GAVIN HIPKINS THE HOMELY

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PREFACE PAULA SAVAGE

The City Gallery Wellington is proud to present Gavin Hipkins's *The Homely*, the latest in an ongoing series of New Zealand artists' projects which have included Ani O'Neill's *Cottage Industry*, Vivian Lynn's *Spin–Versor*, *Versari*, and Mary-Louise Browne's *Out of Character*.

Artists' projects in public galleries are important milestones in the career of an artist, frequently representing major periods of research, development and public exposure. They enable an artist's ideas to be explored in depth and to be realised on a more significant scale than in a dealer gallery exhibition. Projects such as *The Homely* allow the critical art community and the general public alike to engage with the developing work of our significant practitioners.

Commissioned by City Gallery Wellington, *The Homely* is the culmination of four years' work for Gavin Hipkins, a Wellington artist currently resident in Vancouver. The eighty photographic images which comprise *The Homely* were collected on travels around Australia and New Zealand. They record images and objects which have helped to define identity in this part of the world, a scrapbook of historical folklore which might give shape to Pākehā, or settler culture. As Gavin Hipkins has noted, 'The use of *The Homely* as a title alludes to the sense of unease that young nations face in defining nationhood. This is still relevant as Pākehā attempt to define their nativeness, and in so doing, call their country "home".'

Gavin Hipkins is one of New Zealand's leading younger artists. Having achieved national recognition over the last decade, his work was exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in October 2000, and was shown in Turin in 2000 as part of an internationally-juried selection of significant young artists from around the world.

The three contributors to this exhibition catalogue take different roles in order to elucidate the cultural significance of *The Homely*. Expatriate art writer Blair French looks at Hipkins's work in the arena of current international photographic practice; Wellington-based art historian Peter Brunt examines its reverberations within a post-colonial context; while the City Gallery's Lara Strongman uncovers its subterranean references to a literary and visual tradition of Antipodean Gothic.

The City Gallery Wellington gratefully acknowledges Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa for their support of the development of the new work and the publication of the exhibition catalogue. And we warmly thank the artist, whose intellectual acuity and good-humoured commitment to realising this project has resulted in the development of a compelling and significant new body of work, which, in its familiarity and in its strangeness, might show us something of who we are and what we might yet become.

Paula Savage is Director of City Gallery Wellington.

GOTHIC REVIVAL LARA STRONGMAN

Awareness of what great gloom
Stands in a land of settlers
With never a soul at home.
Allen Curnow, from 'House and Land'

But what I want to know is: when they dream of home, what do they see?
Sam Neill, *Cinema of Unease*

Over four years at the end of the last century, Gavin Hipkins made a number of small excursions around New Zealand and Australia in search of images which have been 'used to define nationhood and historical folklore.'[1] He found them in the most surprising places: in the hot-house of the Christchurch Botanical Gardens, in a pet shop in Sydney, at a takeaway burger bar in Wellsford, as well as at memorial sites and in museums. To the resulting suite of eighty photographs, launched in Wellington in 2001 as *The Homely*, Hipkins has given the billing 'A Post-Colonial Gothic Novel'.

There is a popular account of our culture which casts it as irredeemably gothic, a people forever menaced by the unforgiving nature of the landscape and by a hard-wired tendency to madness and violence in the face of isolation. This dark Antipodean night of the soul has been told with countless variants in twentieth-century novels, paintings and films as well as recounted in the newspapers. On many occasions, it has given us specific images to illustrate ideas of national identity. I am thinking of such sublimely gothic visions as Jane Campion's piano foundering in the rough waters of the Tasman; the lonely country railway station of Rita Angus's *Cass*; two teenage murderesses running through dank

rhododendron shrubberies in Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures*; black and white TV footage of the *Wahine* foundering in Wellington harbour; poet Charles Brasch's 'gaunt hills' or James K. Baxter's 'cold threshold land'; and perhaps most poignantly of all, Campion's enduring image of Janet Frame as a tiny red-headed child standing alone on the lost highway of her imagination. New Zealand images, these, on the whole, like *The Homely*; but there are Australian variants too, which, in the way of their New Zealand counterparts, are tales of human endurance in the face of a preternaturally harsh landscape: the epic outback adventures of Ned Kelly; painter Russell Drysdale's thin dark stockmen against a barren red land; the contemporary code of the outlaw in *Romper Stomper*.

Actor and director Sam Neill alluded to the gothic imagination as a national trait in his personal journey through the history of New Zealand film, *Cinema of Unease*. He commented of *The Piano*: 'From the start we were aware we were working on something extraordinary, and it was—romantic, gothic, unique... *The Piano* raised for me however, the intriguing but worrying thought: if a national cinema is a reflection of ourselves, then ours is a troubled reflection indeed.'[2] In this part of the world, the gothic sensibility is still inextricably interwoven with the last remnants of frontier culture. It plays itself out in the no-man's-land between separate worlds, at the lawless border between the old world and the new where the old ways have lost their meaning and the new ways are struggling to evolve. It is an inherent aspect of the post-colonial moment for New Zealanders of British descent, as Europe recedes in cultural memory and a new sense of identity as Pākehā is negotiated. As Vaclav Havel writes of global culture: 'Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying and exhausting itself, while something else, still indistinct, were arising from the rubble.'[3] When reflected in our cinema, the gothic frontier always, to use Neill's term, involves *trouble*, attested to by the catastrophic denouements of New Zealand films as diverse in historical setting as *Smash Palace*, *The Scarecrow* and *Once Were Warriors*. For the protagonists of these films, in mutual frustration through an inability to communicate across a gulf of unbridgeable difference, the order of civilisation has irreparably broken down and a red tide of violence is unleashed.

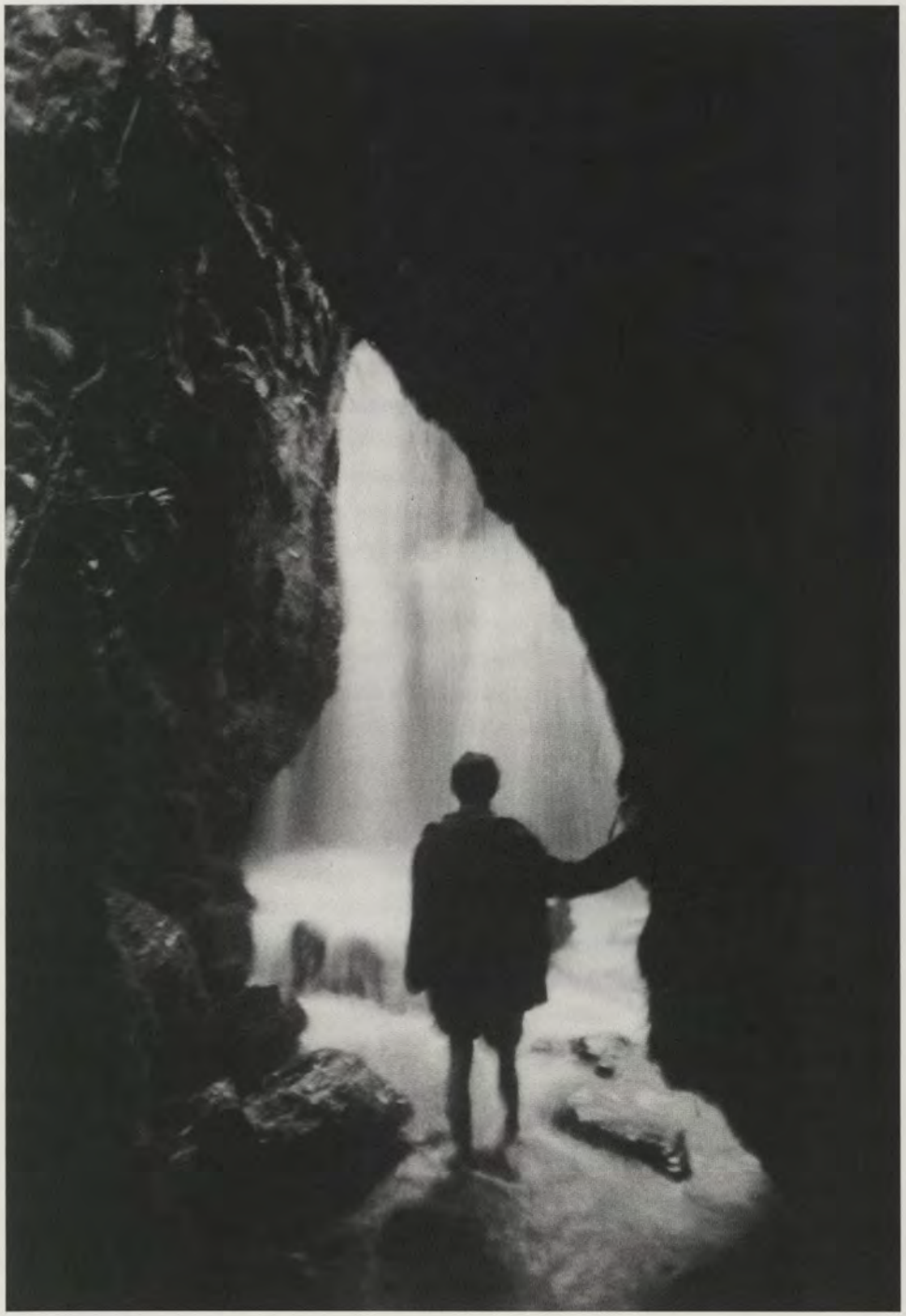
The uneasy collision between the old and the new, the familiar and the strange, that characterises the gothic in New Zealand is also a defining characteristic of the German concept of the *unheimlich*, which has formed the intellectual premise for Gavin Hipkins's recent work. Usually translated into English as the 'uncanny' or the 'unhomely', there is no precise cultural equivalent: in his 1919 essay on the subject, Sigmund Freud discussed the strange ability of this word to also contain its opposite, for the *unheimlich* to also be *heimlich*. Citing examples from European folklore, Freud also quoted German anti-romantic novelist Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow (1811-1878) who wrote, when discussing a family whose sense of latent secrecy he compared with a 'buried spring or dried-up pond', noting that 'one cannot walk over it without always having the feeling that water might come up there again'; that the feeling engendered was what 'we call... "unhemlich"; you call it "heimlich".' Freud continues: 'In general we are reminded that the word "*heimlich*" is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the

