

# ABSTRACT

## ***'He Take Ngā Kōiwi E Rere Ai Te Manu'*** **- Even the Bird Needs Bones to Fly**

**Callum Strong**

***Mountmaker***

***Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand***

The remains of a large wooden fishing boat appear to burst through a gallery wall, its surface completely charred from the fire it was salvaged from in 1984 by the New Zealand artist Ralph Hotere (1937- 2013) of indigenous Māori descent.

How does one store, move, handle, let alone mount this 800kg work of art - *Black Phoenix*, considered one of the great New Zealand contemporary works?

During 2020's covid lockdown, a plan was formulated to re-crate and re-mount Ralph Hotere's *Black Phoenix* in preparation for the retrospective exhibition Ralph Hotere - *Ātete – To Resist*.

While the work had been displayed 3 times since the 80's, the original mounting solution historically was deemed to be cumbersome to installers, dangerous in the loading of gallery walls and causing lasting damage to the work itself. The old crates were tired and ill-supporting of the work and were also causing damage during both storage and transit.

Together mount maker Callum Strong and crate maker Paul Solly designed and fabricated an integrated mount/crate for storage, transit, installation and display with advice and assistance from preparator Pierre Lagace and conservator Nirmala Balram.

This presentation *'He take ngā kōiwi e rere ai te manu'* - Even the bird needs bones to fly, looks not only at the mount making, and work from all those involved but how we work within the cultural framework of *tikanga* – customary practice, at Te Papa – The National Museum of New Zealand.

# BIO

## Callum Strong

Study in architecture, engineering, art history with a healthy dose of technical proficiency in the machine shop world led Callum to Te Papa the National Museum of New Zealand (aka the shaky isles) 11 years ago.

The bespoke nature of mount making in a seismically active environment while working across the national collection and international exhibitions has driven Callum's love of problem solving in the hidden arts of object support.

