

My relationship with the Houston office of Arthur Andersen began in 1980 when a Houston architectural firm asked me to talk to them about art. In 1981, I received a call from Arthur Andersen to come in and work with another architect from the Detroit area to acquire art for their offices on about 12 floors in the Pennzoil Building. The direction of the imagery for the art was decided before I joined the team. My job was to find abstract nonobjective original artwork for common areas and individual offices.

I scoured local artist's studios, art galleries, art publishers, and art distributors for work that met the guidelines suggested by the architect. I placed on hold the appropriate artwork, my crew picked up the art to deliver it to the Client's offices for several art presentations that occurred over a year. There was so much art to buy that we left the works on paper in portfolios and the architect screened through the artwork first in the portfolios. We then placed the selected work in several portfolios which were shown to the staff in the Facilities Department. The crew picked up all the art after the presentations, returned the unsold art to the art sources, and delivered the sold art to my framing subcontractors. I specified the framing at the frame shop and selected archival materials with moldings that were appropriate for the interiors.

At first, all the installation dates were scheduled when the architect was in town. As the architect came to trust my judgment, I saw less and less of him and worked directly with the facilities department. After the art was framed and I had inspected the finished products, my installation crew picked up the art from the frame shop and delivered it to the client. We placed and installed art in the common areas and one piece in each of the CPA's and partner's offices. No one was given any choice as to what piece of art would hang in their offices.

We had a few major commissions on the project.....some paintings and some works on paper. I found the artist who we commissioned to do the artwork for the reception room which was a series of abstract, nonobjective works on paper hung as a series on one wall.

During the first phase of my work with Arthur Andersen, the firm was resistant to my suggestion that all framing of the works on paper be with archival materials. I explained that it would cost a little more, but it was well worth the cost, so that the paper would not discolor over time. I stated that if the firm ever wanted to sell the artwork, it would maintain its resale value if framed with archival materials. I remember vividly the facilities manager's exact words, "We are not ever going to sell this artwork." I held firm on my position and the client agreed to allow me to use acid free mats and hinging on the framing.

Arthur Andersen, called me repeatedly from 1981 to 1988 to purchase, repair, frame, and install more art for them. I worked with four different facilities managers through those years

In 2002, I received a call from a man in the Arthur Andersen corporate offices. He asked me to drop everything and join the team in Houston that was selling all the art

from the San Francisco, San Jose, and Houston offices plus furniture and equipment from the Houston offices. We decided on the terms for me to join the team over the telephone. I was asked to first contact all facets of the media to alert them about the sale. I told him that I had just chaired a gala for an opera company and that I was already connected with the people we needed to approach regarding publicity at the newspapers, television and radio stations. The next week, I met two men from the corporate offices, the auctioneers, and others on the team who would sell all the assets. To my delight, one of the men I already knew and enjoyed working with in the past with the Houston facilities department, made a commitment to stay with the firm through the final sales of art, furniture, and equipment.

He walked me through two floors of the space where piece after piece of art was placed on the floor – 700 pieces from the San Francisco, San Jose, and Houston offices. My job was to place market value on all the art, set sale prices with a representative from the corporate office, try to bring in buyers for the higher priced items, and be on site for the Cash and Carry Sale to answer questions from prospective buyers and reporters from the media. I quickly viewed the Houston art. That was the easiest, because I knew what pieces had probably appreciated. On those pieces, I called each artist and/or their gallery to determine market value. The art from the San Francisco and San Jose offices was harder to value. Luckily, I was able to determine from artist's signatures and a few stickers who the artists were and who some of the original vendors were. Through my network, I contacted the sources and the original buyers and decided on a fair market value for each piece. Arthur Andersen also had inventory sheets from each office with the original purchase prices on many of the pieces of art, so this resource helped to give us a base from where to begin.

Unexpectedly, I also was called upon to field questions and complaints from the tearful wives of former Arthur Andersen partners who were upset by the sale. To be a part of the acquisitions so many years before and to be a part of the selling of the assets was particularly poignant for me. As one retired partner's wife described to me, "We have just joined the newly poor!" It was obvious that selling the assets was hard on everyone on site who had been with the firm for many years, but everyone did their jobs, and moved forward.

Whatever did not sell in the two day (Friday and Saturday) Cash and Carry Sale was taken to the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Houston for an auction on Monday and Tuesday. I was not required to attend the auction, but I did and bought a couple of pieces of art for myself. **(There are no photos.)**