



Peter Bialobrzeski: Heimat

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Peter Bialobrzeski's fascinating and disturbing collection of photographs from the skyscraper landscapes of Asian megacities, *Neon Tigers*, enchanted many. It was selected as one of the best-designed German books of 2004 and awarded the German Photography Book Prize. After his return from Asia, Bialobrzeski spent more than two years traveling through his native Germany. *Heimat*, which is German for "homeland," is the result. For Germans, *Heimat* is a rather difficult term, embodying conflicting tendencies: destiny and coincidence, sentimental kitsch for pensioners and revisionists, and lost paradise or childhood trauma. In Bialobrzeski's own words, "Having a home means having roots, which is not the same as being rooted to the spot." And since he is more interested in creating images than in detailing the places from which they spring, *Heimat* is "not a book about Germany as homeland per se." Rather, it creates a fixed image of "a personalized bit of visual and cultural history that goes beyond Germany's dark past, its reunification, and the 'German disease.'" Bialobrzeski's haunting new photographs act as projection surfaces for modern humankind's yearning for home and for nature--an homage at once to German Romanticism and to the works of contemporary American color photographers.

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