARD WORK =
POSSIBLE !**

The End