

Contacting Cratemakers

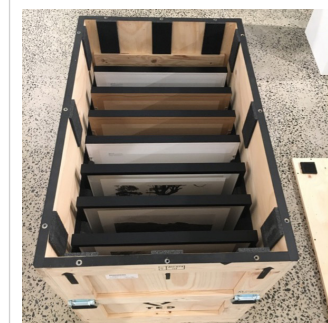
This information guide and checklist provides considerations and possible inclusions to help when communicating with cratemakers to provide quotes. Crating is an excellent way to protect artworks and objects during transit and storage from moisture, pests, dust, and vibration/shock. However, not all artworks or objects will require crating, as it can be an expensive and resource-heavy exercise. It is wise to consider where alternative means of protection can be used or how crates can be designed with re-use in mind.

Crating Styles

There are infinite ways in which crates can be made and retrofitted to meet the needs of artworks and objects. Below are some examples of basic crating styles to help when considering the best way to package items for transport, storage, and safety.



Box Crate: a box crate is simply a wooden/MDF box to house artworks or objects. The need for an interior fit out, or the use of wooden bars to contain pieces within the box should be a consideration.



Slotted Crate: A slotted crate is a box crate with sections to slide in artworks. Depending on whether the works are framed images, painted canvases, facsimiles on foamboard, etc, will influence whether the works are inserted as they are or wrapped in bubble/Tyvek before inserting. Remember to take the handling devices and wrapping into account when giving measurements for the slots.



Travel Frame: A travel frame is a wooden structure within which a 2D work is hung inside. Travel frames can be stacked and then enclosed in a larger travel crate, or a front and back board can be screwed on the frame to protect the work inside. Some travel frames are designed for the canvas works to be attached directly to the frame, however it is recommended that a plastic doover clip is used to ensure that the work isn't being drilled into.



Retrofitted Crate: Re-using crates and retrofitting them with foam supports, internal structures, or other boxes is a great cost-cutting way to ensure the safety of an exhibition without the need to commission specially designed crates.

Considerations:

Sizing to quote:

Providing the height, length, and width/depth of each artwork or object in a crating quote is essential. Even for 2D works, the depth is an important measurement. When providing these details ensure to account for the added space wrapping of any works may take, as well as the thickness of any hanging devices (such as D rings or ropes).

Internal supports:

It is important to ask yourself what internal supports or bracing would suit each artwork/object and keep them safe from vibrations or shock during transit, as well as protected from breakages during the handling and storage of the exhibition. Indicating to a cratemaker whether you would like the interior of the crate to be lined with foam or a fixed foam support to be created is important. Also, advise whether the work/object can travel right-side-up, or whether it should be packed lying down, so that the crates are made in a direction suited to your artwork/object?

Wrapping:

Thinking about how items will be placed into the crate is important to have resolved before confirming any work with a cratemaker.

- Will the work be soft wrapped with bubble wrap and/or tyvek?
- Will the work be inside another receptacle? What is the size of this receptacle and the materials it is made from?
- Will the work be put into the crate without wrapping? If so, what are the materials of the work and will they be protected from shock in transit without wrapping?

Openings:

Most crates either open from the top or from the side. Top opening crate can be useful for smaller crates or ones that can be placed on top of a palette. If the crate is above 1m tall, it is advised that it is side opening, so that artworks and objects are not being lifted above heads unnecessarily.

The openable side may be secured using screws, a hex screw, or a latch. Make sure to request that all the palettes for the same exhibition have the same type of fixings for opening and closing. If the exhibition is going to more than a couple of venues, heavy duty latches for opening and closing is recommended as the threads for screws and hex screws can wear down after multiple uses. It also makes it more evident which side is to be opened.



