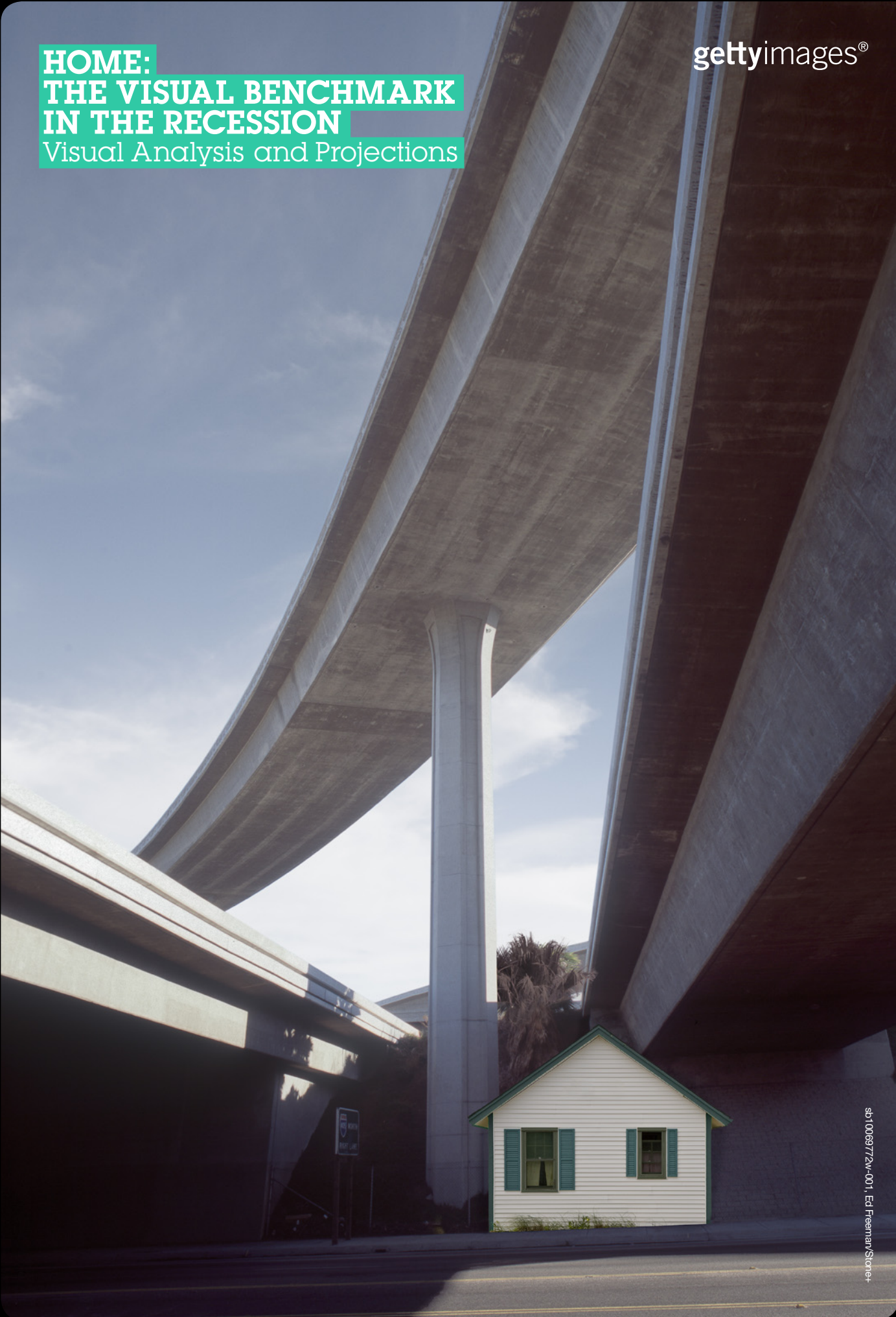


**HOME:
THE VISUAL BENCHMARK
IN THE RECESSION**
Visual Analysis and Projections

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Home is the symbol that grounds

There's one image that always tells us where we are – it's the image of Home. And Home is big news. The symbolic home of America, the White House, is now the home of a black man, his young family and a new puppy. An image of home unimaginable to previous generations. Yet how President Obama got there, also tells us how Home got here. Back at the end of 1999, Budweiser ran its first "Wassup?" commercials, an uncontrived example of advertising naturalism, where the language of Home is a monosyllable: a beautifully simple, expressive "Wassup?" It's mythic Home. In 2008 "Wassup?" was remade (without the Budweiser) as a campaign piece with the same cast of characters. Now, one character is in Iraq, another has lost his job and home, while another has lost a bundle on the stock market. Outside Home there's a hurricane, inside there's breakdown.

