

## Energy

Before we see its gestural shape, we see with how much imagination this sculpture is put together to do what it was designed for: to dominate a wide space within a working harbour, strong as a lighthouse. The structure and outline of the piece, *Alliance*, have to compete with industrial buildings, with heavy machinery like cranes, and indeed with the robust architecture of cargo ships. The way, therefore, the concrete parts are vertically stacked with other elements leaning against each other (like poles, almost, of a tall tent) is in all sections and passages of the sculpture very effective, explicit and readable. Each of these elements was specially fabricated. Their distinct shapes are abstract but they clearly belong, generically, to a particular type. One is reminded of stuff lying around engineering workshops or a forge, or builder's yard: left-over materials, discarded parts of machinery and the like. They retain a familiar industrial flavour, strongly felt, even after they became more abstract. In earlier and smaller work Kuijjer used such materials (pieces of wood or metal sheet or twisted wire) as he found them – in the former industrial shed where he made his studio, along the canal near Utrecht.

Some years ago he gave an important exhibition the title: *wood/iron, iron/concrete (building materials for sculpture)*. Actually it was more than just a suggestive title. I think we should take it as a manifesto for the making of eloquent contemporary sculptural structures in the modern, industrialized world. It is Ruud Kuijjer's conviction that such sculptures are, as I said, straightforward and readable for only then can they convey what I take to be their optimistic message of *energy* – the energy of man building the new world.

Each of the elements of the sculpture were taken from Kuijjer's typical, iconographic repertoire of industrial, machine-like shapes (objects from the yard). To make them effective – to perform in the sculpture's large, majestic scale, they were then enlarged, tightly stylized and poured in concrete. Together they make a strong, expressive construction that keeps itself upright and together. Yet the couplings between the various parts are nowhere heavy or sluggish – on the contrary, the constructive connections between the parts are surprisingly light.



Here Kuijjer shows himself an heir in the noble, twentieth century tradition of *collage* sculpture, from Picasso to David Smith and Anthony Caro. Lightly coupled wherever parts meet and are connected, they are never packed together. The structure is transparent and open, the elements remain clearly visible within their precise shape and outline. So when we move around *Alliance*, we see an intricate display of clearcut silhouettes drifting around each other and defining the sculpture's vibrant interior space. Each of the elements, while interconnected in a subtle construction, stays somehow mobile like a bird. Because of that the sculpture itself, with its vigorous upward surging movement, is an emblem of energy itself. It is altogether proper that such a grand sculptural monument, celebrating human enterprise, should find a home in Australia.

Rudi Fuchs

Rudi Fuchs is a writer and art historian. He was director of modern art museums in Eindhoven, The Hague, Turin and Amsterdam. In 1982 he was artistic director of *documenta 7*, a large international exhibition in Kassel, Germany.



# ALLIANCE

### Sculpture Exemplifies Major Dredging Project and Spirit of Alliance

'Footprint Alliance,' the 10-metre-high sculpture in the courtyard of Port Education Centre, pays tribute to the largest marine infrastructure project ever undertaken by Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC).

The sculpture was presented to the Port and to the people of Victoria by Royal Boskalis Westminster (RBW) – a renowned Netherlands-based dredging operator, who worked very closely with the Port on the Channel Deepening Project (CDP) under an 'Alliance' contracting model.

The CDP, which began in February 2008 and was completed in November 2009 – ahead of schedule and under budget – involved the removal of nearly 23 million cubic metres of sand and silt from the Port's main shipping channels and berths.

The project was necessary to increase the allowable shipping depth along the Port's main shipping artery from 11.6 metres to 14 metres to accommodate larger container vessels now being used by many shipping lines. Prior to the CDP, approximately half of the vessels entering the port were unable to carry full loads due to the draught constraint. With this impediment now removed, the world's growing fleet of larger container ships gain access to Melbourne easily and efficiently.

To give some idea of what commodities enter the Port of Melbourne, each day, on average, the port handles 700 motor vehicles, 550 tonnes of tea and coffee, 750 tonnes of wood and timber, 1300 tonnes of chemicals, 2200 tonnes of fruit, vegetables and nuts, 2400 tonnes of dairy products, 5100 tonnes of cereals and 10,800 tonnes of petroleum. At the same time, commodities regularly leaving here for overseas markets include: cereal grains, beverages, paper and newsprint, fruit and vegetables, dairy products, stock feed, meat and miscellaneous manufactures.

CDP was an extremely complex project requiring a range of advanced skills and expertise which was acknowledged in the magnificent sculpture presented to the Port on 25 November 2009, the day the CDP was declared completed by the Victorian Government. The sculpture pays tribute to the success and enduring partnership achieved during the project between PoMC and Boskalis.

While the CDP was a massive project requiring advanced skills in engineering, environmental monitoring and management and dredging, the 'Footprint Alliance' sculpture, created by Dutch artist – Ruud Kuijjer – similarly involved experts within a multi-disciplinary team, including carpenters, welders, crane operators and engineers.