other, what is concealed and kept out of sight.' A footnote to the 1974 publication of Freud's 'The Uncanny' ascribes a similar archaic ambiguity to the English word 'canny', which 'may mean not only "cosy" but also "endowed with occult or magical powers".'[4]

With *The Homely*, Hipkins trains the *heimlich* principle on to Australasia's developing post-colonial identity. This is a work of profound cultural psychoanalysis, in which Hipkins has pictured the phantoms of national character. Glimpsed through the blurry lens of a white middle-class suburban 1970s childhood, these are images of home—but of a home made here at the end of the world, rather than one whose comforts have been imported from the motherland. These are not so much images which attempt to recapitulate the experience of Britain in the South Seas, but which might belong to New Zealand culture itself, and, figuring in the collective memory, in turn offer a sense of cultural belonging to the people of this place. These contemporary myths of Antipodean origin are there in enigmatic images of the everyday such as *Sydney (Pocket)*, 1998, which pictures the corner pocket of a pool table; *Wellsford (Sign)*, 1999, with its hand-lettered 'European food' sign offering prawn crackers and pineapple fritters; a swinging tyre suspended from a tree in *Wellington (Tyre)*, 1999. In these images, the all-too familiar is rendered strange, through the fundamental psychological principle of the uncanny which defeats our attempts to separate ourselves from it. There is a dark undertow to *The Homely*, a dream-like encounter with the past which at times, in images such as the oddly disturbing *St. Arnauld (Forest)*, 2000 (where a run-down old caravan is glimpsed through a thickly-wooded forest), assumes a forensic quality—like a photograph of an ancient crime scene. Though flirting at times with the well-worn iconography of 'kiwiana' in images such as *Wellington (Fern)*, 1998, or *Huka (Falls)*, 1999, there is an overarching sense of strangeness and ambiguity—the uncanny at work—which belies any sense of kiwi-lite. Although *The Homely* is a 'novel' comprised of images, it is never a comic book.

If *The Homely*, Hipkins's most ambitious work to date, is to be considered a novel, then his earlier forays into the territory of national identity might be regarded as similarly literary acts. While his *Folklore: The New Zealanders* of 1999 anthologised images by other photographers, last year's *The Habitat* was a perfectly constructed short story. *The Homely* by contrast is a contemporary hypertext novel, whose structure is rhizomatic rather than linear and whose fragmentary narrative can be read from almost any entry point. To use Roland Barthes's distinction, *The Homely* is a writerly rather than a readerly text: here Hipkins has authored the images for which his viewer must revive a gothic narrative.[5]

Two and a quarter centuries before *The Homely* was first presented to the public, the first gothic novel was printed in England. Originally published under the pretence that the manuscript was medieval in genesis and that he was its recent translator, in its second edition Horace Walpole described his book, *The Castle of Otranto*, as a 'gothick story'. It laid the ruinous foundations for many others which would follow in this new genre. Its setting, an ancient and crumbling castle, was plagued by an ancestral curse. The supernatural manifested itself visibly in the form of ghosts, omens and prophecies, perpetuating the uncanny return of the past within the present. Perhaps most significantly in a discussion of *The Homely*, this first gothic novel established the notion of geography as a specific plot device—place as character, haunted by time. As novelist Lawrence Durrell wrote of Alexandria in the 1950s, a similar time of rapid



The Homely: Te Wairoa (Falls), 1999

cultural change in a collision between the old ways of empire and the new self-determination of an African nation: 'We are the children of our landscape: it dictates behaviour and even thought in the measure to which we are responsive to it.'[6]

The protagonist of *The Homely* is the place itself, the Antipodes, on a journey of self-discovery as it leaves behind the foundering ship of British colonialism. Its invisible subjects are the children of this landscape, the people who make their lives here and who respond to the land's call in their actions and intuition, shaped by this place. The late British Empire has, in Hipkins's hands, become the metaphoric ruined castle of Walpole's gothic imagination, its ghosts and clanking chains—a bronze lion, a row of targets on an archery lawn, a battle fleet on manoeuvres in Sydney harbour—caught by Hipkins's camera like spirit projections. Anticipating new forms of cultural imperialism in this part of the world, Hipkins notes that 'the unfolding story reveals Western suburbanisation, Catholicism, and Americanism'—the formative influences of his Pākehā childhood. In *The Homely*, the gothic tradition of passionate melodrama has been overtaken by something closer to home—the violent poetry of the everyday.

The principle of infinite return by which the same events are perpetuated in new forms is a trait shared both by the gothic and the *heimlich*. Freud recounted a personal anecdote which illustrated this principle in his analysis of the uncanny. He told of an incident which had engendered a particularly uneasy emotion in him, describing an accidental visit to a district full of 'painted women' which he seemed incapable of leaving: 'I suddenly found myself back in the same street, where my presence was now beginning to excite attention. I hurried away once more, only to arrive at another detour at the same place yet a third time. Now, however, a feeling came over me which I can only describe as uncanny, and I was glad enough to find myself back at the piazza I had left a short while before, without any further voyages of discovery.'[7]

There is a sense in which the uncanny, figured as the persistence of the past in the present, which Freud describes above and which ascribes odd significance to chance events, is an underlying feature of the colonial impulse, in its desire to remake home in a new place. At once familiar and very strange, *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, this concept casts a surrealistic tone over the stone-built Victorian Gothic Revival architecture of the central city in South Island towns such as Christchurch and Dunedin, the seeding ground for several of Hipkins's images. Christchurch, in particular, becomes Olde England in the South Pacific, a colonial theme park attracting thousands of international tourists each year, the place and the pastiche of the place co-existing uneasily together. (I've often imagined the strangeness of those kodachrome images kept in photograph albums in Tokyo and Berlin which picture their subjects standing smiling beside the stone coat-and-trousers statue of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, or squinting into the hot Antipodean sun over a Devonshire tea at Mona Vale.) This is a replica of a long-abandoned homeplace; a psychic space, like that of *The Homely* (where Hipkins has combined objects photographed from the 'real' world as well as paintings, dioramas, and models) where facts and fictions collide.

