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Australia's largest cast bronze figurative sculpture unveiled at Canberra Airport

A 7.5 metre, 3.8 ton bronze work by Australian sculptor Andrew Rogers has been unveiled at Canberra Airport by Federal Minister for the Arts, Simon Crean.

“Andrew Rogers’ work is well-known throughout the world. To have a sculpture of this scale at Canberra Airport, the gateway to our national capital, reaffirms this city’s commitment to the arts,” Mr Crean said.

“Private sector contributions like the commissioning of this significant piece are critical to the cultural life of our nation. This is not just a work of art but a demonstration of the capacity of private individuals and corporations to enrich the lives of all Australians through their philanthropic support of the arts.”

Attending the unveiling, sculptor Andrew Rogers described the commission as unique.

“The enterprise of Canberra Airport and its commercial surrounds is a major undertaking and different to most. I am pleased my sculpture is part of it,” Mr Rogers said.

“The vision to elevate the Airport and provide a stimulating point of difference for people is something that on the larger scale can improve the world.

“For me sculpture is not just about the creation of an object. It is an expression of the heart.

“I am pleased to be part of the vision at Canberra Airport and to be able to be responsible to help bring it into being.”

Canberra Airport Managing Director Stephen Byron said the sculpture had been commissioned to act as a focus for the southern courtyard at Canberra Airport and was the eighth sculpture to be installed in the airport precinct.

“Canberra Airport has set out from the beginning to show that an airport can be so much more than simply a piece of national transport infrastructure. Our program of commissioned public art is an important part of that approach,” Mr Byron said.

“People coming to Canberra ought to have their spirits lifted and be inspired on arrival in the national capital; this sculpture will take their breath away. It’s a very, very powerful work.”

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About “Perception and Reality 1”

The sculpture measures 7.5m high and weighs 3.8 tons. It is the largest cast bronze figurative sculpture in Australia and one of the largest in the world. The original maquette is 68cm high and was created in 1993. A larger scale edition of 1.7m was created in 2004. The original clay sculpture was created in the artist’s studio in Melbourne from a live model. This work was commissioned by Canberra Airport in mid-2011 after Chairman Terry Snow purchased Andrew’s work “From Hope to Optimism” from Sculpture by the Sea in late 2010.

About the Artist

Andrew Rogers is one of Australia's most distinguished and internationally recognized contemporary sculptors. He exhibits internationally and his critically acclaimed sculptures are in numerous private and prominent public collections in Australia, South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States of America. He has received many international commissions and has created "*Rhythms of Life*", the largest contemporary land art undertaking in the world, forming a chain of 40 massive stone sculptures, or Geoglyphs, around the globe. The project has involved over 5,500 people in 12 countries across five continents.

Artist’s Statement

To express one's self is a timeless need - Sculpture is a manifestation of this need.

What sets us apart as human and a higher order of animal is this faculty of meaningful expression of our soul and intelligence.

This sculpture is about beauty - it is an expression of the heart.

I like to be reminded that no matter how large the form, it is just a spec in space – it is a message inculcated in the form - reaction to this message is what is important.

How else to express the spirit of humanity?

How does one show the essence, the energy and feeling but through the vision of the form?

To derive work from the live model; to capture the vibrancy and beauty

What pleasure to perceive an idea and bring it into being with one's hands?

An idea to take from life,
then clay,
the wax,
then raw rough bronze
to choose to refine
Finally - vibrant form.

“By 1993 Rogers was definitely developing a personal style as can be seen evolving in Reaching Away where the female figure is depicted in a continuation of his earlier realist/impressionist style of modelling, yet the base has been pierced and changed to a lattice of intersecting ribbons. Then, when this intricate piercing and cutting up of the form was applied to the figure itself, as in Perception and Reality, the change was of some significance. The figure no longer evoked memories of Rodin but came closer to aspects of Surrealism and the art of Salvador Dali.”

Ken Scarlett, Author and Art Critic

“Like Rodin, Andrew Rogers places particular emphasis on the gestural language of his figures and in particular on the expressive attitude of the hands of his subjects. It has been said that Rodin was ‘the sculptor of hands, of furious, clenched, angry and damned hands’. In the sculpture of Andrew Rogers, these hands are not so much ‘furious’, ‘angered’ and ‘damned’ as fervent, imploring and declarative.”

Geoffrey Edwards, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Victoria,
Director Art Gallery of Geelong.