



AXA Art Insurance Collection Management Series:

Caring for Coin Collections

Coin collecting is often called the “king of hobbies” and the “hobby of kings”. It was originally practiced by royalty, who kept coins not only for their monetary value but also for the narratives attached to these objects. From the first coins produced in ancient Turkey dating to 650 B.C. to modern commemorative coins, the design, condition, mint mark, and bullion value of coins offer a historical glimpse into the past. These small items portray a story of the evolution of international commerce and political history.

Today, rare coins often yield significant monetary returns. In 2005, a 1913 liberty nickel sold for \$4.1 million. Five years later, the finest graded US Mint 1794 Flowing Hair Silver Dollar sold for \$7,850,000 in a private sale. In Winter 2012, a trio of ancient Judean coins from the Shoshana Collection fetched \$3 million at auction, while the entire sale totaled \$7.6 million.

Proper care and handling is essential to ensure the aesthetic and monetary value of coins. The following tips will help you to care for your collection.

Handling

·A coin should be held with clean hands or while wearing soft, clean cotton or latex gloves.

·To conserve its value and condition, hold a coin by its edge using your thumb and forefinger. Fingerprints and natural oils can be corrosive and leave lasting marks that are difficult to remove.

·Always handle coins over a soft surface to protect the coin in the event of an accidental drop.

·Avoid cleaning. Cleaning coins can reduce their value significantly. Older coins showing discoloration from age are more desirable than coins that have been subjected to cleaning. If you feel you must clean your coins, wash them one at a time in a bath of warm water and a small amount of mild detergent and rinse them in a bath of distilled water to remove all the soap. Never use metal cleaners. Lay the coins on a clean towel to dry. Make sure your coins are completely dry before storing.

Storage

·Coins should be stored in a consistently cool and dry place. Any changes in temperature and moisture can promote tarnish thus devaluing the pieces.

·As the volume and value of your collection grows, consider placing your coin collection in a safety deposit box or in a safe in your home.

·Whenever possible, keep coins in their original holders. Modern commemoratives and sets should be bought and sold in their original capsules and cases.

·Avoid soft plastic holders that contain polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Over time, this chemical can emit a sticky film that can erode the surface of a coin.

·Plastic tubes are ideal for rolls of coins, hard plastic holders such as flips and slabs are the preferred method for storage. Foldout albums,

polyethylene sleeves, and paper envelopes are suitable for short term storage, but with time may cause coins to change color due to reactions from sulfur or other chemicals found in the air and paper fibers.

Value & Insurance

·Due to the nuances of coin designs, a collector should have his collection appraised by a professional numismatist.

·Because the market for coins has expanded so rapidly, diligence is a necessity. Have your coin collection re-appraised on a regular basis to establish replacement values and to assure that your insurance policy reflects your new values.

·Create an inventory of your collection with thorough documentation, including purchase invoices, pictures, literature, and provenance details.

·Certificates of Authenticity and the information cards that accompanied any coins when they were purchased should be kept in a safe place. These items are essential for collectors and their presence often increases the value of the coin.

For more information on insuring your collection, please contact 888-873-6931.

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