The rural landscape, too, does not escape from a similar colonialising vision—that is, the new colonisation of economic exploitation. Familiar majestic vistas of New Zealand scenery become, both in images for tourist promotion and in actual experience, a form of quotation, a sort of mediated second-hand encounter with the sublime in a clean green theme park at the end of the world. Hipkins alludes to this

sense of the landscape as adventure playground in images such as *Te Wairoa (Falls)*, 1999, the only image in *The Homely* to feature a human protagonist, moodily isolated in silhouette against a raging torrent in the style of the eighteenth-century Romantic painters. Hipkins has continued to explore the idea of adventure tourism in the body of work which he is currently engaged in making on Canada's Western seaboard.[8] Like New Zealand, Canada is a post-colonial nation (or as film writer Jerry White has noted, perhaps more accurately a post-Commonwealth nation) with a relatively brief European history and a corresponding identity crisis among its white settlers; in Canada, as in New Zealand, myths of the frontier continue to work themselves out at a time when technology is eroding traditional national boundaries.[9]

The contemporary individual is a member of many different global communities. Uncircumscribed by geography in the borderless zone of the Internet, today people may choose to identify themselves through multiple ethnicities, religious or philosophical persuasions, or social groupings, and may switch allegiances between groups as circumstances demand or allow. National identity is one such linking factor among many others: individuals who would be horrified at the notion of militaristic patriotism may, for example, become fervent supporters of a national sports team in a cheering crowd. These communities of strangers (to use Greil Marcus's term to describe devotees of popular culture) constitute a new kind of tribalism, whose membership is established through the mutual recognition of images and stories.

A notion of culture as collective memory, the essence of the new tribalism, lies at the heart of *The Homely*. These are tribal fictions of our recent past, a psychological compendium of memory-images which simultaneously contribute to our culture and draw upon it. The gothic nature of these stories, alluded to in Hipkins's subtitle, is only to be expected: if we look at the emergence of the eighteenth-century 'gothick novel', we discover that this fiction of fear similarly arises at a time of great social and economic change. At the same time that Pākehā culture is rising from the rubble of the end of empire, it turns in upon itself back to the landscapes of childhood memory; and in works like *The Homely*, re-imagines what it is to be a person belonging to this place, to be at home in a new world.

Lara Strongman is Programme Manager at City Gallery Wellington. She recently curated the City Gallery's first biennial exhibition of contemporary New Zealand art.

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1 Gavin Hipkins, 'Artist's Statement for *The Homely*', quoted from his project proposal to City Gallery Wellington, 1999; and passim.

2 Sam Neill, *Cinema of Unease*, 1995, BFI/Top Shelf Productions (56 min). Writers/Directors: Sam Neill, Judy Rymer.

3 Vaclac Havel, 'The Search for Meaning in a Global Civilisation' in the *Fontana Post-Modernism Reader*, ed. Walter Truett Anderson; London: Fontana, 1996, p.208.

4 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. XVII, London: The Hogarth Press, 1974, p.225.

5 Readerly texts describe works from 'old-fashioned' technology—the printed book—where the reader follows a linear narrative. By contrast, writerly texts exist in an electronic environment—CD Roms, the Internet—whereby the reader can chose how to navigate around the text using links to explore vertically as well as horizontally, following many possible information paths.

6 Lawrence Durrell, *Justine*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961, p.41.

7 Freud, 'The Uncanny', p.237.

8 Hipkins's ongoing sequel to *The Homely*, entitled *The Next Cabin* 2000–2002, will feature in a forthcoming issue of *Art Journal*.

9 Jerry White, 'Possum, Film Noir, and the past/future of New Zealand', in *P.O.V.* no.7, http://imv.aau.dk/publikationer/pov/Issue_07/section_2/artc5A.html.

PLATES

[13] The Homely: Dunedin (Landscape), 1999

[14] The Homely: Auckland (Model), 1998

[15] The Homely: Rotorua (Gateway), 1999

[16] The Homely: Napier (Tree), 1999

[17] The Homely: Sydney (Heads), 1998

[18] The Homely: Melbourne (Portrait), 1999

[19] The Homely: Sydney (Harbour), 1999

[20] The Homely: Paraparaumu (Statue), 1999

HOME TIME PETER BRUNT

Fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.

Benedict Anderson

For me the great achievement of the centuries in which the artist accepted the probable and familiar as his subjects were the pictures of the single human figure—alone in a moment of utter immobility. But the solitary figure could not raise its limbs in a single gesture that might indicate its concern with the fact of mortality and an insatiable appetite for ubiquitous experience in the face of this fact. Nor could the solitude be overcome. It could gather on beaches and streets and in parks only through coincidence, and, with its companions, form a tableau vivant of human incommunicability.

Mark Rothko

The *Homely* comprises eighty photographs lined up along the gallery wall. Each is identified by a date, a named object, and the name of the general location—city, town (such as one would find on a political map)—in which it was photographed. The work requires its spectator to walk by it, so that the process of looking transpires in time. These dates and names are important. They specify individual sites but they also map the site specificity of the work as a whole. They are a kind of litany accompanying the viewer in his or her passage through the work.

The Homely is clearly the product of a traveller. Our own 'tour' through the series—around the gallery in eighty pictures—mimicks, even as it formalizes, the odysseys of the artist in the world. But the wanderings represented in *The Homely* are not as aimless as they seem. They cohere in terms of that unnamed locality—so taken for granted it is (almost) unnecessary to name it—namely New Zealand and (its neighbour) Australia, the Nation, the 'home.' The naming of these *two* nations already indicates the complex psychic relations at play in their national identity formation, the dynamic interplay of rivalry and difference: the poor cousin, the big backyard, we are like them/we are not like them, and so on.

Yet it would be easy to imagine contexts in which this series of photographs, without its names,

would dissolve into generic placelessness; or to the same place replicated everywhere. What iconic clues there are to the contrary are all misleading. *Wellington (Flag)*, 1999 shows the Union Jack; *Wellsford (Sign)*, 1999 reads 'European food'; *South Island (House)*, 1999 is a house in the style of medieval Tudor. As for *Rotorua (Gateway)*, 1999, showing a miniature railway track passing beneath an imitation Māori carving, well, setting aside its debts to Disneyland, it begs all the big questions doesn't it? Whose 'home' is this? Whose nation is it? What is a nation? How did nations come to be? What was before the nation?

The fact that they are *not* from anywhere, and that it matters that they are not, depends on *who* is looking. (But just so: who *is* looking?) Most of these objects and places are more or less familiar to us—some in the domestic sense, like Time-Life books and glass vases; others from the socio-scape, like war memorials and State Highway One; still others from the cultural-scape, like white men in woolly jumpers or the *menu* of 'European food'—*because* we assume the 'we' whom the images address. We are *interpellated* by them, in the Althusserian sense of subjects who recognize themselves as such by the authority of a call.[1] These photographs call out to that 'imagined community' called the nation, at the same time as they attempt to make the ideological character of that calling visible.

The familiarity of this iconography is what makes us familiar to ourselves, makes us 'us.' Yet it is possible to imagine other perspectives within the nation. Indeed the more familiar this iconography seems, composed as it is of primitive villages and sailing ships, of Crown land and imperial government, of a culture of ballet and landscapes, the more reduced and troubled by the perspective of others it may become. Is *The Homely* legible to an immigrant 'fresh off the boat' from Samoa, recruited to work in the factories at Penrose? How is an immigrant from Somalia in Newtown or an Aboriginal Australian interpellated as a 'subject' in the imagined community of *The Homely* by an image like *Sydney (Heads)*, 1998, for example, in which a mannequin head is violently distorted into the stereotype of the 'sambo'?

The Homely is billed, says the artist, as a kind of post-colonial gothic novel. We will come to the post-colonial part below, but in what sense is it like a novel? It does not tell a story, or at least not overtly. That it leaves to you—not out of any indifference to narrative but precisely because you are crucial to novels being what they are. Novels, says Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities*, emerge as new literary forms in history around the same time as nations do. They make it possible 'to "think" the nation' because they structure time (and space) in a particular way. Borrowing a phrase from Walter Benjamin, he describes this idea of time as '"homogeneous, empty time," in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefigurement and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, measured by clock and calendar.'[2]

Calendrical time is not hard to discover in *The Homely*. It is marked most obviously by the dates which accompany the title of each photograph, their linear continuum suggested by the fact that the series is 'on-going.' Moreover, the formal seriality of its installation—eighty photographs of identical proportions lined up along the wall—also echoes the calendar's regular clocking. Contrast the alternative temporality assumed by that forlorn megalith in *The Homely* in *Near Rotorua (Rock)*, 1999, for example, with its millennial inscription 'Jesus will soon return.' In what year? we ask, the absurdity of the question—or the expectation—betraying the incommensurability of 'homogeneous, empty time' to other temporal models in which events might be imagined (such as that which Benjamin called 'Messianic time').