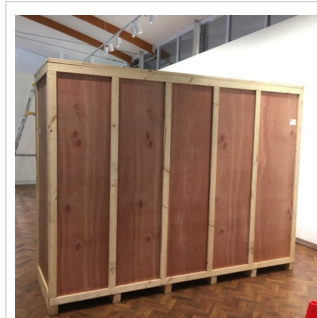
Top Opening



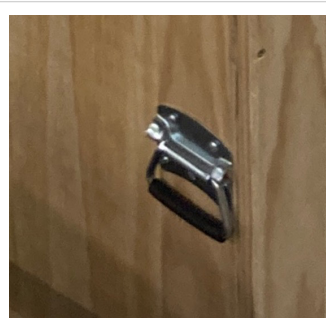
Side Opening

Additional Exterior Requirements:

If the crate is too heavy for two people to easily carry, it is advised to include lockable castors (wheels), provided the crate has enough depth. If the crate needs to be lifted, it is advised that there are sturdy handles. If the crate is heavy but does not have enough depth or height for castors, or is too heavy for castors, consider making it palette capable. The term palette capable just means that bars are put at the bottom of the crate to allow the forks of a palette jack or forklift to easily slide under the crate, between these bars. Factoring in latches if feasible is also recommended as the best opening/closing fixing for a touring exhibition. Painting the exterior of the crate is also an option with some cratemakers and is done to further protect the items inside from the elements and water damage



Palette capable



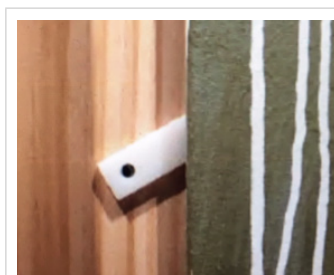
Handles



Castors



Latches



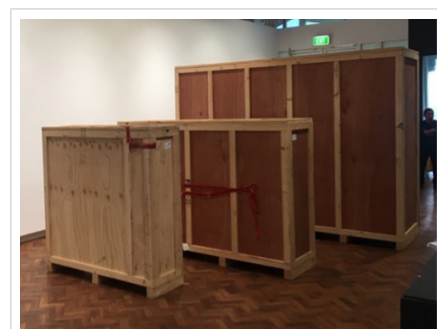
Doover clips

Doover clips:

Sometimes referred to as “ocker clips”, doover clips are plastic lengths with one flat side and one rounded side. The end with the rounded side is attached to the artwork and remains on the artwork even when installed. The end with the flat side is attached to the travel frame using a screw. The doover clips should be positioned so that they are splayed outwards as to reduce movement of the works in the travel frame.

Crate Materials

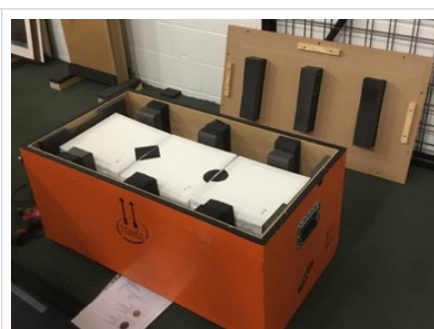
Deciding on the material that your crate should be made from depends on the artworks or objects being housed, as well as the requirements of the crate in terms of longevity, temperature control, and transport safety. Wooden/MDP crates are sturdier and cardboard crates are lighter. For original artworks or objects, going with a stronger option that is more weather and pest proof is advised. For other general items, a cardboard crate may be sufficient. If your crate makers builds both wood/MDF and cardboard, it is always good to ask for a quote for each material and you can weigh up your options.



Wood/MDF



Cardboard



Painted exterior

Roadcase

A roadcase is a good long-term solution for items that may be reused repeatedly beyond a touring exhibition, such as televisions and projectors. Ensure that the roadcase has space for cords, media players, remotes, spare projector bulbs, or mounting equipment, so that it is an all-in-one case. Roadcases usually have recessed handles and latches, with most cases having lockable butterfly latches. The interior of a roadcase is usually padded, with a few different options, including high density foam, convoluted foam (undulated), or carpet lining. Roadcases can be custom made with dividers and cut-out foam sections, or there are ready made roadcases from AV production suppliers.