Home is organic

This is where we are at with Home, still powerfully symbolic yet threatened by recession. In 2007 analysis of client keyword searches, House was not even in the top 25 search terms. Now 'House' is in the top 10. 'Construction' meanwhile has plummeted out of the top 25 keyword search terms, just like the

plunging housing market. This shift is reflected in our tearsheet analyses where we are beginning to see less imagery around the idea of a house as a 'lifestyle' decision, or an 'investment', and much more around the idea of house as Home. Less a sense of the house as a 'space', to be designed and managed, and more the idea of Home as a 'place' with its own organic set of meanings. You can see it in this recent ad for European supermarket Lidl, where each purchase only finds its place and meaning in the unique story each person gives to it.



Budweiser, 1999



Wassup 2008



74732230, Delphine Charret, ANYONE/Amarna Images



Home is 'dwelling'

It highlights the idea of home as 'dwelling' rather than a sign of status, or simply a place to furnish. 'Dwelling' has a sense of anchorage and, like the Lidl ad, of being in the moment. Caterina Fake, co-founder of Flickr, explained this difference in her [blog](#). Quoting 20th Century giant of philosophy Martin Heidegger, she wrote "Heidegger drew this distinction between 'dwelling' – creating a place where you feel at home both physically and spiritually – and 'inhabiting' – taking shelter or merely occupying a house." (Anthropologist Grant McCracken also discusses 'dwelling' and the consumer downturn [here](#)). The 90s 'nesting' trend was about lifestyle. Dwelling is a more reflective form of nesting.

Home is retreat

Dwelling is about having a sense of place, a psychological imperative at an uncertain moment in the economic curve. It's about belonging, not only about belonging to family but belonging to something bigger, rediscovering tradition. This Chinese property ad is a fascinating example, the traditional painting is intended to communicate some abiding values among Chinese, living with nature, escaping from the politics and complicated relations of working life. The image of Home is seen as a retreat from the economic chaos surrounding it, just like the visual metaphor of the hurricane in "Wassup? 2008."

200534881-005, Todd Wernock/Stone



sb10069753f-001, Howard Berman/Stone+



3438264, Getty Images/ MGM Studios



When there is a crisis of value, as there is at the moment on the stock market, when people don't know what to trust, the image of Home is a benchmark. It becomes the standard of value against which other images are measured. In flashier times Home looks boring, slow and riskless. As the economy gets tough, Home is an image of safety and security (Post-Crash, Sweden's Daily newspaper was quick off the mark with this ad). Home is the ultimate image of being grounded. As Dorothy reminded us in the *Wizard of Oz* "Toto, we're home! Home. And this is my room, and you're all here and I'm not going to leave here ever, ever again. Because I love you all. And... Oh Auntie Em! There's no place like home!"

Home is freedom

It mirrors a pattern we saw in post 9/11 advertising when Home and Family reemerged as leading concepts for brands. There is a subtle shift away from freedom as self-expression and towards the idea of freedom to be yourself. And Home, as we know, is where we have the freedom to be ourselves, to hang, just like in the "Wassup?" ads.

Home is the standard

The downturn is already having an impact on the visual language, especially in the Finance sector where imagery of Home is already replacing images of lighthouses, rocks and forks in the road, which seem too distant, 'tricky', too clever, and no longer feel relevant. Home is uncomplicated.

Dagens Industri, 2008



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Put Home in your next project

Here are some highlights from our interpretation of Home. This project brought in thousands of images, so if you're interested in seeing more, let us know and we'll put together a great big light box for you.

[Home: Creative Still Imagery](#)

Special recession promo

Enter **T6NPC46N** at checkout for 15% off Home imagery*

Get in touch

For more information about our visual trend services and a free consultation from our creative research team to build your brand image library, email us at trends@gettyimages.com

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