The notion of simultaneity or transverse time is evident in the co-presence to each other of these images of spatially separated sites and objects. If we were to 'novelize' *The Homely*, as we are invited to do, we would construct our plot, as novels do, in transverse, cross-time: *Warships brood in Sydney harbour. Meanwhile, the baby sleeps contentedly in the bassinet in the Auckland suburb. She is unaware of the bird with the hooked beak waiting in the faraway mountains ready to peck out her eyes.*[3] And so on. These disconnected spaces and imaginary events are simultaneous and have their narrative coherence in the omniscient mind of the reader. To adapt Anderson's explanation, only he or she, like God, imagine the baby sleeping, the owl watching, and the ships brooding 'all at once.'[4]

The Homely is novel-like in another sense suggested by Anderson. It imagines a lone male hero as the protagonist of its 'story', explicitly depicted in *Te Wairoa (Falls)*, 1999, but implicit in every other photograph by the deserted character of its scenography, as if the entire human population, bar one, had recently vanished. That one, the solitary hero, whatever the nature of events, moves through a *sociological* 'landscape'—parks and streets, harbours and museums—whose recognizability confirms its reality ('Fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality') and thereby the reality of the 'imagined community.' The fact of their typicality, that they are replicable anywhere, does not negate their locality but defines it as such, as a national locality, comparable to others like it around the world. Local differences are differences bound to their modular sameness, like the difference between nations at the World Cup Rugby Tournament: one game, one clock, one numbering system, *different* colour uniform, though as we all know, that difference, like the difference between Australia and New Zealand, is the essential one to make.

But if *The Homely* maps the localities called New Zealand and Australia within the co-ordinates of 'homogeneous, empty time', it is not in order to assert its hegemony. On the contrary, what it sets to work, via an aesthetics of the uncanny, is a creeping sense that the very banality of this world conceals something immanent within it which disturbs and disorients its ontologizing fictions. It makes *being*, in the space of the nation, ambivalent. Its images of passageways and thresholds—corridors, stairwells, doorways—are haunted by other places and times somehow *within* the space of the nation but which are not represented, or representable, in the imaginary of *The Homely*.[5] It insinuates—via the angle of a view, the reflection of a flash, the glare through a lens—a temporal ambivalence which 'doubles and splits'[6] the time of the modern nation. *The Homely* reverses the flow by which fiction 'seeps quietly and continuously into reality' by sending the real seeping back into fiction. It stages the familiar and mundane—a ball on the grass, a vase on a shelf, an empty tennis court—as so many uncanny rebuses, which, as the surrealist Louis Aragon said of the environs of Paris in the 1920s, are like 'unrecognized sphinxes' which grant to the 'modern Oedipus' who interrogates them, only 'that he shall once again plumb his own depths.'[7] Plumbing the depths of what it means to be a 'kiwi', a 'New Zealander', a 'Pākehā,' is Hipkins's game in *The Homely*.

In the second part of this essay I would like to suggest three interrelated themes which may serve to contextualize and historicize *The Homely*. The first is its concern with time. In a globalized world, it attempts to explore political and cultural space in terms of their temporal ambivalence. One may see this exploration in an earlier project, *The Unhomely*, the predecessor and counterpart to *The Homely*, which comprised historical photographs selected by the artist at random (or apparent random) from the photo-

graphic archives of the Alexander Turnbull Library and exhibited at the library's gallery in 1997. Foregoing the 'redemptive' task of formal history which selects and orders the disorder of the past, giving it a point of view and making it meaningful to the present, Hipkins confronts the spectator of these images not with the drug of nostalgia or the reasonableness of sociology and history, but with the temporal disjunctiveness of images which are at once familiar and strange. Because they provide no framing narrative to order, or re-order, the story of the national self, we are left to confront the sheer strangeness of others from times past, made all the more strange for the assumption of familiarity (Hipkins imagines the National Photo Archive as the nation's 'family album,' his excavation an encounter with the 'ancestors'[8]). In re-presenting the national *imago*, *The Unhomely* makes palpable the death inscribed in it from the beginning, an anti-aphrodisiac to our own dream-capture by the national and global *imagos* of the present.

What is at stake in these self-othering operations is no doubt a complex affair. The deliberate link *The Homely* and *The Unhomely* make to Freud's 1919 essay (from which they borrow their titles) on the feeling of uncanniness suggests their high stakes. Our susceptibility to the experience of the uncanny suggests an important characteristic about being modern and about modernity. The 'homeliness' we are encouraged to feel within that complex, as taken for granted as the kitchen sink, is vulnerable to more or less disturbing interruptions, based as modernity and being modern are on psychic and historical repression. The primitive mind we leave behind in childhood is also the 'primitive mind' which 'universal world civilization' has conquered by colonization and imperialism. To plumb the depths of being a modern kiwi, the New Zealand Oedipus risks not only the coincidence of remembering the enormity of a crime he did not intend, but also the terms of an interminable repentance.

My second theme concerns the link which *The Homely* makes itself to a Romantic tradition of solitude, travel, and the quest for transcendence. The link is made in a photograph I have already mentioned: *Te Wairoa (Falls)*, 1999, which depicts a lone man beneath a rocky crevice transfixed by the visionary blur of a cascading waterfall. It cites a figurative convention familiar from the paintings of the eighteenth-century artist Caspar David Friedrich. This figure also appears in my second epigraph where I quote the American painter Mark Rothko. My purpose in linking Hipkins to Rothko is not simply in the fact that they pay homage to a common tradition. In fact they are linked through what separates them which I would suggest is a profound mutation in the Romantic tradition which occurred in the middle of the twentieth-century when Rothko (in 1947) made this statement.[9] The reiteration of a kind of Romanticism in Hipkins's work, as in that of many other artists revisiting this tradition today,[10] is nonetheless a Romanticism of a different order. The mutation I am suggesting occurred in the Romantic tradition in the twentieth-century had much to do with the momentous historical reversal entailed in the global dismantling of colonialism after World War II. That will be my third contextual theme.

The image of the man beholding the waterfall is central to *The Homely*, partly because it embodies its contradictions. The luminous radiance of the falls is clearly what holds the man's gaze and fixes him 'alone in a moment of utter immobility'—before the 'object' of desire. This is *it*, the object of his search, the source of his being. The ultimate nature of that 'object' is of course obscure: Wordsworth felt it had to do with childhood and associated its aura with heaven ('Heaven lies about us in our infancy'). Freud proposed

it as the sight of the mother's genitals—our natal home, the epitome of uncanniness for Freud—reminding us of something intimately familiar but long forgotten. *Te Wairoa (Falls)*, 1999 puns this 'home-at-last' moment as simultaneously the ultimate beaver-shot. The components of this encounter are displaced, parodied, and (above all) repeated through the series. Solitude is echoed in the ambience of all photographs. The encounter's ambiguity is evoked by the formal echo of *Te Wairoa (Falls)*, 1999, in *Auckland (Door)*, 1997 and *Westport (Curtains)*, 2000, with their contradictory associations of the accessible and the forbidden (the doors are closed), the enlightening and darkness (*Curtains* is almost the exact negative of *Falls*). The encounter is repeated in every other photograph which all offer surrogate objects to solicit the gaze, half-parodying, half-reinvesting its desires for transcendence with various profane illuminations: incandescent light-bulbs, fluorescent crosses, fountains, and electric insect-traps; each a 'little revelation,' promising an intimacy it will or won't deliver. *The Homely* also puns its own *scopophilia*, the act of *looking*, multiplying witty substitutes for the 'eye' and its passions—tyre rings, archery targets, balls, 'bulls-eyes' on beanies—and interspersing them through the series like vision's own pulse.

The repetition of these substitutes for the 'home-at-last' moment, however, undermines the singularity of its archetype. This is a crucial tension in *The Homely*. It separates Hipkins from Rothko. Note that for Rothko the transcendent experience which paralyzes his solitary hero is countered by an altogether different impetus which unfreezes him and sends him back into the world of the probable and familiar, moving through streets, beaches and parks (the locations of *The Homely*). From immobility, transported outside time and space in the optical instant, to mobility and multiplication in the nomadic wanderings of the hero, plunged back into a mundane world which is temporal and finite. Hipkins is a kind of latter-day Wordsworth, relocating the mnemonic valences Wordsworth saw in nature in that forest of signs which has become post-modern 'nature': warships and electric fly-traps for meadows and daffodils.

