“In 1988, coming from a technical background in engineering and an artistic background in filmmaking, I began to create interactive video installations that involve the viewer and the viewer's response to a given situation. In creating interactive video artwork, my goal has been to move away from the conventional computer screen 'button pushing' interface and instead to move towards creating works that have a more intuitive level of interaction....I have tried to create installations that are less about a viewer dominating a work, and more about viewers participating in the developing personality of a work.”

— Jim Campbell (Artist's statement for The Mortal Coil: Mourning Becomes Electronic, exhibition at the University of California, Santa Cruz; Sesnon and Faculty Galleries, 1996)

Jim Campbell has been producing video and sound-related new media works since the early 1980s. Known for combining LED light panels with diffusion screens to augment light patterns and underscore the relationship between the digital and analog, from 2002-06 Campbell produced a series of low-resolution Wave Studies, including the 2005 work Divide.

Comprised of custom electronics, 768 LED lights, and treated Plexiglas, Divide presents the viewer with evocative binaries: natural and man-made, analog and digital, abstract and concrete. The pairing of an angled LED panel with a fixed diffusion screen allows the projected image to move through a full visual spectrum, from discrete and pixilated at the top, to continuous and blurred at the bottom. The imagery appears digital in the top of the work, but analog at bottom, bringing into question the concepts of flux and fluidity related to the waves depicted in the work.

In 1978, Jim Campbell received degrees in Mathematics and Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He transitioned from filmmaking to interactive video installations in the mid-1980s, and as a result, Campbell's custom electronic sculptures and installations have made him a leading figure in the use of computer technology as an art form. Campbell's work is held in numerous public collections including the Cincinnati Art Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); MOMA (New York); Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, DC); the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York); and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In the fall of 2010, Campbell's work, Scattered Light, was installed in the Madison Square Park Conservancy in Manhattan (through February 28, 2011), making it the artist’s largest and most extensive public piece to date.