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Photographic Migrants: John Goto's *West End Blues*¹



J. Goto, *Sidney Bechet*,
Royal Philharmonic Hall, 1919



J. Goto, *Louis Armstrong*,
London Palladium, 1932



J. Goto, *Joe Harriott*,
St. Pancras Town Hall, 1951

West End Blues is a work in progress. About two-thirds complete as this issue of *Flusser Studies* goes online, it will comprise some fifteen photographs, each a consideration of one, or sometimes two--jazz players or singers who emigrated to Britain or Europe to live and work after the First World War. They seem aware of archival photographic evidence, of how a particular musician looked, gestured, dressed, etc. But they are closer to *tableaux vivantes*, set in the West End of contemporary London. The models – Goto and his wife, Celia, are very much alive, if not really recognizable in the usual sense. Using negatives, and negatives of negatives, putting Photoshop through its paces, and setting the figures in a chromatically chilled, metaphorically “blue” city, Goto has rendered the figures ghostly, insubstantial, like shadows or reflections. It is as though figure-shaped spaces had opened up in the West End itself, or perhaps better, that gaps, or fissures had opened in our own visual perception. Amid conventions for three-dimensional figures positioned in a three-dimensional space, that is, these read as nearly flat, slightly reflective silhouettes – perhaps the shadows of the musicians who once played in London, but just as probably the shadows or reflections of the viewer

¹ http://www.johngoto.org.uk/West_End_Blues.htm

herself. In short, they deny the “pastness” and question the “otherness” of the men and women they describe, presenting them instead as active, effective in the present – through us.

Like migrants in the land of photography, John Goto’s images tend to elicit awkward, impatient responses from the natives. To many who have studied, worked and taught in institutions of photographic education and exhibition over the past twenty years, these minutely constructed images seem distinctly alien. They are complex and ambiguous. They demand sustained attention. They address the past, but are emphatically in the present. In openly asserting their relationship to Photoshop, in referring to multiple texts, in their use – sometimes – of highly saturated colour beloved of certain schools of commercial design, they often skirt a very sensitive boundary between art and advertising. They plant a disturbing suspicion among us that our understanding of “photography” has limits, and that there could be others. The usual first response of natives is to withhold “citizenship,” i.e., to deny Goto’s work the status of photography.

“[The migrant]... is both a window through which those who have been left behind may see the world and the mirror in which they may see themselves, even if in distortion.” (Flusser 2003, 14). As “migrants,” that is, Goto’s images become a means of metaphorically seeing photographic orthodoxy, and of seeing ourselves as proponents - or challengers - of that orthodoxy. It is very easy to recognize what these images are not: casual, comfortable, familiar. They are not “natural”. And abruptly we’re forced to ask what “natural” means in terms of photographs. The more common term, no doubt, is “straight,” or “unmanipulated,” -- what family snaps are and what advertising photographs are not. And here, perhaps, we are nearing the core of the anxiety; for we are in fact very familiar with manipulated photographs – in advertising, fashion, and now more and more often in journalistic contexts. The real problem is admitting Goto’s work as good photography, or art photography– as work that incorporates the ideals, the aspirations of “photography” as such.

From Goto’s own standpoint, this issue of this work’s identity as photography is probably not urgent. He is an established artist, with substantial critical acclaim, a long, distinguished exhibition record and a steady stream of new exhibition and publication opportunities – albeit primarily in continental Europe and Korea rather than in his native England. But at the same time he is one of “us” in the sense of living and working in a photographic culture in which digital imagery is visible, accessible, powerful – without quite being discussable. Photography remains the most comprehensive discursive context for the technologizing of imagery. And so, although there is no denying the dramatic differences between Goto’s work and the work on which “native” photographic culture has so long been based, neither is there any denying the urgency of grasping a

continuity. For the isolation of digitally constructed images from photography as a whole narrows the horizons of both work and field. *West End Blues* needs a context for its many resonances to be fully perceptible. It needs a way of thinking visual inheritance with the technological present, historical texts with everyday visual experience. Conversely, in rejecting at least certain uses of new technology as photographic, i.e., as part of itself, photography makes itself smaller, less engaged in the present, and detaches a powerful new set of technological possibilities from the context in which it could be “seen,” discussed, evaluated.