Let me turn finally to my last theme. The post-colonial turn in history was registered by Levi-Strauss in the 1950s as the loss of the adventure of journeying, along with the self-transforming experience such adventures made possible through the encounter with exotic 'others'. Paul Ricoeur registered the same moment as the end of the 'cultural monopoly' of the West, even as its colonising history had made 'universal world civilisation' an escapable reality.[11] Ricoeur saw the rise of a plurality of national cultures in the 1950s as decolonising countries struggling for independence returned to their cultural pasts, suppressed by colonialism to 'unearth' their 'separate personality' and 'unfurl' it like a flag before the 'personality' of the coloniser.[12] He wondered what the encounter between one culture and another, outside a relation of conquest and domination, would involve. 'In order to confront a self other than one's own self, one must first have a self,'[13] he wrote, and this 'having' required a return to its sources in the cultural past.

Amongst other things, one can see in the enigma of this unfolding history the collapse of the Romanticist belief in an exotic *outside*, existing elsewhere in time and space, far from the metropolitan centre. For the post-Romantic Romantic traveller, melancholy for a lost 'other', to travel meant a kind of perpetual wandering through space, 'chasing after vestiges of a vanished reality,'[14] keen to the promptings of memory and remembering. Shadowing the metaphysical sobriety of this fate (it has qualities of that penance I mentioned earlier) is Ricoeur's vision of a commodified exotic organized for tourist consumption

on a massive scale, threatening, he feared, to empty of all significance *even the question* of national identity.

> Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an 'other' among others. All meaning and every goal having disappeared, it becomes possible to wander through civilizations as if through vestiges and ruins. The whole of mankind becomes a kind of imaginary museum: where shall we go this weekend—visit the Angkor ruins or take a stroll in the Tivoli of Copenhagen? We can very easily imagine a time close at hand when any fairly well-to-do person will be able to leave his country indefinitely in order to taste his own national death in an interminable aimless voyage.[15]

Hipkins's interrogation of the national *imago*—othering it on the one hand, remembering it on the other—walks the precarious line between two grim alternatives.

In the final analysis we must come back to the post-colonising process being played out by Pākehā in Aotearoa-New Zealand, which began in earnest in the 1970s and continues into the present. The images in *The Homely*, whatever else they mean, are the 'vestiges and ruins' of that recent and very particular political history. For all its deadpan coyness, the work points directly at fundamental anxieties about belonging to the nation. 'Is it still heimlich (homely) to you in your country where strangers are felling your woods?'[16] This question, quoted in Freud's essay, haunts the cultural memory of Pākehā in this country like no other. It haunts *The Homely. Yet it is a question not asked of them.* The question posed from their mirror is, 'Having felled the woods and built the nation, is it homely to you yet?' If the former query finds its way into *The Homely*, it is via an opening of otherness *in the self* where others can finally be.

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1 Louis Althusser, 'On Ideology,' from *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971, p.163.

2 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso, 1991 (1983), p.22–24.

3 My narrative links *Sydney (Harbour)*, 1999; *Auckland (Corridor)*, 1998; and *Christchurch (Museum)*, 1998.

4 Anderson, p.26.

5 It is striking what is not represented in *The Homely*—indigenous people and non-European immigrants, for example. They will see themselves in this national imaginary only as racist stereotypes (*Sydney [Heads]*, 1998) or fun-park props (*Rotorua [Gateway]*, 1999). For in the cultural imaginary it maps they are simply not, except in those terms, there. But it would be wrong to think of this as its failing. It does its job in making that absence apparent. But if they *were* there, as we would expect them to be these days, that would not solve the problem *The Homely* is raising, which is to call into question the power of claims to all-encompassing representativeness. The synchronous inclusion of many cultures in the (re)imagined national community does not disturb the hegemony of 'homogeneous, empty time'.

6 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p.144.

7 Louis Aragon, *Le Paysan de Paris* (Paris, 1926). Quoted in Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1993, p.174.

8 Gavin Hipkins, 'A Safe Haven', in *The Unhomely: Images Selected from the Alexander Turnbull Library Photographic Archive*, National Library Gallery, Wellington, 1997, n.p.

9 Mark Rothko, 'The Romantics were Prompted,' quoted in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, 1900–1990, Oxford and Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1992, p.563.

10 Consider the recent exhibition, *Bright Paradise*, curated by Allan Smith at the Auckland Art Gallery, March–April 2001.

11 Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, trans. Charles Kelbley, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965 (1955), pp. 271–284.

12 Paul Ricoeur, p. 277.

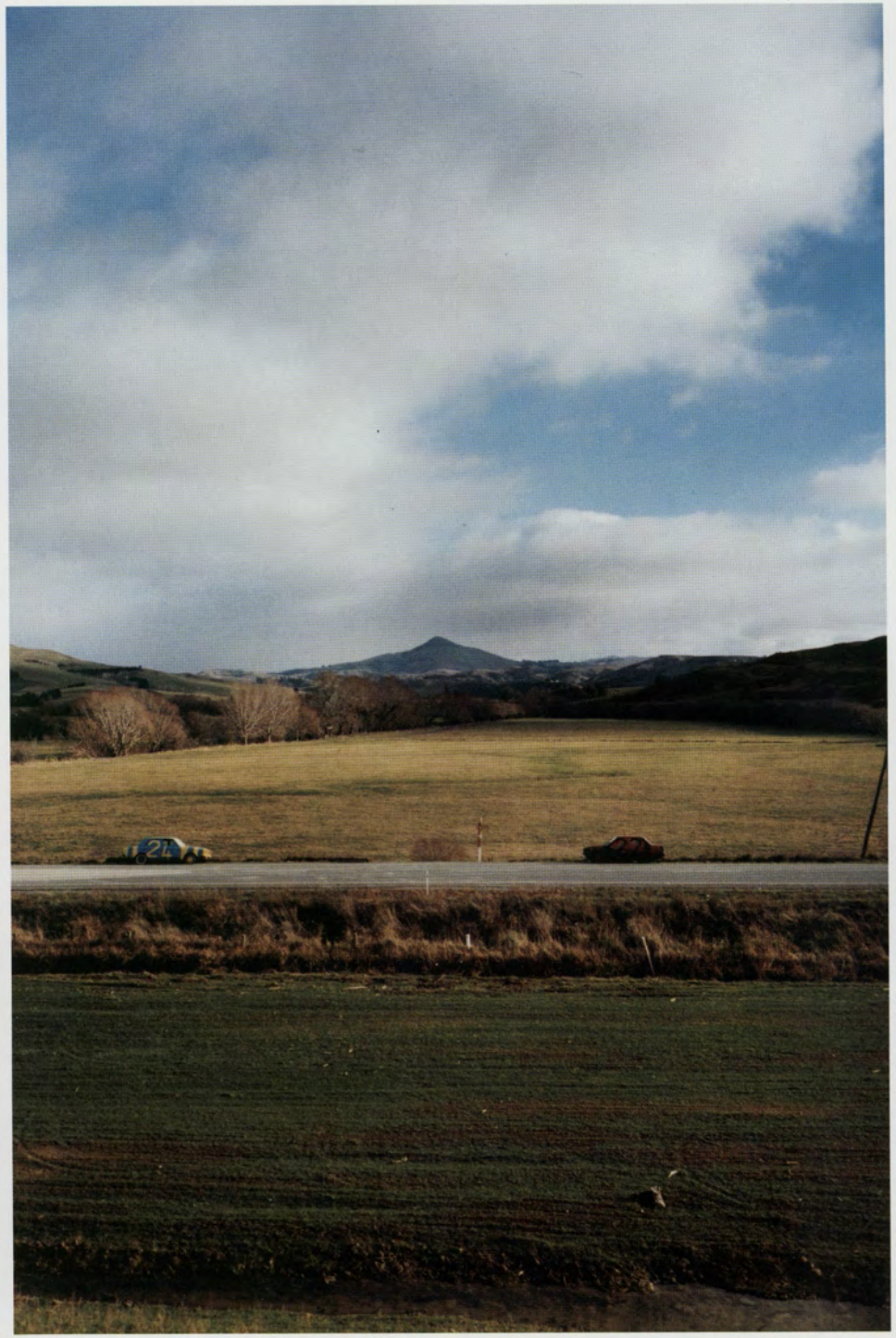
13 Ricoeur, p. 283.

14 Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, London: Pan Books, 1989 (1955), p.51.

15 Ricoeur, p.278.

16 Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny,' in *On Creativity and the Unconscious*, New York: Harper and Row, 1958, p.126.

