



At the mercy of the elements . . . Jenny Turpin, left, and Michaelie Crawford at Pyrmont Point with their installation *Tied to Tide*. Photograph by BRENDAN ESPOSITO

Sculptors expose Sydney's working heart

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Heritage Writer

With the Balmain docks to its north and the ships and cranes of Darling Harbour to its east, Pyrmont Point collects all the strands of Sydney Harbour — as residential lodestone, playground and tough working port.

But it is the last strand which is celebrated in a new sculpture at the point, to be unveiled on Friday by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Dr Refshauge.

Artists Jenny Turpin and Michaelie Crawford won the

design competition for the site sponsored by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority with *Tied to Tide*.

The two women have collaborated on several public installations over the past five years, including *The Tank* in the tunnel of Museum Station which leads to the Downing Centre and a new work for 363 George Street, the massive Denton Corker Marshall redevelopment in the CBD.

The Pyrmont installation, for the park at the end of the point, consists of eight solid

timber open frames pivoting from fibreglass float tanks — under the boardwalk. These counterbalance the weight of the timbers and allow them to move with the tides — rising to near vertical at low tide, near horizontal at high tide.

(The artists only discovered by chance that the timber, sourced from a recycling yard in Echuca, Victoria, had originally come from the old Goldsbrough Mort wool stores in Pyrmont.)

Set within the frames are ladders of marine aluminium,

painted red, with baffles to catch the wind. "The ladders can do a complete 360-degree turn in strong wind," Crawford said. "The wind and the waves choreograph the elements."

When boats go by, their wash, coming in at an angle to the shore, can send the frames bowing one after the other like a mechanised Mexican wave.

"We wanted to use materials that were related to the harbour and port activities — old hardwoods and marine aluminium — and fuse those with the natural elements of the site, the

movement of wind and water, so that it could take on a life of its own," Turpin said.

For her, the project became something of a family affair, with her engineer father, Peter Turpin, helping on the engineering aspects and supervising the construction team, and brother Tim Turpin acting as project manager.

"It's been a great site and a great project to work on," she said. "We hope people will see it as something joyous, something which expresses the wonder of the elements . . ."