Mirrors and Windows

In the field of photography, the combination of “window and “mirror,” introduced above in the quotation from Flusser, almost inevitably recalls the title of John Szarkowski’s now canonical text, *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960* (Szarkowski 1978). In it, the two terms form the central pillars of a powerful, comprehensive and in many ways durable definition photography as a whole, a way of encompassing what belongs to the field and of excluding what does not. Szarkowski was himself a distinguished photographer and a man whose curiosity and commitment to the medium never wavered over a lifetime. As the curator of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York between 1962 and 1991, it was effectively his job to build photography into a modern art that could take its place among the other illustrious departments at MoMA—Painting, Sculpture, Design. He did this primarily through an energetic sifting, selecting, exhibition and publication of photographs, but also through a series of short, memorable texts that marked out a territory, a field with distinguishing features and boundaries.

It is difficult to overestimate the force Szarkowski exerted in raising and shaping consciousness of photography. When he died last year, no one disputed the claim that he had been the most important curator photography has ever had. Over the years, critics have resented the Museum’s success in “estheticizing ” and “commodifying” photography, and so in blunting the political impact of an essentially Realist medium. Many found the familiar art world mechanisms of “star” photographers, limited print runs and skyrocketing prices inimical to photography’s democratic potential. Others have quarrelled with particular canonizations and exclusions the Museum performed in establishing and promoting a particular photographic aesthetic. Almost everyone, including Szarkowski himself, questioned his own basic definition of photography: “More convincingly than any other kind of picture, a photograph evokes the tangible presence of reality. Its

most fundamental use and its broadest acceptance has been as a substitute for the subject itself – a simpler, more permanent, more clearly visible version of the plain fact. Our faith in the truth of a photograph rests on our belief that the lens is impartial, and will draw the subject as it is, neither nobler nor meaner. This faith may be naïve and illusory (for though the lens draws the subject, the photographer defines it), but it persists. The photographer’s vision convinces us to the degree that the photographer hides his hand.” (Szarkowski 1966)

It is a curious profession of faith that simultaneously acknowledges doubt and agrees to overlook it. Still, it is surely the position that best represents that of the photographic native today.

In Flusser’s account, by contrast, it is migrants – people – who frame or mirror the world; photographs rather project possible worlds, or possibilities within this one. Photographs have always performed this function, digital technology has only made it easier to see. He describes a technology capable of reaching into an incomprehensible, meaningless chaos of whirling particles—whether molecules of silver nitrate or magnetic charges that translate into pixels – and ordering them into a meaningful mosaic, all made possible by an apparatus with control keys. And where Szarkowski speaks approvingly of photography’s detachment from the photographer (or at least the appearance of detachment) as the medium’s identifying feature, Flusser fears the capacity of the medium to function independently, to become automatic. He celebrates those who can make the apparatus behave in surprising, improbable ways, in ways never anticipated by hardware or software or chemistry designers, for only in this way can truly new information be generated.

The force and durability of Szarkowski’s influence is not difficult to understand. For those interested in photography, whether they have heard of Szarkowski or not, seek some way of establishing order, value in a vast, chaotic field. The system Szarkowski established allows photographs to be seen, discussed, and exchanged independently of their editorial, scientific, legal or commercial use value, perhaps not entirely unlike the way literature negotiates the value of writing. But Szarkowski famously excluded digitally manipulated photographs from his system: “Mr. Szarkowski was always keenly aware of how changes in technology – in cameras, film developing processes and magazines – affected photography. But he had little patience for computer imagery and manipulation, which came into vogue during his final years at MoMA and put him at odds with some younger artists. Such images might have been art, he suggested, but they weren’t necessarily photography.”(Schudel 2007)

John Goto would have been among those “younger artists.” He was, in any case, among the first to integrate Photoshop, at its introduction in 1990, into his practice.

In short, *West End Blues* can hardly be recognized or evaluated at all in Szarkowski's framework; it seems quite at ease, on the other hand, among Flusser's projections, meaningful surfaces formed from chaotic particles, absolutely reliant on elaborate apparatus and controls. Flusser's framework, that is, offers a starting point, a possible context in which *West End Blues* could be clearly visible, comprehensible as photography.

