

## Tips for Virtual Appraisals

Getting you the accurate appraisal you need while maintaining your safety.

Typically, we will first have a FaceTime or Zoom walk through with you to determine what details and photos you will need to send.

### ❑ Camera Phone

Be sure that your phone is charged, and your camera's lens is clean from finger prints. Set your rotation lock to "off" position so you can shoot horizontal pictures.

### ❑ Lighting

Decent lighting for all the objects is crucial, but indirect natural daylight will be best. The newer Smart Phones have excellent lenses and do quite well with low light, but if lighting is too dark we won't be able to get the right information. Your camera's flash can work, but best to have a bright lamp available. Try to avoid reflections from shiny surfaces.

### ❑ Full view

Make sure that we can see the entirety of the object from edge to edge.

**Pictures**--Be sure to include the frame. To avoid reflections from glass, place the picture on the floor so it is reflecting a plain ceiling (no light fixtures).



Sometimes we may ask to have the you shoot the picture removed from the frame.

**Signatures**-- These are very important and we will need a close-up of these as well as dates or edition numbers.

**Backside** --Sometimes we find more information on the back of an item than the front! Be sure to capture a full

view of the back, plus a close-up of anything you may find (gallery tags, auction marks, etc.).

### ❑ Measuring

Please measure your items (width, height, depth). Have a measuring tape available for our online session in case we need to see something for ourselves.

### ❑ Magnification

Depending on the item, we may require a few close-ups. You may need to hold an additional hand held lens in front of your phone's camera lens. If you have a loupe (10x to 30x magnification), that is even better. You may need to get a helping hand, but with a little practice you will get the knack!



Example of how we use a magnifying glass or loupe to look at an etching.

### ❑ Determining Original Works of Art vs. Prints

One thing we will need to determine is the medium of the object (e.g., oil painting, acrylic, watercolor, print, giclée, etc.). This should be clear to us with magnification. It's often important to get very accurate measurements. With some prints we need a measurement of the plate marks where you can see that the paper has been marked

by the press.

In some cases we will need to inspect the paper that a work is printed on by back-lighting the paper. If you don't happen to have a light table, a window in direct sunlight will work quite well.

## ❑ Sculpture

Besides the signature, be sure that the edition number can be found on a work done in bronze. And just like with prints, it is important to get very accurate measurements as well to determine the edition.

## ❑ Silver vs. Silverplate

If we are appraising silver, we will need to determine if it is sterling silver (.925) or silverplate. Typically, if it doesn't say "sterling," it isn't. And the market for most silverplate is so low, it wouldn't be worth an appraisal unless it is very old Sheffield silverplate, or an unusual object.

If it is sterling silver you will need to weigh it with a good kitchen scale and get photos of the reading.

Hallmarks or maker's marks will have a big impact on identification and value. You may have to hunt for these but you can usually find them on the side or bottom. We will need you to use a magnifier to get detailed pictures of these.



Plate marks on a 17th century etching.



The etching back-lit by direct sunlight revealing the watermarks and wiremarks of the paper.

## ❑ Furniture

Many times when identifying furniture we need to see the inside of a drawer where the joinery is evident. This can help us date the item. On some furniture there is a logo or maker's mark on the back, inside a drawer or bottom.

## ❑ Damage and Condition

Be sure to point out any damage to the items since it can effect the value depending on the type of item.

An antique piece of furniture will not be affected by some wear (in fact it may be desirable and prove it is a genuine antique!)

However, a piece of art glass, or crystal bowl will loose tremendous of value by the smallest chip or crack.

## ❑ Gems and Jewelry

If you have jewelry and gems these will probably require an in-person appraisal and can be dropped off at our office.

## ❑ Knowing When it Won't Work

Fortunately, in-person inspections are not required for certified USPAP appraisals, but an appraiser must feel confident that they can come to a credible conclusion when identifying an object and determining the value. In the rare case this is just not possible with a virtual appraisal, there may be some other options that we can discuss.



The "dovetail" joints help to date furniture. Note the handles aren't original--as you can see by extra hole inside drawer.