

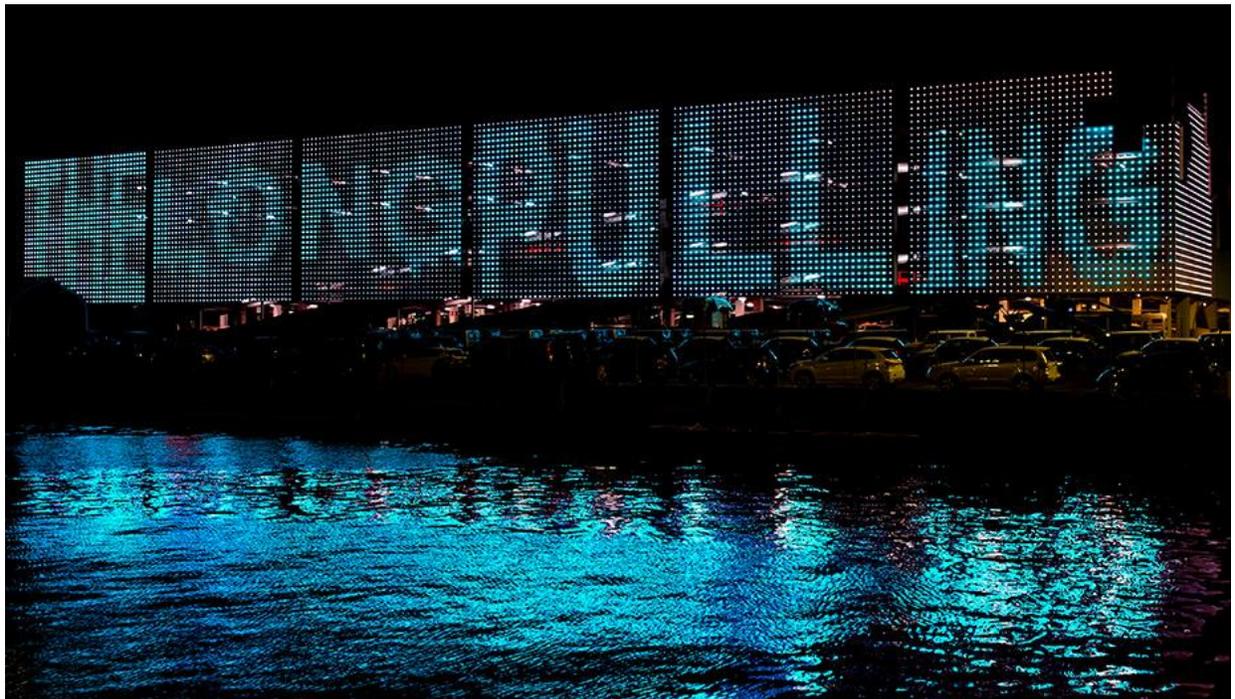
THE LIGHTSHIP

NATALIE & SAM TOZER LAUNCH
NEW WORK ON 'THE LIGHTSHIP'

22 July 2021

PRESS RELEASE

- The Lightship, in partnership with The University of Auckland, Elam School of Fine Arts is pleased to present site-specific artwork *Onepanea* – a new piece by current Master of Fine Arts student Natalie Tozer and her collaborator Sam Tozer, displayed from 22 July – 20 August 2021.
- In July - September 2021, The Lightship presents an Elam Season. After a call for proposals was opened to Elam's student body, Natalie's was one of two successful proposals selected for development into a work for public viewing.



Composing together numerous languages of the Waitematā and its shoreline, *Onepanea* looks at the communication of and in a place as a force that can both define it in meaning and physically shape it. Assembling languages that are human, nonhuman, those in everyday use and those less in currency, *Onepanea* works through a linguistic strata of The Lightship's place.

We come to know and relate to a place through its name, shared understandings of its purpose and histories, and through personal and bodily experience of it. Slowly absorbing these differing modes of information we become attuned; sensorily and symbolically orientated to our regular locations. Both minute and macro in scale, places are made through a nexus of cultural and environmental forces. Continually evident in our urban environments is the placemaking of engineering and design, forces that have shaped the urban centres of Aotearoa New Zealand since the beginning of colonial interest here.

When we walk, shop, or work in the downtown precinct known as Commercial Bay we are doing so on the site of a once deep, still, naturally sheltered bay, *Onepanea* – the place that gives this work on The Lightship its title. Due to its natural assets for good anchoring, this bay was quickly established as a centre for trade upon Governor Hobson's arrival in the area to establish a new capital. It was not long after that the natural cliffs, headlands and shorelines of the Waitematā were recomposed to suit the needs of the burgeoning city. The many natural inlets of the harbour were reclaimed as deep water quays built to meet the growing economic demand of Auckland City.

It was for its natural form and temperament that *Onepanea* was designated as the site for trade and called Commercial Bay. Then, due to this purposement in name and interaction, through time the geological character of the bay gave way to new shapes and modes to upkeep its nominated role.

Once named and related to differently, such sites of reclamation are addressed by *Onepanea* as the work charts the form giving relationship between the geological and cultural.

In the film we visit five sites along the inner Waitematā. Each, a site of land reclamation, the geological characters of these places, along with their names, have shifted with changing human relation to them. Moving through a series of distinct language structures for each place name, the film leads us to a relationship between the mutually informing forces of human culture and its environment.