Envisioning History

Goto's and Flusser's paths actually crossed once, in 1989. Flusser's review of Goto's work *Terezin* (Goto 1988) appeared in the April, 1989 issue of *European Photography* (Flusser 1989). Rather than an actual review, however, the text explains the author's refusal to comment. *Terezin* is a harsh, inhospitable work. Ostensibly an account of the Czech village transformed into a German concentration camp between 1941 and 1945, it centres on a series of photomontages, accompanied by one text in the voice of a historian, Detlef Mühlberger, a series of "straight" photographs of the site taken in 1983, and a short text by Goto's friend and fellow photographer, Craigie Horsfield. To someone coming to it much later, *Terezin* seems like a long, intricate and highly disciplined scream. It screams in exasperation at, among many other things, the failure of the usual tools of "history," neatly separated texts and images, to convey anything of the horror, the monstrous inhumanity of Terezin. The historian's text is cool, orderly exposition, with precise dates, times and quantities; the "straight" photographs, too, are composed, controlled – depicting clean, unpopulated buildings and grounds. In the photomontages, on the other hand, images and texts fight, fuse, obscure and contradict one another, convey a sense of dark confusion and brutal insensitivity, occasionally punctuated with moments of delicacy and clarity and hope, always concerning an artist.

Flusser was, at least, a remarkable choice of reviewer. In the text, he justifies his refusal to comment on the grounds that he himself ought to have been at Terezin, and wasn't. He was referring to his own escape from Prague before the Nazis began transporting Jews to Terezin, his failure to persuade his family of the danger, and their subsequent murder. He is, he writes in 1989, unable to enter into an intuitive model of what it was like in Terezin when he has spent his life trying to avoid such an intuition. Flusser calls his own reasoning "irrational" and also considers that perhaps he should not have published the review at all. But he did. And in doing so, and wishing the work well despite his own reservations, Flusser tacitly acknowledged the work as a very personal envisioning of history, and gave an equally personal, emotional response.

Terezin marked a turning point in Goto's career, the end of a period of "straight" photographs of places (which itself followed initial training in painting), and the beginning of an extended attempt to envision the past in clear awareness of the present. The word "envision" is my own attempt to translate the German verb "einbilden" as Flusser used it in his outline of an emerging telematic society, *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder* (Flusser 1983). There, "einbilden," with its overtones of "intuit" and "hallucinate," forms a counterpoint to the verb "imagine". The two terms then serve to distinguish between making the work of making "traditional" images in a society grounded in linear text and print, and the work of creative people in an emerging society that relies primarily on technical images – photographs, film, video, sound recording, and linked computer terminals. "The difference between traditional and technical images...would be this: the first are observations of objects, the second computations of concepts. The first arise through imagination, the second through a peculiar hallucinatory power which has lost its faith in rules." (Flusser 1983, 14. The translation is mine - NR)

It may seem that Flusser is here describing a shift from hand-made images—painting and drawing—to automated images and sound, and that Goto's earlier transition from painting (the field in which he was trained) to photography is closer to what Flusser is describing than the later shift from straight photography to the montage process of *Terezin*. But Flusser's concern is not with the storage medium per se so much as with the forms of consciousness they support. For Goto, the move from painting to photography was certainly crucial, and shaped by a simultaneous engagement with contemporary film and music. But the most remarkable feature may well have been what did *not* shift, namely the desire to present a particular consciousness of the past, and a dissatisfaction with the usual, available means – with History. For from the moment he began to exhibit photographs in the early 1970s ("I was making 'straight' photographs of places, hoping that in the fabric of the buildings and objects were signs of a greater history." (Goto 2008a) Goto was thinking about history. The following is quoted at length because the themes – painting, Bauhaus pedagogy, cinema, jazz, history - return as the subject matter of Goto's work. " As a child painting represented the imaginative world to which I was devoted, whilst photography, by and large, lacked this absorbing magic. ... I set off, at the earliest opportunity, for art school. There I got a rigorous training... in the formal elements of picture making along Bauhaus lines. Form, colour, texture, surface, movement, rhythm, composition and scale were isolated and analysed, along with a highly disciplined approach to graphic materials...I was a serious and committed student of art, and these were stirring times, especially musically. After college I spent many great evenings in clubs listening

