

---

**Kenneth Baker**  
*Galleries*

---

## 'Home Movies' not like the ones your dad made

A raking view of Jim Campbell's mural-scale "Home Movies (920-1)" (2007) literally dazzles. It reveals a sparse grid of pulsing LEDs hanging on vertical strings, something like an imaginary look behind the curtain at a planetarium.

But stand well back from the wall and the points of light disappear behind their fixtures and cast their fluctuating glow softly on the surface in patterns intermittently recognizable as imagery.

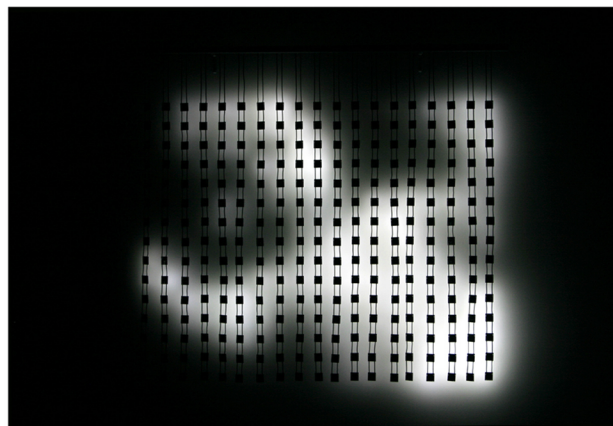
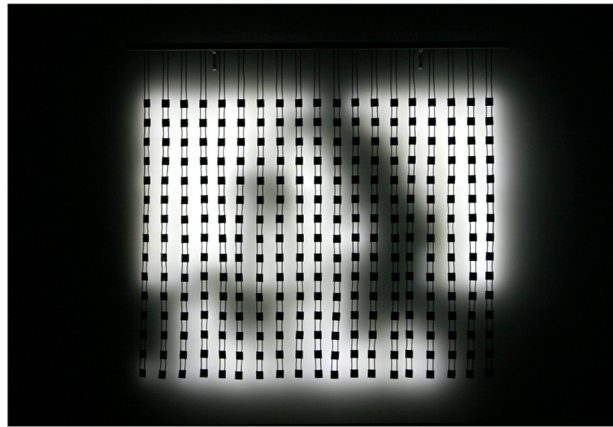
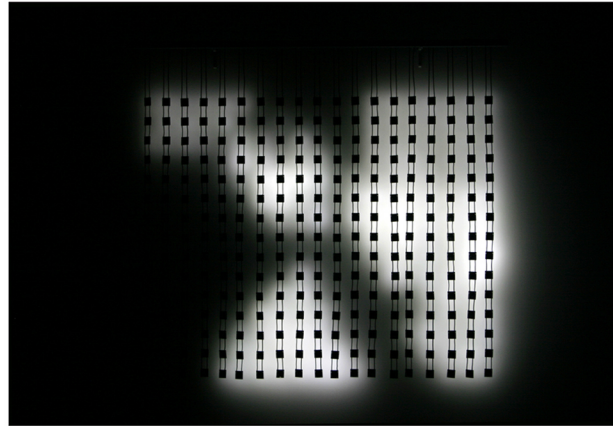
The work's title helps the eye coalesce the shifting fog of brightness and dimness into images of seemingly archetypal familiarity: a procession of trees drifting past a car window, a house facade, figures lolling on a lawn.

Campbell has taken passages from found home movies and subjected them to pixelation so thin that it starves them of definition almost completely. Looking at his "Home Movies," we experience our imagination's refusal to meet even the most attenuated makings of imagery without trying to mold them into something readable.

Modern artworks of many kinds have exposed our preference for seeing what we think we know over seeing as a process pleasing and valuable in itself. But Campbell connects this predisposition — of what? The brain, cultural habit, emotional need? — with the informal conventions of memorabilia and the fugitive nature of subjective memory.

At the low level of definition in Campbell's new work, we lose the customary confidence that other viewers see images where and when we do. The loss brings us emotionally close, without sentimentality, to the unshareable quotient of memories. At the same time, Campbell's "Home Movies" fulfill a fantasy of what it might feel like to spy on someone else's mental imagery, or see our own made public.

The most abstract piece — just six color diodes on posts that cast their light on the wall — plays footage of the New York street that Campbell shot himself. But despite the engaging quality of its animated color-field, it lacks the surprising psychological complexity of the black and white "Home Movies."



Home Movies (300-1), 2006, custom electronics, LEDs, wire, 51 x 60 x 5 inches