



THE LIGHTSHIP

PARASITE LAUNCHES NEW WORK AT 'THE LIGHTSHIP'

6 April, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

- The Lightship is pleased to present *Broken Sovereignty*, a new work by Parasite.
- The commissioned site-specific artwork which will be displayed from 6 April – 1 June, 2022.
- Extending Parasite's original critique concerning the lack of LGBTQ+ representation in art galleries, director Daniel John Corbett Sanders' new work reflects on the use and misuse of LGBTQ+ representation in advertising.
- *Broken Sovereignty* will be accompanied by a series of discussions with Sanders around issues of LGBTQ+ representation.



Parasite

Parasite was conceived in February 2020 by curator and artist Daniel John Corbett Sanders in response to recent discussions about the lack of representation of LGBTQ+ art and artists in public art institutions.

Though such discussions have been circulating for years, the issue of LGBTQ+ representation in galleries was reignited by Sanders in his informal research published in late 2019, in which he revealed only 0.06% of the Auckland Art gallery's collection is digitally archived as being LGBTQ+ related in any form. The research went viral on social media, and instigated a lot of discussion around representational politics in art institutions.

Parasite emerged out of such ideas surrounding institutional critique and sought to present new modes of art-making, in particular those that often situate queer cultures within a wider conversation on the socio-political context of everyday life.

In response to rising rental prices and the impossibility of renting space for a gallery, Parasite was located on Karangahape Road in the three-story high staircase of Sanders' private residence. A structure responsive to recent 'upgrades' in the local Karangahape Road area, Parasite is mindful of arts complicity in gentrification processes regardless of who it is critiquing it.

Parasite has exhibited critically acclaimed solo exhibitions including by Tash Keddy, Ali Senescall, Aliyah Winter, Nayan Patel, Owen Connors, Cao Xun, Obadiah Russon, p Walters, Laura Duffy and Deborah Rundle.

The gallery published author Samuel Te Kani's first novella, *Daddy*. In 2020 the gallery participated in May Fair Art Fair, and in 2021 held a booth at the Auckland Art Fair.

Broken Sovereignty

Broken Sovereignty furthers Parasite's original critique of LGBTQ+ representation. Turning to the space and language of advertising, Sander's screens *The Lightship* with the simple statement: AUCKLAND. Set at billboard scale, the letters spelling the place name are designed with the colourful symmetries of the original Pride flag, slowly beginning to glitch and break.

The original eight stripe Pride flag was designed in 1978 by artist Gilbert Baker for San Francisco Pride. Each colour represented a joy of being queer; hot pink for sex, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, turquoise for magic, blue for harmony and violet for spirit. In 1979, the original Pride flag was reduced to six colours, dropping the hot pink, and substituting turquoise and indigo for royal blue, due to fabric unavailability and to make the flags easier to make.

The Pride flag was quickly translated as an international symbol of unification and resistance for a people who continued to be violently persecuted and discriminated against for their gender and sexuality. Rainbow flags were hung out windows and paraded in public space in protest to often legalised human rights violations, including murders, arrests and evictions. As the HIV and AIDS pandemic gripped the world, the original Pride flag took on an additional meaning as a marker of solidarity, hope and mourning as LGBTQ+ communities buried their loved ones and were denied fair medical treatment and recognition.

Since the LGBTQ+ liberation movements of the late 20th century, the Pride flag has been put to more superficial use. It now appears in political and marketing campaigns promoting countries, products, people or entities as gay-friendly in order to be perceived as progressive, modern, and tolerant. More than often, these strategies have nothing to do with LGBTQ+ equality or inclusion.

Though these objectively tokenistic campaigns have had some positive outcomes, *Broken Sovereignty* aims to identify how they might contribute to 'homonationalism'. A term coined by Jasbir Puar, homonationalism describes the often overly-orchestrated relationship between nationalist ideologies and LGBTQ+ people^[1].

On the brink of Auckland's reopening to international tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic, *Broken Sovereignty* welcomes visitors back to a city we all wish to be progressive. But as the iconic rainbow letters of AUCKLAND begin to flicker, the work encourages us to question the role of homonationalism inside a campaign to create a thriving Auckland.

Broken Sovereignty is a part of an ongoing project by Sanders that aspires to evolve internationally.

^[1] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke University Press, 2007).

About Daniel John Corbett Sanders

Daniel John Corbett Sanders, born 1994, is a Pākehā artist and curator from Ngāmotu New Plymouth, Aotearoa New Zealand, of Dutch and Ashkenazi descent. He majored in sculpture, and has studied at Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland and Auckland University of Technology.

He currently works as the Assistant Curator at Artspace Aotearoa, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and has worked as a curator and facilitator across several galleries, i.e. RM Gallery and Project Space, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Trish Clark Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Auckland Art Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; George Fraser Gallery and Project Space, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Ngāmotu New Plymouth.

Sanders has also curated several independent exhibitions and events across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, often in collaboration with local LGBTQ+ businesses and organisations. Acknowledging the lack of representation of LGBTQ+ artists in Aotearoa New Zealand, in 2020 Sanders founded *Parasite* – an artist-run gallery prioritising the exhibition of LGBTQ+ artists.

Reflecting on the intersectional nature of art galleries, Sanders often looks to curation as a creative practice that sits collaboratively with his work in film and photography. He is interested in critical geographies, and the relationship between LGBTQ+ citizens and political economies. Sanders reimagines documentary aesthetics in order to capture LGBTQ+ spaces in their diversity and precarity, and in this process he attempts to deconstruct the concept of ‘queer space’.

His films often investigate the dreams and catastrophes of urban history viewed through queer narratives of inner-city life. More generally, Sanders’ research also engages with LGBTQ+ investments in the right to live; questions of sovereignty, biopower and necropolitics, especially as played out in local histories and events.

www.danieljohncorbettsanders.com

About The Lightship

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*: Sorawit Songsataya
10 December, 2020 – 4 February, 2021
2. *Skylined*: Tyson Campbell
11 February – 8 April, 2021
3. *Broken Embraces*: Sione Tuívailala Monū
15 April – 16 June, 2021
4. *Pūtahitanga kura*: Abigail Aroha Jensen & Georgina Watson
17 June – 18 July, 2021
5. *Onepanea*: Natalie & Sam Tozer
22 July – 2 November, 2021
6. *Kupesi Sisi Huelo 'oe Taulanga Waitematā moe Funga*
Tāmaki Makaurau: Sione Faletau
3 November – 13 December, 2021
7. *Whakakiwi*: SINŌ
14 December, 2021 – 2 February, 2022
8. *EVERYTHING*: Fiona Jack
9 February – 30 March, 2022

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

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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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