PLATE SERIES TWO



HEW NUTS $10.30 EC
EUROPEAN FOOD
FISH 1.90
CHIPS SMALL $1.00 LARGE 1.90
MUSSEL 0.80
OYSTER 1.00
SAUSAGE 1.00
HOT DOG 1.40
CRABSTICK 1.40
CHICKEN PIECE 2.20
CHICKEN + CHIPS 350
MEAT FRITTERS 100
POTATO FRITTERS 0.65
PINEAPPLE FRITTERS 0.85
PRAWN CRACKERS 2.00

PLATES

[29] The Homely: Auckland (Mount Eden), 1999

[30] The Homely: South Island (House), 1999

[31] The Homely: Melbourne (Corridor), 1999

[32] The Homely: Christchurch (Black Hood), 2000

[33] The Homely: Near Timaru (State Highway One), 1999

[34] The Homely: Wellington (Tyre), 1999

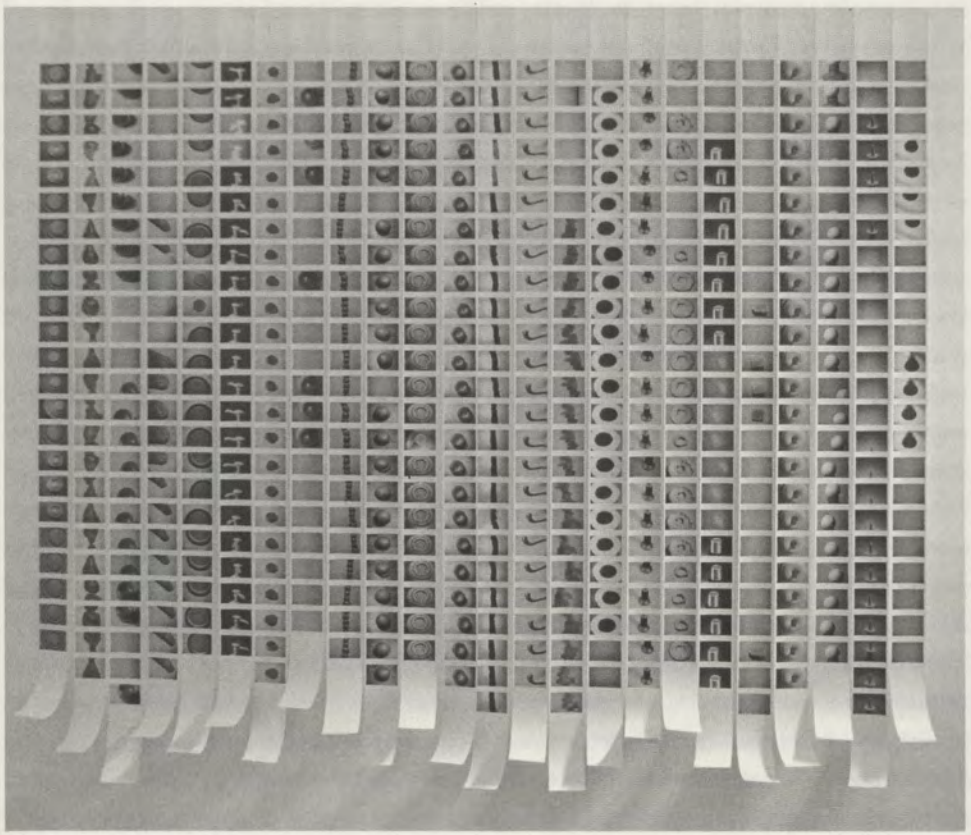
[35] The Homely: Wellsford (Sign), 1999

[36] The Homely: Wellington (Path), 1999

THE BIG PICTURE GAVIN HIPKINS AND INTERNATIONAL PHOTO-ART BLAIR FRENCH

Gavin Hipkins's first major overseas showing was in *every day*, the 1998 Biennale of Sydney. His work, *Zerfall* (1997-98), was a set of 24 colour photographic strips, each featuring multiple close-up images of domestic objects and fittings. The strips hung vertically and loose like lengths of drying film, so foregrounding both the material quality of the overall work and the laborious action of its making through time. If the classic aesthetic project within modernist photography involved the creation and selection of single images encapsulating ideal form or decisive moment, then *Zerfall* attested to the debilitation of the claims of such singular images to authoritative record of historical experience. Whilst mimicking advertising and still-life image-forms as well as German 'new objectivity' photography of the 1930s, *Zerfall* acted in a similar manner to conceptualist photography from the late 1960s and early 1970s, rejecting overt pictorial formalism in favour of an accumulation of matter-of-fact photographic records.

Photography was utilised within conceptualism to record events as they occurred both in and through time. It was exploited as a means of collecting and structuring raw data from the everyday world into often aberrant systems and typologies. Photo-conceptualism highlighted the porous quality of



Zerfall, 1997-98, 24 C-type prints

boundaries between fictional and real worlds. None of these photographic conditions were initiated or discovered within photo-conceptualism. Rather conceptual artists drew on both photographic history and traditions of the twentieth-century avant-garde, deploying photography as an act of transcription and classification whilst simultaneously unveiling and critiquing the cultural structures and political bias of 'naturalised' representational conventions. Photo-conceptualism therefore provides a key prism through which to both engage with earlier photographic forms and approach the continued efficacy of the photographic image in contemporary art and life. It is just such a touchstone for Hipkins's practice.

In *Zerfall*, for example, the typological action and anti-aesthetic of conceptualism dissipates before a deliberately overbearing commodity fetishism produced within the now highly stylised aesthetic convention of the advertising image. Moreover, its multiple strip images form a grid—that arch form of modernist regularity—which survives as a key design principle within contemporary commodity culture. A systematic catalogue of objects in the world gives way in *Zerfall* to a seductive play of slightly strange, alluring forms across diagonal as well as horizontal and vertical axes. Utilitarianism has been voided by Hipkins's camera. As Robert Leonard notes, 'zerfall' means cultural decay, expenditure, dissipation—the

exhaustion of the modernist project of making the world anew in radical form.' So what then of photography? Is it condemned solely to actions of cultural anaesthesia? Can it aspire beyond visual distraction, lifestyle promotion, or cultural nostalgia—those defence mechanisms against post-millennial inertia that have ingratiated themselves so successfully within contemporary art practice as 'critical strategies'?[2]

Both the urgency of these issues and the adroit manner in which Hipkins addresses them become clearer when we consider his practice in light of the increasingly ubiquitous presence of the photographic image not only within but as a determining form of international contemporary art over the past decade. Hipkins's practice draws on the legacies of not only conceptualism but factographic, surrealist and documentary photography in order to both locate photography, and through photography locate the self in a meaningful, critical relation to the flux of daily life and its negotiation via images. In much conceptual art the photograph was treated as a space in which life and art (or experience and critical reflection) might intermingle, even collapse into each other. Such a project was utopian, of course, and doomed not only to heroic failure but also to incessant repetition into the present and beyond. Therefore, as with a number of his contemporaries internationally, the core importance of photo-conceptualism for Hipkins's work is in fact to be found in this insistent return of the pictorial as a means and form by which critical art might be, in the words of John Roberts, reconnected 'to the world of social appearances without endorsing a *pre*-Modernist defence of the pictorial.'[3] Such a relation fundamentally undermines any notion of conceptualism as primarily an anti-visual art. Canadian artist-critic Jeff Wall claims that if conceptual art involved a critique of not only the constitution of objects, representations, actions and ideas as art, but also of the very conditions within which art may be conceived, and perceived, then the photographic image necessarily emerged from this critique as one of art's key sites or conditions.[4] Under this reading the photographic image acts as a hinge between the aesthetic and the social. We are not speaking of a collapsing of life and art within the image, but of their ongoing transaction back and forth through the image or, particularly as in the case of Hipkins, through accumulations, sequences and patterns of images.