to visiting American R&B and Soul bands. I next applied to St. Martin's School of Art with a group of large colour-field paintings, but my confidence in painting as a practice began to wane when I arrived in London. Amongst my contemporaries there was a confusing profusion of styles; there were naiveists, hard edge, pop, expressionist and systems painters and barricaded into a studio somewhere in the far reaches of the building, Leon Kossoff's students painting from the life model. But none of these approaches seemed to me capable of matching the power of the music I was listening to or the movies I was discovering in the arthouse cinemas of the West End. ...I started working with 'new media.' I borrowed from my father his 8mm film camera and also worked with sequenced photocopies and photograms in book form...Somewhere around the darkroom area I met two other students, Andrzej Klimowski and Craigie Horsfield, and an important and formative dialogue ensued... Our project centered on the idea of a European culture that might offer an alternative to the pervasive culture of American. Film became part of our self-imposed studies, and we were fortunate to engage with European cinema during its last great period...I too would have liked to have made films, but as the resources were not available, I settled for photography. Chris Marker in his film *La Jetée*, showed how from a sequence of still images a narrative could be constructed, and it was in these terms that I began to make groups and series of photographs.” (Goto 2008a)

Goto is by no means alone in his pursuit of what art historian Linda Nochlin once memorably called “the intersection of the self and history,” some way of setting one’s own particular experience in larger, longer context. What is more singular about his path is that he reliably locates that self in the relationship between past and present, and that he never really questioned the compatibility of photography with narrative. He has therefore inherited-or rather chosen-the history painter’s problem, the problem of *seeing* historical narrative, of reconciling history as it is recorded in journals and ledgers or written in books with the form of single images, in his case grouped into series. Only painting never threatened writing, never spilled out of its frame into books – except inasmuch as it had been translated into engraving. Photography, on the other hand, has presented enough of a threat at certain points to at least generate an energetic defense against narrative. Szarkowski, in particular, denies photography any capacity for narrative: “The decline of narrative painting in the past century has been ascribed in large part to the rise of photography, which “relieved” the painter of the necessity of story telling. This is curious, since photography has never been successful at narrative...The elaborate nineteenth century montages of Robinson and Rejlander, laboriously pieced together from several posed negative, attempted to tell stories, but these works were

recognized in their own time as pretentious failures. In the early days of the picture magazines the attempt was made to achieve narrative through photographic sequences, but the superficial coherence of these stories was generally achieved at the expense of photographic discovery. The heroic documentation of the American Civil War by the Brady group, and the incomparably larger photographic record of the Second World War, have this in common: neither explained, without extensive captioning, what was happening. The function of these pictures was not to make the story clear, it was to make it *real*.” (Szarkowski 1966, n.p.)

Although Flusser shares Szarkowski’s sense of an intractable opposition between writing and photography, his sense of what is at stake is vastly different: “The division of culture into a scientific-technical culture and an artistic culture has been overcome thanks to photography: scientific perception and technical behaviour can be experienced in the image. Nevertheless, the image has remained an image. Structurally speaking, it is antihistorical. We do not experience our environment through images as a process, but as a scene. Even when we order images into rows (as in film or video) we experience the environment not as a process, but as a sequence of scenes. For we are able to cut and paste the rows: not acting historically, but magically. Certainly, the photograph has succeeded in carrying the image into history; but, in doing so, it has interrupted the stream of history. Photographs are dams placed in the way of the stream of history, jamming historical happenings. Thus, the photograph can be considered to be the first posthistorical image.” (Flusser 2002, 128)

Flusser provided something like an abstract, or summary of the idea in the introductory paragraph of the same essay: “Historical images are those that contradict linear texts either directly or indirectly. Posthistorical images are those that set linear texts into the image.” (Flusser 2002, 126)

This is the reason *Terezin*, rather than photography itself, represents the crucial transition in Goto’s work. It marks a shift in consciousness from historical to posthistorical images, or in Flusser’s framework, from photographs that continue to defend themselves against the threat of texts to images that paste texts into an image, that “dam up” the flow of history, or perhaps better, that invite viewers to think through the “damming up” for themselves. There is a further transition around 2000 that might be described as a change in perspective – roughly from past to present. In the work that began with *Terezin* (1989) and ended with *The Framer’s Collection* (1997), Goto attempted “to deal...with history through the filter of the present”; from the work called *Ukadia to West End Blues*, he is squarely focused on a present in which the past actively resonates (Goto 2008b). But the engagement with history is always clear, always in the foreground. Goto quite consciously invents his own texts, incorporates, obscures, assumes and undermines the texts of others. Each work embeds a

different relationship, a different relative force or value between the two, and with it a different possible relationship to History.

