



THE LIGHTSHIP

SONYA LACEY LAUNCHES
NEW WORK ON 'THE LIGHTSHIP'

17 November, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

- The Lightship is pleased to present *Chlorophyll (Port of First Arrival)*, a new work by Sonya Lacey.
- The commissioned site-specific artwork which will be displayed from 16 November, 2022 – 28 February, 2023.
- The piece builds on previous works in which Lacey connects the physiological needs of plants with those of humans, and with a broader idea of how time is experienced via the rhythms of the body.



Chlorophyll (Port of First Arrival)

Sonya Lacey's new site-specific video for The Lightship presents footage which pans over a red-hued array of plants and vegetation. The extreme close-ups highlight slight movements of plants in the breeze, giving them an animated, dynamic quality, while the measured slow pace of the camera feels exploratory, or even voyeuristic. Equal parts clinical and hauntingly atmospheric, this footage was captured using a camera shooting at the 680 nanometre wavelength, or the near-infrared part of the visible spectrum.

Lacey's footage is in fact a series of intimate observations of a large-scale vertical garden at the Ports of Auckland, directly adjacent to The Lightship screen. The red colour in the video is infra-red light reflecting the chlorophyll in the various plants' cells, back towards the camera's sensor. Chlorophyll functions almost as a mirror for infrared light, meaning that cameras operating on this frequency can be used to quickly assess the number of green plants in an area, an application that NASA uses to measure the health of various ecosystems from space. Likewise, the vertical garden at the port is used as a test site for biosecurity measures, operating as a kind of early-warning system that will attract invasive species arriving in cargo and allow them to be headed off before they endanger wild habitats.

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Chlorophyll (Port of First Arrival) builds on previous works in which Lacey connects the physiological needs of plants with those of humans, and with a broader idea of how time is experienced via the rhythms of the body. While a feature of the building during the day, the 100-metre long green-wall typically recedes into darkness during the night hours that The Lightship operates. Here Lacey gives the plant-life prominence throughout the night, ensuring this work will become part of the circadian rhythm of the central city, a record of growth and synthesis illuminating the harbour and surrounding buildings.

About Sonya Lacey

Sonya Lacey lives in Tauranga and works in a range of media including moving image, sculpture and language.

In 2021 she was the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Visiting Artist, a residency that culminated in the one-person exhibition *Totally Dark*. Her exhibition *Weekend* was nominated for the 2021 Walters Prize and exhibited at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

She has exhibited throughout Aotearoa at galleries including Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Ngāmotu New Plymouth; Artspace Aotearoa, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington; The Dowse Art Museum, Te Awakairangi Lower Hutt; and Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Pakuranga, Tāmaki Makaurau.

Her moving image works have been exhibited internationally including at the State of Motion Festival of Moving Image, Singapore and the London International Film Festival.

She has undertaken a number of international residencies, most recently with NTU CCA Singapore. Sonya is represented by Robert Heald Gallery, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

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
9. *Broken Sovereignty*: Parasite
6 April – 16 June, 2022
10. *Hinemoana & Papatūānuku*: essa may ranapiri
22 June - 17 July, 2022
11. *A Random Rant*: Sean Kerr
3 September - 15 November, 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.

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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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