Applying this framework to contemporary photo-art practice enables us to refute two rather tired photo-theory conventions. The first is a 1980s' genuflection to the cult of the simulacrum, that call 'toward dematerialisation, repetition, degeneration, fade, towards the state of infinite replay' which Terry Smith describes as 'the horror at the heart of postmodernism.'[5] The second is a 'naïve reflectionist'[6] take on photography where the image is assumed to merely reflect or open onto a reality external to itself. Recognition of the direct relation between image and world is certainly important to a fully realised conception of contemporary photo-based art. For example, the lingering connotation of this relation—the photographic assertion of 'this is' or 'this has been'—is vital for any understanding of how the photographic image operates as a nexus in Hipkins's *The Homely* for very real forms of relation (perceptual, imaginative and social) between us as viewers and the world about us. However, a nostalgic return to a 'window onto the world' form of positivist criticism only serves to suppress the very presence of the photograph itself as this active, determining element in our daily lives. Misreading key twentieth-century photographic traditions through an insistence upon a 'truth-to-life' documentary fallacy, such criticism creates false legacies for contemporary photo-based art and, more significantly, attempts to separate photographs out

from the world in which they are formed or through which they transact.[7]

Resistant to such limited readings, the very best contemporary photo-based art practices deploy the image to multiple ends: as bearer of information regarding the material and social world, both historically and in the present; as marker of presence in and movement through the world; and as dynamic mode of intervention into and transaction within the social and communicational structures that give form, meaning and value to our lives. To put this another way, in practices such as that of Hipkins the photographic image is always acknowledged as simultaneously both a constituent component of, and yet also a means for enabling reflexive critique of those cultural conventions that constitute our world.

Hipkins's work, nevertheless, is somewhat at odds with one of the dominant strands of international photo-art practice today—the predilection for singular, colour, mural-scale and often backlit images. Such works draw equally upon the forms and claims to social significance of traditional history painting, of cinema, and of present-day advertising infrastructure. They tend towards all-encompassing, even totalising views of urban space and social organisation in a world of global capital (the work of Andreas Gursky for example). Or they stage figures in often enigmatic or disruptive relationship to carefully detailed social or natural environments (such as in the work of Jeff Wall or Gregory Crewdson). These images are generally contrived so as to appear seamless, far more so than the world they might purport to represent. Often over-resolved in aesthetic terms they are, in effect, networks of visual data organised to what Wall himself refers to as the conventionalised 'spatial continuity' of the western pictorial tradition.[8] Even when created in apparent reflection of the increasingly image-saturated condition of our urbanised, twenty-first century world they tend towards a further organisation of that world into the condition of 'image' (Martin Heidegger's 'world picture').[9] The all-seeing precision and allure of surveillance in such work is most disturbing when most banal. What rhetorical force these works possess is generated in direct relation to a culture in which, according to Fredric Jameson, aesthetic experience is everywhere, saturating every aspect of social life and in doing so making the very notion of the image as work of art problematic.[10]

Jameson's is a particularly negative critique of such work, claiming in effect that artworks drawing on the spectacular image forms of contemporary commodity culture will necessarily be absorbed back into that culture, neutralising their critical potential. Under this reading, for example, Gursky's massive, overwhelming images of dance parties, factories and stockmarket floors are considered akin to advanced forms of advertising, little more than grist to the mill of corporate culture.[11] Yet such practices flourish internationally. And even if we pursue other, more positive readings regarding the relation of such images to our experiences of contemporary life we need still to acknowledge that this photographic form has come to constitute something of a museum art for the new millennia. Might the work of Hipkins, amongst others, be seen as providing a radical counterpoint? And if so, how?

As a lengthy frieze of photographic images, Hipkins's *The Homely* constructs a very different form of relation between viewer and work than that demanded by a single, large scale Gursky image for example. The latter dominates the viewer's perceptual and physical space. Even when conventional perspectival form is eliminated, the viewer remains locked into a static, passive position before the totality of the image.[12] The image is complete without recourse to the viewer's participation. In contrast, the frieze

form of *The Homely* requires a physically active viewer. With a work nearly 40 metres long it is clearly necessary to physically move back and forth along the work in order to register it fully. In doing so we will each develop a particular experience of the work in our assembling of its individual pictorial elements into idiosyncratic groupings and sequences akin to phrases and sentences.

The Homely therefore activates the phenomenological encounter of the viewer. Hipkins is drawing here on the legacies of minimalism.[13] In this sense his practice displays affinities with that of North American artist Roni Horn, a maker of minimal objects and installations who has for over a decade been producing books and installations of photographs made in Iceland. In these works photographs operate relationally to construct in Nancy Spector's words an 'actual experience of time and place.' These photographs 'defy the viewer to be present in the perceptual moment.'[14] Like Horn's photographic work, *The Homely* constitutes both a dynamic space of physical interaction and an active visual syntax.

Again like those of Horn, Hipkins's images also operate counter to any impulse to contain or encapsulate the world as image. There are multiplicities of viewpoints, for example, running through *The Homely*, and never are we presented with an all-seeing, disembodied view. In fact the viewpoints within Hipkins's images are difficult to assimilate, are never easily naturalised, and tend to keep prodding at a constant acknowledgement of the fabric of the photograph as a constituent, if slippery component in our ongoing negotiation of the world about us. If anything, Hipkins's images in *The Homely* tend to hyper-dramatise our individual relations to the material matter-of-factness of the world, and in doing so hint at psychological states that accompany this relation. Mundane objects are pictured close-up, both drawing us into unsettling intimacies with our environment and anthropomorphising otherwise prosaic, inert forms. Figures, on the other hand, are rare and generally immobile, often taking the forms of statues and mannequins. Objects glow. Knick-knacks are pictured in spaces within spaces. An isolated rock at sea, a tyre on a rope or a macramé cross take on greater symbolic significance than the odd religious icon. Pictured surfaces brush the surfaces of images. Signs, handwriting and odd objects accumulate to no apparent structure. There are a multitude of enclosed environments and built spaces, often with hints of passage to worlds beyond—staircases leading to windows or doors, parted cloth, half-glimpsed views over balconies or out through cave entrances. Natural and manufactured forms and spaces contaminate each other: light catches a caravan hidden in bush, a snake lies curled in its dioramic space, both trees and buildings blaze in artificial light, cars and boats interrupt otherwise scenic (although far from spectacular) vistas, a tree trunk wraps a warehouse pillar. (This latter image was taken in the former Museum of New Zealand building on Buckle Street after its abandonment, the tree becoming quite literally a neglected cultural relic.) We might attempt to bring some classificatory structure to this overall set of images, but in their contrariness they will always bleed out of our allotted criteria.

Whilst apparently endless streams of 'post-photographic' digital images flow through our world daily, the analogue photograph maintains its grip on our consciousness as record of and material intervention into time and place, as container of information, and as means of communication. Thomas Crow recently suggested that 'the currency of the descriptive photograph' is shifting from a verification of the object photographed to some form of affirmation of both the location and act of photographing. Thus, for Crow

photography's greatest value (and challenge) is not in the production of aesthetically recognisable images, but as a means of negotiating and marking the 'nomadism' of contemporary life (the dynamic flux of images, objects and individuals through time and space).[15]

This is the project of *The Homely*. Each of Hipkins's images is a glimpse or fragment of time and place in flux. Each is an act of location and of testing relation to place. As all the images are made in Australia and New Zealand, *The Homely* records not only particular presences in these places, but of these places within a wider world (and within a global arena of photographic images). Finally, *The Homely* (and indeed each of its individual images) bespeaks an acknowledgement of the ultimate impossibility of totally encapsulating all the complexities and contradictions of our changing world within any single photograph. The quality of Hipkins's project is in his careful process of photographically recording fleeting encounters with the visible world, in his collecting and then his reconstituting these visual fragments over and over again in new configurations like some form of compelling but irresolvable puzzle. We might speculate then that Hipkins makes images not to order the world, but simply as a means of thinking a passage through it. In *The Homely* this passage is finally reconstituted in a photographic frieze through acts of suture—through a visual re-stitching of the world in multiple image form—and so in a consequent animation of our own life passage through photographs.

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1 Robert Leonard, 'Gavin Hipkins', in Jonathan Watkins, curator, *every day: The 11th Biennale of Sydney*, Sydney: The Biennale of Sydney, 1998, p.112. Leonard here also makes reference to the commodity fetishism of *Zerfall*.

2 A more recent Hipkins exhibition of strip photographs—*The Stall*, Waikato Museum of Art and History, 2001—more directly addresses the relation of photography to each of these three 'conditions'.

3 John Roberts, 'Photography, Iconophobia and the Ruins of Conceptual Art', in *The Impossible Document: Photography and Conceptual Art in Britain 1966–1976*, London: Camerawork, 1997, p.9.

4 See Jeff Wall, '"Marks of Indifference": Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art', in Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, curators and eds., *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965–1975*, exh. cat., Los Angeles and Cambridge, Mass.: Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 1995, pp.247-67.

