



# THE LIGHTSHIP

TYSON CAMPBELL LAUNCHES  
NEW WORK AT 'THE LIGHTSHIP'

*09 Feb 2021*

PRESS RELEASE

- Auckland-based artist presents *Skylined* – a lyrical and biographic tale, narrating the complexity of navigating citylife.
- Tyson Campbell commissioned to produce the site-specific artwork which will be displayed from 11 February – 8 April 2021.
- The Lightship is a 110-metre-long, 13-metre-high light wall that Ports of Auckland built into the western façade of their new car handling building. It can be viewed from Quay Street, city wharves, local buildings and the water.



[High Res Photos](#)

[Low Res Photos](#)

Tyson Campbell presents a lyrical and biographic tale. Set to the poetic and political device of rap music, the city boy biography narrates the complexity of navigating citylife as “white-palatable Māori”. Like a series of thoughts noted-to-phone on the bus ride-home, *Skylined* memoirs the feelings and tones of living in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Presented large and at scale with the rest of cityscape, the artist’s ambivalent attitudes are no longer private and personal but given space and place within everyday order.

Our narrator becomes the Sky Tower. Although it shares identifying markers with towers the globe over, the building has - and was purpose built to - become the defining icon of Auckland city, superseding its numerous natural landmarks. The highest point in our skyline, the tower is synonymous with a certain type of being and success. As if to embody its virtue as an emblem of business, glamour and a global hand, the artist speaks as if the object himself.

*To whomst thou b spiritually snatched and litty in cancel couture steppin in drip city.  
Self-possessed and hella Paranoid, my purse comes first, you just one of my toys.  
27 is the age, I woke up, and if you look up, you might just be chuffed,  
27 years, on Auckland’s skyline, you must respect mine, I am your devine.  
On my 34th floor, your on ur knees, I am your god, you globalese.  
stripped of ur seas, water-less Pisces.  
A celeb in the sky,  
A reality of lies.  
I’m a social exercise  
A glamorous enterprise  
I attract cards like micro-plastic butterflies.  
Harmless now, but a true addiction.  
A forged ideology, in this dream-scaped jurisdiction.*

This embodiment gives voice to a dissonance felt required to be a city player; a false grandiosity to have stake in its lifeways, values, and returns promises. “I am the Sky Tower. A divine being. A tall poppy. A self-professed celebrity”, says the artist. Spitting over-confidence, the rap is an exercise in preparatory hype for systems and places in which you can only half invest. Part self-affirmation, part self-exposé, *Skylined* narrates city-being from the hyphen-space of belonging and not belonging at once.

Punctuated by emoji - the ideogrammatic language of ‘youth’ and electronic communication - the artist’s rap maintains the intimate and common quality of a message received from a friend or a feeling sharing post online; while *The Lightship* itself takes on the quality of a personal device.

The Lightship, is a new site for contemporary art, which was launched by the Ports of Auckland in October 2020. The large-scale digital light wall on Quay Street provides Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland with a unique place for public art to be enjoyed.

The Lightship is a 110-metre-long, 13-metre-high light wall that wraps around the western façade of the port's new car handling building. It is made up of seven panels with nearly 8,500 individually programmable LED lights and is visible from busy Quay Street, city wharves, local buildings and the water.

The Lightship's inaugural commission was a new artwork by Janet Lilo entitled *ISLOVE* which was live from 8 October until 3 December 2020. This was followed by *Come Up For Air* by Sorawit Songsataya, which was live from 10 December 2020 to 4 February 2021. The site is programmed by curators Sarah Hopkinson and Bridget Riggir-Cuddy, and sits near another significant public artwork, *The Lighthouse* by Michael Parekowhai on Queens Wharf, cementing the area as a destination for contemporary public art.

[www.thelightship.co.nz](http://www.thelightship.co.nz)

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### **About Tyson Campbell**

Tyson Campbell (Te Rarawa/ Ngāti Maniapoto) is an Auckland-based multi-disciplinary artist whose work is engaged with the relationships between the indigenous and the settler-state imaginaries. Campbell's research focuses on Indigenising ways of knowing through relationality and the agency of Whenua.

Tyson is part of the *Wominjeka Djeembana Research Lab* at Monash University and is also Assistant Curator at *Artspace Aotearoa*.

### **About the Car Handling Building**

The car handling building was developed by Plus Architecture as part of Ports of Auckland's 30-year master plan. It is designed to reduce the space taken up by imported vehicles and better integrate Auckland's port into the surrounding community.

The car handling building is no ordinary 'car park'. It is a harbour-saving building, which removes the need to take more of the Waitematā harbour for reclamation by stacking cars vertically. On its southern wall, facing Quay Street it has the world's largest soil-based vertical garden, which was created by local company Hanging Gardens.

The western wall, facing Queens Wharf, holds The Lightship and a public park is currently being designed for the roof, giving Aucklanders a beautiful new green space with outstanding views of the harbour, the central city and their port at work.

It is a remarkable building, weaving the functional and the aesthetic together to create a building that works both for the port and the city. There is nothing like it anywhere else on earth.

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