At each site we encounter a layering of five different systems for meaning or communication. The first; an international code of signals or flag semaphore, where a series of flags each representing a letter conveys place name. The second, the English place name communicated by these flags. The third, the place's pre-colonial name in te reo Māori. The fourth, a translation of this name from reo to English. Finally, is footage of natural phenomenon belonging to each place itself - the forms and behaviours an environment communicates itself through.

Stratified in these single scenes, we begin to see the capacities and constraints of each particular meaning system. With their own unique purpose, history and culture; each way of conveying and naming has had use in the Waitematā and its surroundings, adding cumulatively to its cultural identity.

Maritime signal flags are an international system that visually communicates in silence and at distance. Perhaps vaguely familiar, their meanings are likely illegible to most of us. This is a language specific to the sea with roots in the colonial era of exploration; the navy, and the global movements of goods by water.

Seven flags 'spell out' CMRCLBY. Decoded by adding in vowels this becomes Commercial Bay. Using this system to spell out colonial names for bays of the Waitematā, the Tozer's put into relief the limited nature of this quick, disembodied means of communication.

Determining our language and therein experience of place is our cultural view and purpose within it. Onepanea: Commercial Bay: CMRCLBY: in these translations we can chart histories and ideologies inherent to both language and view of place. Transmitted through The Lightship the geometries and bold colours of the maritime flags are easier to visually discern than the other modalities of place naming in this work. Their meaning however, is lost to most of us in the efficiency of its code, its symbolic bearing on place abstracted almost entirely.

The relationship between the environment and human behaviour is mutually form giving - something that can be briefly gleaned by these names in translation in written word only.

Commercial Bay - Onepanea - Beach of the Heads in Line

Official Bay - Te Hororoa - The Long Landslip

Mechanics Bay - Te Toangāroa - The Long Pulling

Parnell Baths - Taurarua - Song of Annoyance

St. George's Bay - Te Waiataikehu - Waters of Taikehu

The film *Onepanea* ends with two maps; one of the original geological shoreline, the other of the reclaimed line as it exists today. The visual contrast between the two maps is stark, even though in one sense they depict the same place.

Is a place eroded along with its geological formations, erased with its name, or forgotten when we stop telling its stories? Translated *Onepanea* means 'Beach of the Heads in Line' — a name given to the place by a precolonial event that characterized it in name for years after. Does this place, *Onepanea*, somehow remain at Commercial Bay?

Onepanea presents us with this simple poetic proposition. Just as water can be claimed for land and industry; stories, names, language and place can be reclaimed from the force of erasure to be given form in the present. Charting the origin stories and names of these places in the Waitematā, artists Natalie and Sam Tozer begin this work, encouraging us to know, speak, and give form to these places, their names and stories.

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 – 3 December, 2020.

This was followed by;

1. *Come Up For Air* by Sorawit Songsataya
10 December 2020 – 4 February, 2021
2. *Skylined* by Tyson Campbell
11 February – 8 April, 2021
3. *Broken Embraces* by Sione Tuívailala Monū
15 April – 17 June, 2021
4. *Pūtahitanga kura* by Abigail Aroha Jensen & Georgina Watson
5. 17 June – 18 July, 2021

The site is programmed by curator 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
hello@thelightship.co.nz
IG [@the_light_ship](https://www.instagram.com/the_light_ship)

About Natalie Tozer

Natalie is an artist and experimental filmmaker based in Tāmaki Makaurau. She is interested in geological processes, exploring our own experience in the geologic. Working closely with behaviours of ‘the underground’, her process often involves burying and unearthing objects and information. Recent shows include *Emerging Artists Show* at Sanderson Gallery, *Salted Earth* at Sosage Gallery and *Goofer Dust* at Elam Project Space. In 2021 her work was selected for Femisphere 4 and was a National Contemporary Award Finalist.

She has also had work in the Guangzhou Art Fair, The Wallace Arts Trust, Headland Sculpture on the Gulf Pavilion, Art in the Dark Cinema, was a finalist in several Walker and Hall exhibitions and a recipient of a University of Auckland Summer Scholarship.

Natalie holds a PGDipFA with distinction and is a MFA candidate at Elam School of Fine Arts. She produces a range of cultural events and media at LOT23 Studio and is the founder and caretaker of the artists run project *mothermother* which supports curatorial activism.

About Sam Tozer

Sam (Kāti Māmoe, Pākehā) is a co-director of LOT23 – a film studio, gallery and live music events centre. He is also a long time collaborator of Lisa Reihana, being her DOP / Technical director / VFX / compositor for *Ihi* installed at the Aotea Centre in 2020, *Nomads of the Sea* 2019 and *In Pursuit of Venus {infected}* which represented New Zealand at La Biennale di Venezia 2017.

Sam was also the Studio DOP / VFX / compositor for the iwi lead *Manea - footprints of Kupe* a permanently installed exhibition, Hokianga 2020. With over 20 years experience, directing, editing, creating visual effects and shooting for music videos, drama, advertising and fine art projects he is pleased to collaborate for the first time with another creative force in his life; his co-director at LOT23, wife, mother of children, and writer of bio's Natalie Tozer.

With special thanks to Te Reo consultant
Kiriana O’Connell (Ngāti Tukorehe, Pākehā)

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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For further information contact:

Matt Ball
GM PR & Communications
M: +64 21 495 645
E: ballm@poal.co.nz