5 Terry Smith, 'Enervation, Viscerality: The Fate of the Image in Modernity', in *Impossible Presence: Surface and Screen in the Photogenic Era*, Sydney and Chicago: Power Publications and Chicago University Press, forthcoming 2001, p.7.

6 I am indebted to Terry Smith for suggesting this term.

7 Such fundamentalist positivist criticism tends in particular to misread photographic forms associated with the so-called Düsseldorf School in Germany from the late 1970s onwards; with socially interventionist, often 'insider' documentary practices; and with Euro-American photo-conceptualism. For a classic example see Elisabeth Sussman, 'The Invincible Pencil of Queen Mab', in Lynne Cooke, curator, *Jurassic Technologies Revenant: 10th Biennale of Sydney*, exh. cat., Sydney: Biennale of Sydney, 1996, pp.27–32.

8 See Jan Tumlir, 'The Hole Truth: Jan Tumlir talks with Jeff Wall about *The Flooded Grave*', *Artforum*, March 2001, pp.112–17.

9 See Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt, ed., New York: Harper Row, 1977, pp.115–54.

10 Fredric Jameson, 'Transformations of the Image in Postmodernity', in *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998*, London and New York: Verso, 1998, pp.100.

11 For just such a critique see Alex Alberro, 'The Big Picture: Blind Ambition', *Artforum*, January 2001, pp.104–14.

12 In many of Gursky's images, for example, a sense of recession 'through' the image is forgone in favour of the arrangement, often via digital technology, of equally visible components right across the picture surface.

13 This is even more apparent in Hipkins's earlier abstract photographic installations such as *The Tunnel* (1997), *The Trench* (1998), and *The Circuit* (1999).

14 Nancy Spector, 'Roni Horn: Picturing Place', in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Nancy Spectator, curators and eds., *Events of Relation: Roni Horn*, exh. cat., Paris: éditions des musée de la Ville de Paris, 1999, p.50. Horn's most recent photographic series, *Pi* (1998), produced also in book form as Arctic Circle, was first exhibited at the Australian Centre for Photography *in every day: The 11th Biennale of Sydney*. The 45 photographs including portraits, images from a television soap opera, landscape and fauna photographs were hung high on the walls in a single encircling sweep around the room.

15 See Thomas Crow, 'Image versus Object in Art's Global Network', in Department of Art History, *Pre/dictions: The Role of Art at the End of the Millennium: Papers Presented at the Conference of the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington, 2–5 December 1999*, Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 2000, pp.1–8.

LIST OF WORKS, THE HOMELY (1997-2000), 80 C-TYPE PRINTS, EACH 40 x 60 cm (16 x 24"), EDITION OF 8, COURTESY OF HAMISH MCKAY GALLERY, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

The Homely: Melbourne (Rope), 1999
The Homely: Dunedin (Landscape), 1999
The Homely: Auckland (Model), 1998
The Homely: Nelson (Harbour), 1999
The Homely: Westport (Rope), 2000
The Homely: Rotorua (Gateway), 1999
The Homely: Melbourne (Wood), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Dogs), 1998
The Homely: Auckland (Corridor), 1998
The Homely: Porirua (Village), 1999
The Homely: Westport (Curtains), 2000
The Homely: Sydney (Heads), 1998
The Homely: Rotorua (Mud), 1999
The Homely: Wanganui (Wrestlers), 1998
The Homely: Christchurch (River), 1997
The Homely: Auckland (Door), 1997
The Homely: Christchurch (Corridor), 1998
The Homely: Sydney (Flower), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Lion), 1999
The Homely: Canberra (Painting), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Flag), 1999
The Homely: Near New Plymouth (Clouds), 1999
The Homely: Melbourne (Portrait), 1999
The Homely: Picton (Memorial), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Lamp), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Harbour), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Sock), 1998
The Homely: Sydney (Path), 1999
The Homely: Nelson (Hull), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Pole), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Dancers), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Flowers), 1999
The Homely: Napier (Tree), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Wall), 1999
The Homely: Napier (Stage), 1999
The Homely: Napier (Grass), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Horse), 1999
The Homely: Napier (Monument), 1999
The Homely: Auckland (One Tree Hill), 1998
The Homely: Wellington (Tyre), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Museum), 1999
The Homely: South Island (House), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Path), 1999
The Homely: Christchurch (Museum), 1998
The Homely: Christchurch (Mask), 1998
The Homely: Christchurch (Icicles), 1998
The Homely: Wellington (Museum), 1998
The Homely: Te Wairoa (Falls), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Fern), 1998
The Homely: South Island (Trout), 1999
The Homely: Lyttelton (Painting), 1998
The Homely: Huka (Falls), 1999
The Homely: Hokitika (Rocks), 2000
The Homely: Near Rotorua (Rock), 1999
The Homely: Dunedin (Tree), 1999
The Homely: St. Arnauld (Forest), 2000
The Homely: Sydney (Snake), 1999
The Homely: Wellington (Cross), 1999
The Homely: Paraparaumu (Statue), 1999
The Homely: Auckland (Vase), 1998
The Homely: Sydney (Tree), 1998
The Homely: Auckland (Mount Eden), 1999
The Homely: Nelson (Garage), 1999
The Homely: Auckland (Bookshelf), 1998
The Homely: Auckland (Ball), 1998
The Homely: Rotorua (Fountain), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Lighthouse), 1999
The Homely: Wellsford (Sign), 1999
The Homely: Dunedin (Slide), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Pocket), 1998
The Homely: Melbourne (Corridor), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Pet Shop), 1999
The Homely: Near Timaru (State Highway One), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Van), 1999
The Homely: Melbourne (Bar), 1999
The Homely: Nelson (Blind), 1999
The Homely: Sydney (Tennis Court), 1998
The Homely: Sydney (Toy), 1998
The Homely: Christchurch (Black Hood), 2000
The Homely: Picton (Boats), 2000

GAVIN HIPKINS, BORN 1968, AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.
LIVES IN VANCOUVER, CANADA, AND WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2001 The Stall, Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton, New Zealand

The Gulf, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

2000 The Habitat, Artspace, Auckland; Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington

The Shaft, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

1999 The Pack, Artspace, Sydney

The Circuit, Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Machine Art: Recent Work by Gavin Hipkins, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

The Well, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

The Drop, Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland

1998 The Coil, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

The Trench, Physics Room, Christchurch

1997 The Tunnel, Artspace, Auckland

The Blue Light, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

1996 The Field, Dunedin Public Art Gallery

1995 The Vision, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North

The Field, Teststrip, Auckland

Pictorial, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2001 Bright Paradise: The First Auckland Triennial, Auckland Art Gallery

Alive! Still Life into the Twenty-First Century, Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University of Wellington

2000 Flight Patterns, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Guarene Arte 2000, Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene d' Alba, Italy

Grid Visions, Poole Arts Centre, Dorset; The Winchester Gallery, Hampshire Bedales Gallery, Petersfield, United Kingdom

Crystal Chain Gang: Prismatic Geometry in Recent Art, Auckland Art Gallery

1999 Fear and Beauty: New Zealand Art at the End of the Millennium, Suter Gallery, Nelson

The Collected Works: Going Public at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery 1970-2000, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

1998 Every Day: Eleventh Biennale of Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia

Leap of Faith: Contemporary New Zealand Art, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

1998-2000 Fr: Divergent Abstraction and the Photographic Project, University of Tasmania Gallery, Hobart; Launceston University Gallery; East Gippsland Regional Gallery, Victoria; Rockhampton Regional Gallery, Queensland; The Casula Powerhouse, New South Wales, Australia

1997 Signs of the Times: Sampling New Directions in New Zealand Art, City Gallery, Wellington

Currents, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

1996 Nostalgic, Monash University Gallery, Clayton, Australia

1995 Currency—Contemporary Photographic Art, Auckland Institute and Museum

1994 Lest We Forget: Photography, Memory and National Character, City Gallery, Wellington

Station to Station: The Way of the Cross, 14 Contemporary Artists, Auckland City Art Gallery

Open the Shutter: Auckland Photographers Now, Auckland Institute and Museum

Ten Years On, Contemporary Auckland Artists, Fisher Gallery, Auckland

Circle of Confusion: 7 Photographers, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

1993 Comfort Zone, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

In Three Acts, Artspace, Auckland

Suffer, Teststrip, Auckland and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington

1992 Scenes—from Real and Imaginary Lives: Recent Photography, Wellington City Art Gallery

False Horizons, Artspace, Auckland

Caterpillar Landscape, Auckland Society of Arts

CREDITS

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