



## **Famous Formica chair rests at new FB headquarters**

A striking new art installation has taken pride of place in the new pavilion of Fletcher Building headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand - a chair, but not like any other – it's a priceless artwork by Zaha Hadid and one of only three in the world. Installed in March 2017, the Cirrus chair was designed by the late Dame Zaha Hadid, DBE - a visionary, world-renowned, and acclaimed architect.

Described as 'Queen of the Curve', Zaha has designed major buildings around the world. She was first woman to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2004; has received the UK's most prestigious architectural award, the Stirling Award, twice; and in 2015 became the first woman to be awarded the Royal Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Zaha's Cirrus is made up of 70 sheets of black, gloss Formica® high pressure laminate and black MDF. Weighing in at an impressive 500 pounds (232kg), the five-part artwork arrived from the Formica Corporation Collection in New Zealand securely packed in five specially made wooden freight boxes. Construction Building + Interiors Stakeholder Manager Mark Hall worked with the architectural team to install the work, which took three people and a whole day to complete. Cirrus is one of ten chairs exhibited world-wide created as part of the 2008 challenge held by the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) and Formica Corporation, known as FORM: Contemporary Architects at Play.

Ten of the most influential members of the architecture and design community at the time participated in FORM, including Zaha Hadid, Michael Graves, Massimo Vignelli, and Thom Mayne. The event, which challenged participants to design an object that people could "sit upon, lie upon, lean upon, play upon", also represented a coming together of patronage, industry, and artistry in truly cutting-edge and unique designs. "The CAC that hosted the first exhibition of these chairs was actually the first US building designed by Zaha Hadid, and the first US museum designed by a woman," says Group VP Design, International Division, Renee Hytry Derrington.

"So in the birthplace of the Formica® Brand and material, the city had a first to host this wonderful architect's vision in building and chair design." Three editions were made of each architect's piece, fully created using Formica® Brand materials: one to be auctioned off by the CAC, one for the Formica Corporation collection, and one for the architect to keep. Of the three Cirrus chairs, the first was auctioned off and then donated to the Cincinnati Art Museum, where it is permanently housed, the second went to Zaha Hadid and is located in her museum in London, and Fletcher Building has the third – now in the new FB headquarters pavilion. The Cirrus editions were built for US\$50,000 each and the auctioned piece sold for US\$250,000 establishing the value in 2008. Now that Zaha Hadid has passed away, the pieces are now priceless.

The FORM collection exhibition, including Cirrus, was also accepted to the 2009 Auckland Arts Festival where it was exhibited to the public for a month and became the launching pad for the Laminex New Zealand "Formations" design competition which is now held every two years. After the unfortunate passing of some of the participating architects including Zaha Hadid, Renee Hytry Derrington had the idea of installing the Cirrus chair from the Formica Corporation Collection in the new Fletcher Building headquarters.



"The chair is quite large with a great presence, and it has a wonderful new home at Fletcher Building," says Renee. Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) are pleased Cirrus has found a new home, saying, "Cirrus fits its context beautifully and it's exciting to know that it is now also exhibited on the other side of the world." The FORM exhibition was part of the inspiration behind Laminex New Zealand's bi-annual Formica Formations design competition. For more information about Formica Formations, visit [www.formicaformations.co.nz](http://www.formicaformations.co.nz)