

Cadogan Tate Review - Paying top price to be deceived, and have your belongings damaged and destroyed.

I am compelled to write this article concerning Cadogan Tate because the disparity between their reputation and the service we received is astonishing. Our experience at the hands of Cadogan Tate has left myself and my husband appalled, shocked, distressed and hurt.

On the 22nd June 2017 Cadogan Tate telephoned to tell us that a number of our possessions had been actively destroyed in one of their crushers. 12 items had initially been disposed of, but 9 were retrieved when the mistake was realised. 3 items were completely destroyed, a BBQ, an Antique Coffee table (passed down through the family), and heartbreakingly, an easel that belonged to my husband's little brother, an aspiring artist who tragically died at the age of 23.

This 'extremely unusual circumstance' occurred because the crew placed these items in an overflow container that had 'disposal' written on the side. When it arrived at the warehouse, the contents inside were (funnily enough) sent for disposal instead of being stored safely. 'Everything handled with care' never seemed such a redundant statement... This all happened the day our stuff was collected on 19th April 2017, but it took Cadogan Tate over two months to muster the courage to tell us. When the news was finally broken we were shocked and distressed that a company we had chosen, based on their reputation, had handled our belongings in this way. After hearing horror stories regarding the handling and storage of people's possessions, we decided to shell out the cash and hire the best, but we quickly found ourselves within one such horror story.

Cadogan Tate did give us compensation of £2,000, they paid £500 to cover the cost of the BBQ, and refunded the cost of our move into store. But this of course covers nothing of the sentimental value of the items, but we accepted their offer and hoped that would be it and we could all move on.

However there seemed to be a worrying uncertainty of what else had been damaged or destroyed. Cadogan Tate were unclear on exactly what had entered the crusher and were unsure of the contents and location of 'box 47'. They did offer for us to go to the depot to have a look at our stuff, and sent photos of what had been retrieved to reassure us that no more things had been destroyed than the three items stated.

We had our first child, 3 days after they collected our things in April, so with a newborn baby we did not have the energy to go to the depot and sort through boxes, and what was the need if everything else had been retrieved unharmed? That was our mistake. In hindsight, we should have gone. The pixelated pictures emailed to us from Cadogan Tate (figure 1) did not allow us to see the detail of our items which had been destroyed. When I unpacked the boxes in March 2018 (that had been repacked by Cadogan Tate) I found a number of other things had clearly been damaged beyond repair. I also found this photograph (figure 2) taken by Cadogan Tate, and accidentally packed in the box but never shown to us. It is one of our boxes immediately after it was retrieved from the disposal unit.

There must be photos of every box, but this is the only one I have found. If I had seen this photo (which is high res), of course we would have gone to the depot.



Fig. 01

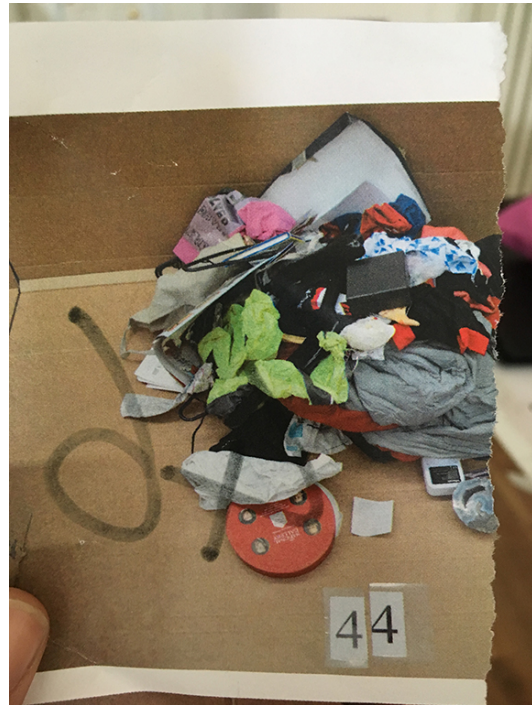


Fig. 02

I am now left with books that have been ripped in half (figure 3), and photographs worth more than £2,000 that are completely trashed with rips, creases and holes in them (figure 4 and 5). The box they were in clearly illustrates the level of damage to the items inside, (Fig. 6) yet none of this was brought to our attention when the items were posed for the low res photographs they emailed to us. 'Everything handled with Care'. I called Cadogan Tate in light of the additional damaged items to which I was told that we should have gone to the depot, and that we have been compensated so there is nothing else for them to do. When I questioned this with regard to the further items we had discovered destroyed, I was informed that we should have insured our items so we would be covered if Cadogan Tate accidentally sent them to a disposal unit. I was completely astonished! But I am yet to describe my experience of Cadogan Tate when they delivered back the items they didn't dispose of in March 2018...