Migrants

For both Goto and Flusser, the condition of the migrant – the subject “expelled” from a familiar, culturally comfortable home and cast into a situation that demands reconsideration of even the most basic assumptions about one’s identity, values, relationships to other people – is available, potentially familiar to any of us today. “I use the word *expelled* rather than *refugees* or *emigrants*, to bring the totality of the problem before our eyes. For I do not only refer to phenomena like the “boat people,” Palestinians or Jewish emigration from Hitler’s Europe, but also the expulsion of an older generation from the world of their children and grandchildren – or even the expulsion of humanists from the world of apparatuses. We find ourselves in a period of expulsion. If one values this situation positively, the future will appear a little less dark.” (Flusser 2002, 104)



Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*

Dorothea Lange’s *Migrant Mother* of 1936 must be among the best-known photographs of any period, and a convenient example of the way our understanding of an image with full photographic “citizenship” might change in response to newcomers such as *West End Blues*. *Migrant Mother* is legible as a window and mirror in Szarkowski’s sense—it both frames a bit of the world and to some

extent reflects the photographer herself. Lange's encounter with the subject of this photograph, Florence Owens Thompson, was, by her own account, more fortuitous than deliberate. For although she had been commissioned to take photographs of migrant labourers in the area, she hadn't planned on stopping at this particular camp until she happened to see it from the road. The shoot was quite brief and businesslike. Of the six photographs she shot, one stood out – not for its informational superiority, but for its composition, clarity, closeness – the very features Szarkowski spells out so clearly in *The Photographer's Eye*.

Flusser would not deny a relationship between the past event, namely the encounter between Lange and Thompson, and the photograph known as *Migrant Mother*. But he would deny that the meaning of the photograph rests on that encounter. To rethink this image in terms more congenial to Flusser would be to grasp it as a projection, an act of assembling particles into a meaningful arrangement using equipment designed expressly for the purpose. The photographer was employed by an institution to project specific ideas – complex ideas about suffering and equality and rights and identity. These ideas were absorbed through texts and verbal conversations more than through existing photographs. The photographer was hired at least in part because she had already demonstrated that she was programmed for engagement with visual images – able to quickly resolve questions of composition, scale, iconicity. This photograph was made using a camera that itself embodied countless texts – on physics, optics, chemistry, and perception. And with this move, the “truth” of the image – the idea that the photographer “hides her hand,” the putative detachment of the image from texts – all become untenable. The image rather appears at some conjunction of preparation, faith and luck, in which the preparation and faith allow an envisioner to improve the odds of making something new over sheer chance. For the goal, as Flusser sets it, is to make images that are *improbable*--which is to say, images that encode and transmit new information.

Flusser's understanding of photography, then, does not exclude admiring and valuing photography's past. In fact it accommodates Szarkowski's understanding of photographic truth, even as it proposes another: “Most of us (including most photographers) are still caught up in historical, progressive, enlightened consciousness. Thus, photographs are received with a different consciousness from the one that produces photo apparatuses. (In the field of synthetic images, this discrepancy is less dramatic than in that of photographs.) Most of what is said and written with respect to photos can be attributed to this discrepancy. Photos are not received as projections, that is, as images of the future, but rather as copies of scenes, that is, as image of the past. And, it is generally assumed that photographs illustrate (document) happenings, as if they were historical

images. The consequence of this misunderstanding between the programmers of photo-production and photo-distribution apparatuses and the addressees of the photographs is absolutely characteristic of the present cultural situation...At first glance, a photo of an airplane does not reveal that, just like a synthetic computer image, it signifies a possible airplane rather than a given one.” (Flusser 2002, 129-131)

The prospect of re-viewing *Migrant Mother* as a possible woman in a possible situation, rather than Florence Owen Thompson in Nipomo, California in 1936 will still seem faintly treasonous to photographic natives; it also seems to offer a much more hospitable context for understanding how this image came to be iconic. For such a woman could be any one of us, now or in the future, facing possible suffering with possible dignity.