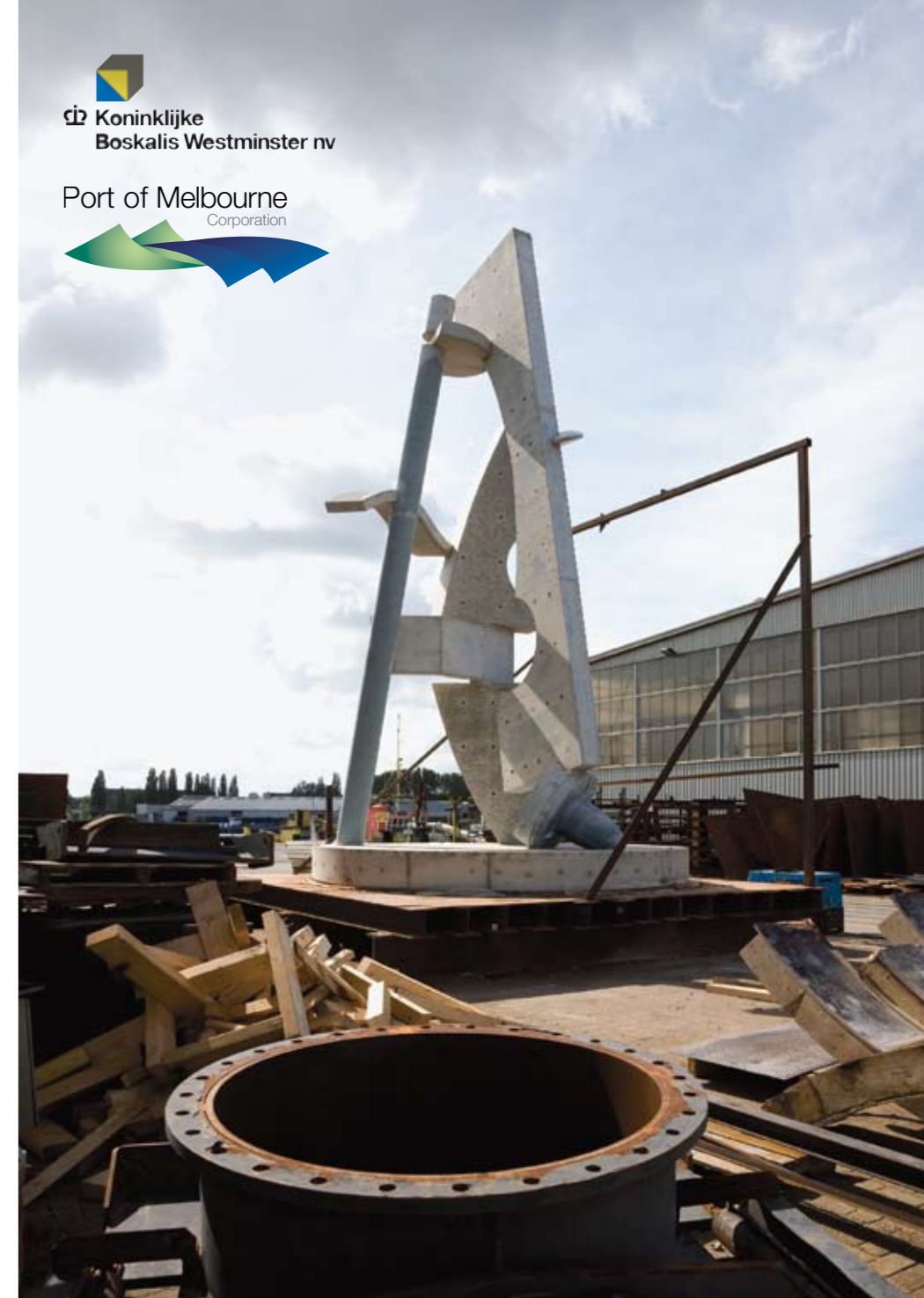
Elements of the CDP have been incorporated into the sculpture, including a monitoring buoy, the image of a wave, a draghead used by the dredging vessels during the 21-month project and a steel plate used to protect some of the city's essential services from accidental damage.



### Biography Ruud Kuijjer

Ruud Kuijjer (1959) lives and works in Utrecht. He studied at the Royal Academy for Art and Design in 's-Hertogenbosch (1981–1984) and the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht (1984–1986). In the last two decades, he has had a number of solo exhibitions in leading museums and galleries, including the Central Museum in Utrecht, Galerie Wentzel in Cologne, the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague and Galerie Waalkens in Finsterwolde. Kuijjer's works can be found in the collections of, among others, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Central Museum in Utrecht, the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht, the Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum in Duisburg and in the collections of individuals and companies in the

Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and the United States. He gives frequent lectures about his work in the Netherlands and internationally, and he is a regular guest lecturer, as in 2007 and 2008 at the Berlin University of the Arts. [www.ruudkuijjer.com](http://www.ruudkuijjer.com)



Photography: Rob Versluis