Fig. 03



Fig.04

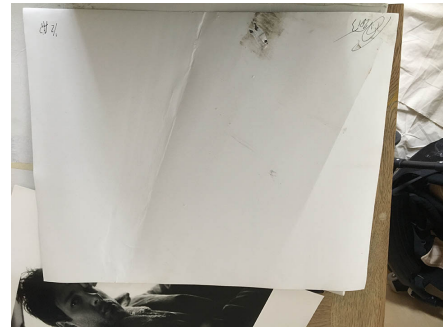


Fig.05

My husband was at work, so I alone received our belongings at the house. I had my enfant son with me when they arrived, yet I was given the clipboard and the job of checking everything off. (I missed a number of boxes that came in because my son was squirming in my arms, not that this mattered later when everything seemed to tally up, which shows the efficiency of their system). The four guys brought the boxes in and I directed them to the floor the boxes were to be placed. They explained that they offered an unpacking service but they don't put anything away so I'd just end up with loads of stuff on the surfaces so be I'd be better off if they didn't unpack (great, thanks). A lot of the stuff was destined for the top floor which was three floors up, so quite a few stairs, but the level of jovial complaining was grating. I was under the impression I was paying them to bring the stuff into the house, but the comical complaining was tiresome. I directed about 15 boxes to the ground floor, which were destined to the top floor, because I couldn't bring myself to ask them to take them to the top floor. (I moved the boxes myself with the help of one of our builders a few days later). When I asked if I could help them with some of the boxes I was told 'Just keep doing what you're doing best, standing there, looking pretty'. Wow. I thought this was 2018, and these guys are the best in the business?

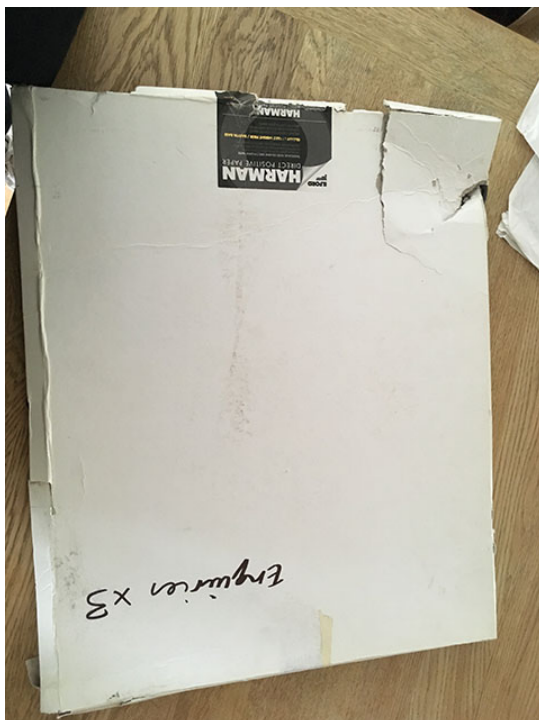


Fig. 06



Fig. 07

The sexist comment got to me, but when I saw that my late grandfathers spice rack (which he made) had been pulled apart, (fig. 8) I was on the edge of tears. I went to the top floor to unwrap some of the pictures, (I had got bored of looking pretty). One of the guys swung a framed picture around to get a better look, saying 'ooh that's nice!' His enthusiasm for the picture is now permanently illustrated on the door frame that he hit as he swung the heavy frame around (fig. 7).



Fig. 08

They were finally done, and I just wanted them gone gone gone, before they did any more damage, emotional or otherwise... I signed the paperwork so they would leave and I could shut the door and cry. They said they would be in touch about the spice rack, which they accepted full responsibility for, but they have not been back in touch.

There are still three items I have yet to find, a music box which featured in our wedding ceremony, a brown leather Mulberry handbag, and an oversize book, given by a friend of all the bombs that landed in London during WWII. The absence of these three specific items leads me to believe another box was destroyed. I imagine the contents of the lost box will reveal itself as time triggers memories of sentimental objects that are missing, destroyed by Cadogan Tate, a company that did not have the decency to record or inform us of their loss.

I want Cadogan Tate to acknowledge and fully accept that they are still unsure of how much of our stuff they destroyed. I would like them to compensate us for the art books and three one-off fine art photographs they destroyed, but failed to tell us about. I want them to admit that they misled us regarding the extent to which our stuff was damaged, concealing the degree of the destruction through the photographs they sent.

Mistakes happen, but it is the company's response after the event that reveals the quality of their service. Cadogan Tate failed miserably. They took three months to report the incident, they were dishonest regarding the damage inflicted on items retrieved from their crusher, and they attempted to lay the blame with us for not visiting the depot and for not insuring

our belongs that we had paid them to carefully move and store. I want people to know that their reputation is unfounded in our experience, and their actions in light of a catastrophic mistake on their part were deceptive, underhand and dishonest.

I have never experienced such a prolonged and appalling experience of a company. 'Everything handled with Care', what a complete joke. They should be ashamed of themselves.

Rose Lewis, June 2018