Roadcase

Other solutions

Not every item needs to be transported and stored in a heavy duty, specially designed or retrofitted crate. Plastic tubs, boxes, and suitcases can all be effectively utilised to keep items safe for long periods of time.

- Plastic tubs: You can source plastic tubs from hardware, garden or office supplies shops. It is important to go with a strong plastic tub with secure latches. For sturdier tubs with options to add castors, commercial food storage providers have lots of adaptable options.
- Cooler boxes can be purchased from outdoors shops and are useful for storing delicate items. Lighter polystyrene cooler boxes can be used as an internet structure in a bigger crate. Heavy duty plastic cooler boxes can be used instead of crates and retrofitted with foam if required. Often these coolers are waterproof and have latches for easy opening.
- Hard shell suitcases purchased from travel shops, or even second-hand shops, are a great way to transport materials from one location to another safely. Make sure to check the sturdiness of the wheels and ensure whatever is enclosed is not disturbed when being rolled/transported on an angle.
- For some items, you and your transport company may feel that soft wrapped is acceptable. Items such as carpets or installation devices may be able to be protected in cardboard, plastic, drop sheets, or zipped up bags.



Plastic tub from hardware shop



Plastic tub with castors from commercial food storage provider

Box Crate – Quote Template



Artwork/ object/s details: inc. medium, conservation status, condition	
Dimensions (h x l x w): Include both original dimensions and dimensions with soft packing if applicable	
Opening: Do you want a side or top opening crate?	
Additional exterior requirements: Do you need any fixings or transport aids attached (palette capable fixings / lockable castors / lifting handles / latches for opening)?	
Crate Materials: Are you open to wood/MDF, cardboard options? Would you like the exterior painted? Foam lining or supports?	
Any additional requirements? e.g., Limits to crate sizes to fit into host venue loading docks and internal pathways.	
Images of artworks and/or wrapping:	

Slotted Crate - Quote Template

#1: Artwork/ object/s details: Include medium, conservation status, condition.	#2: Artwork/ object/s details:	#3: Artwork/ object/s details:	#4: Artwork/ object/s details:
#1: Dimensions (h x l x w): Include both original dimensions and dimensions with soft packing if applicable	#2: Dimensions (h x l x w):	#3: Dimensions (h x l x w):	#4: Dimensions (h x l x w):
#5: Artwork/ object/s details:	#6: Artwork/ object/s details:	#7: Artwork/ object/s details:	#8: Artwork/ object/s details:
#5: Dimensions (h x l x w):	#6: Dimensions (h x l x w):	#7: Dimensions (h x l x w):	#8: Dimensions (h x l x w):

Crate Specs:

Opening: Do you want a side or top opening crate?	
Additional exterior requirements: Do you need any fixings or transport aids attached (palette capable fixings / lockable castors / lifting handles / latches for opening)?	
Crate Materials: Are you open to wood/MDF, carboard options? Would you like the exterior painted? Foam lining or supports?	
Any additional requirements? e.g., Limits to crate sizes to fit into host venue loading docks and internal pathways.	
Images of artworks and/or wrapping:	

Roadcase – Quote Template

Artwork/ object/s details: Inc. medium, conservation status, condition. If tech, include model # and additional items (projector lamps, remotes, cords, TV brackets, mounts).	
Dimensions (h x l x w): Include both original dimensions and dimensions with soft packing if applicable. If tech, indicate if you need separate compartments.	
Opening: Do you want a side or top opening case?	
Additional exterior requirements: Do you need any fixings or transport aids attached (aluminium edging / lockable castors / lifting handles / rubber feet)?	
Interior Case Materials: High density foam, convoluted foam, carpet lining? Foam/ plywood dividers?	
Any additional requirements? e.g., Limits to crate sizes to fit into host venue loading docks and internal pathways.	
Images of artworks and/or wrapping:	