

# ABSTRACT

## Displaying a Leather Back Turtle Amongst a Sea of Rubbish

**Presenter:**

**Tom Beeston, Auckland Museum, Auckland, NZ**

In this presentation I will talk about a case fit-out in our upcoming Learning Base gallery, which is intended as an introduction gallery for school groups.

The proposal from the Exhibitions Development team was for a large case displaying a leather back turtle shell swimming through a sea of rubbish. The rubbish would be that collected from an Auckland beach, therefore genuinely representing the debris found in our oceans. Both the shell and the rubbish would therefore require mounts. I will present a few options we explored on how to mount the rubbish, and how this would integrate with a mount for the turtle shell.

I will then talk about how the final approach of laser cut stainless steel sculptural elements was made into a theme across all four large cases in the gallery. So for this case we would make a stainless steel version of surface ripples formed into the curve of a wave to support the rubbish.

I will then talk about the design and fabrication process for this wave of ripples. The ripple outline was drawn to make sure it passed through all the objects of rubbish so that they could be mounted onto it. Making this into a compound curve, involved scaling up and down, paper templates, and 3D printing in 2D.

My colleague will then talk about the mount for the turtle shell briefly. This was made by 3d scanning the inside of the shell and taking profiles from this file.

I'll then talk through the mounting of the rubbish onto the wave form. Being almost exclusively plastic, the rubbish objects were scribed into the stainless form at the imaginary water level. Not being collection objects as such, they could be cut and modified to fit, but there weren't any spares. The end result was a surface made up of some 300 objects being supported on eight vertical rods.

I'll then talk about the logistical considerations of getting it from where it was assembled, to the gallery and finally into the case.

As this exhibit is yet to be installed, I will leave this presentation on a bit of a cliff-hanger, and promise to update you when we have the finished thing in place.

# BIO



Tom studied product design in the UK, graduating the Royal College of Art in 2003 with a masters focused on critical design. While in London he continued to work on critical design as an art practice, alongside working as a designer-maker in theatre, music festivals, marketing installations and interactive museum exhibits.

On moving to Aotearoa New Zealand in 2009, he found himself working mainly as a prop maker in the TV and Film industry and had quite a lot of fun. After nearly a decade of that, he was drawn back to the museum world in the hope of working on slightly more long lasting and meaningful projects. He has been working as a display technician at Auckland Museum for two years now, and working on this particular project on and off for about that time.