



THE LIGHTSHIP

JESS JOHNSON & SIMON WARD

NEW WORK ON 'THE LIGHTSHIP'

3 Nov - 14 Jan, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

- The Lightship is pleased to present *I Have No Body, and I Must Move* - a new piece by Jess Johnson & Simon Ward.
- The commissioned site-specific artwork will be displayed from 03 November - 28 December 2025.
- Drawing from both ancient cosmologies and digital game aesthetics, the duo have created a lucid visual choreography in the form of an animated video that feels at once game-like and mythic.



I Have No Body, and I Must Move

Long-time collaborators, Jess Johnson and Simon Ward, present *I Have No Body, and I Must Move*, an animated video that unfolds like a ritualised side-scroller. Faceless silhouettes navigate a gravity-defying maze of staircases and platforms, framed within Johnson's signature universe of saturated patterns and symbolic architectures. Drawing from both ancient cosmologies and digital game aesthetics, the duo create a lucid visual choreography that feels at once game-like and mythic.

About Jess Johnson & Simon Ward

Jess Johnson and animator Simon Ward form a New Zealand-born, Melbourne/New York-based duo whose immersive art practice bridges hyper-detailed drawing, animation, video and virtual reality. Johnson builds fictional worlds through intricate hand-drawn cosmologies—layered patterns, arcane symbols and humanoid figures—while Ward animates these visions into multisensory, navigable environments. Their major 2018 VR installation *Terminus*, commissioned by the National Gallery of Australia, invites viewers on a “choose-your-own” journey through psychedelic, architectural realms via travellers and gateways. Exhibited across Australasia—at Dowse, Heide, Tauranga and beyond—the work reshapes expectations of art through technological interactivity, immersive narrative, and the marriage of analogue craftsmanship with digital speculation.

About The Lightship

The Lightship, is a new site for contemporary art, which was launched by Port 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 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 went live from 8 October, 2020.

This was followed by;

1. *Come Up For Air*: Sorawit Songsataya
2. *Skylined*: Tyson Campbell
3. *Broken Embraces*: Sione Tuívailala Monū
4. *Pūtahitanga kura*: Abigail Aroha Jensen & Georgina Watson
5. *Onepanea*: Natalie & Sam Tozer
6. *Kupesi Sisi Huelo 'oe Taulanga Waitematā moe Funga*
Tāmaki Makaurau: Sione Faletau
7. *Whakakiwi*: SINŌ
8. *EVERYTHING*: Fiona Jack
9. *Broken Sovereignty*: Parasite
10. *Emma's Rain*: Andrew Beck
11. *Heavy Frame (wairua)*: Turumeke Harrington
12. *The Long White Cloud*: Jae Hoon Lee
13. *Sky Sculpture*: Andre Hemer
14. *Frequency Colour*: Clinton Watkins
15. *Slow Fever*: Nicola Farquhar
16. *White Collar Eclipse*: Oscar Perry
17. *Cut Line*: Alex Chambers
18. *Untitled*: Esther Stewart

The site is programmed by curator Simon Bowerbank, 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 Port 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.

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.

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