Goto’s work, at least since 1988, all but insists on its own status as a set of possibilities, a projection. It seems worlds away from *Migrant Mother*, and yet to the extent it is possible to grasp both as projections, Goto has stepped beyond the boundaries of a particular photographic faith, rather than beyond photography itself. As Flusser suggests, it is much easier to recognize synthetic images as projections, but in any case Goto makes no pretence of photographic truth, no attempt to “hide his hand.” He never saw Photoshop as a means of making traditional images more persuasive, or of making anything more efficiently. Rather he saw the possibility of investing electronic operations themselves with meaning. In the recent series *Dance to the Muzik of Time*, for example, some of the image’s own history, recorded in Photoshop’s much-admired “layers” feature, have been left visible, and function as a kind of archaeology: a move back from the picture plane signals a move back in time. *West End Blues* uses Photoshop’s profiling facility to introduce a sharp disjunction in the image that becomes legible as past-in-present, or possibly – in theatrical terms – backdrop and projection.

In addition to the musician’s name, something about that player’s distinctive style, something about the conditions that led to the decision to live in Britain, and a snippet of music, each of the profiles gives the date and venue of a particular performance. The profiles are ordered by these dates, giving the sense of a loose chronology. The texts are, on the surface, like those that might be found in a biographical dictionary or guide, giving information that wouldn’t be legible in a photograph, such as the musician’s place of birth, education, associations with specific styles and groups. And then there are some other, quirky things that can only have been chosen by Goto himself from other—perhaps many other texts: Louis Armstrong’s decision to come to Europe was prompted in part by an awkward conversation with a gangster; Sidney Bechet threw all his English

money overboard after he was deported in 1922; Saxophonist and composer Joe Harriott decided to stay in Britain when he accidentally met some congenial musicians while waiting for travel documents.

The photographs are distinct – each with a very particular composition or mood; and yet the figures are uniformly graceful, poised and ghostly. Migration is some significant part of the subject matter, a key link among the various figures. And yet *West End Blues* can't be understood as a study of migration. Nor does it comprise a "story" in the sense of one image coming before or after another, one event causing or explaining another, like a written history of British jazz. It doesn't exactly make sense to ask whether we are looking at a reflection on the condition of migrants, a history of jazz in Britain, a story of how these images came to look as they do, or a history of John Goto, for pictures don't demand such a prioritizing of goals and ordering of materials. *West End Blues* is, rather, one possible way – Goto's own way – of engaging the past in the present.

At one level this is a tribute to a group of people for whom Goto himself has long felt great admiration and sympathy. Some of these figures were no doubt constructed from bits of Goto's first-hand memory, from having heard the players and singers in the West End in the 1960s and 1970s. The dates of some of the performances stretch back to a time before Goto's birth, though, and still the "memories" look consistent – the same use of negatives, the same elegant poses, the same blanched atmosphere, the same informative, slightly quirky texts- – they are necessarily memories informed by critical writing about the music, books and recordings. And all are integrated into the same surface, the same form – a form like one person's vision, saturated with memory. These figures *are* in some sense Goto himself, and make no particular secret of it. They are projections his mind makes, associations with particular places. "A little story; on the High St in Oxford there is a jeweller's shop, above the entrance to which is a clock supported by a dog. Moholy Nagy photographed it in 1935 when, as an exile from Nazi Germany, he found work illustrating John Betjeman's book *An Oxford University Chest*. I seldom walk past the spot and don't think of him with his Leica and beret, on the run." (Goto 2008b)

Lazlo Moholy-Nagy was in London between 1935 and 1937; Goto was born in 1949. They could not possibly have met. Still, the little story both testifies to Goto's highly specific, visual "memory" of this seasoned émigré (László Moholy-Nagy--1895-1946-- was born in Hungary, he lived for varying lengths of time in Austria, Germany, France and Holland before his time in England, which was followed by a final emigration to the United States.). This visual memory is Goto's unique way of mapping a history on to a specific urban space – something many of us may do, but rarely in such

detail or in a form accessible to others. In presenting this London to us, Goto has identified himself – along with potential viewers – in the situation of a migrant, someone expelled from the situation into which he was born, from the customs and understandings to which he was initially accustomed. Like Flusser, he recognizes this situation as “the incubator of creativity” (Flusser 2003, 87). Rather than a geographical migration, Goto’s is one of consciousness, an expulsion from the universe of the historical text and photographic “truth” into a “universe of technical pictures,” where the old rules of causal logic and linear progression no longer apply. The migrant is forced to create a new system of reference, another relationship with the past, to envision a great city in which one’s fellow migrants, challenging, upsetting, reflecting the best and worst of the natives, take centre stage.

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