## The Tensions at the Amazon's Fringe Photography by Gui Christ

Brazilian photographer Gui Christ has been hailed as one of the best documentary photographers of his generation. In *The Tensions at the Amazon's Fringe*, he documents the Indigenous Amazonian Akroá-Gamella people's struggle against the social and environmental effects of economic development in Maranhão state's marshland.

In recent years, tensions have increased. The local population of fishers and farmers has suffered attacks from agribusiness land grabs, compounding the devastating impacts of climate change. Industries such as buffalo rearing have illegally taken Indigenous land, creating conflicts between ranchers and local people. One such conflict escalated to violence against the Akroá-Gamella, an almost-extinct Indigenous group that demanded the return of their original territory, in 2017 and again in 2021. The construction of electrical lines has also caused severe environmental damage, such as water pollution, and an economic crisis due to a loss of fishing revenue from the pollution.

The Akroá-Gamella people stand tall in the face of threats to their livelihoods. Victims of the attacks revive their strength using traditional Indigenous spirituality. They persist in their efforts for legal land reclamation, environmental



protection, and continuation of ancestral practices. This project aims to shed light on these environmental problems and social conflicts faced by the original populations of this underreported region.

Portrait of Antonio Lima, 81, the eldest cowboy in the Papagaio community. He is pessimistic about his family's future since it is now difficult for them to fish enough food for their survival, and raising cattle takes time until they can be sold. Brazil, 2022. A portrait of Rosa Maria Veras, a 70-year-old artisanal fisherwoman. She is unable to catch enough fish to feed her family because the electric charge in the waters has expelled most of the local aquatic animals. Brazil, 2022.





This aerial view shows the power lines built in the marshlands that decimated the fish population. Fishing has been a vital source of income and sustenance for the community, and without it, families are struggling to make ends meet. Brazil, 2022.





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A portrait of Pajé (healer) Maria Roxá. She is considered a spiritual leader who can communicate with the forest guardian spirits to protect the community's territory from attacks by gunmen. Her knowledge and practices are crucial to the community's well-being and cultural preservation. Brazil, 2022. A portrait of Kum'Tum Akroá-Gamella, 49, the chief of the Akroá-Gamella tribe. Due to colonization, the Akroá-Gamella were declared extinct, with many living in cities. Knowing his ancestral origin, he began the reconstruction of the Akroá-Gamella community and the retaking of his people's ancestral lands. Brazil, 2022.

A portrait of Praw Akroá-Gamella. As a child, Akroá-Gamella witnessed gunmen attacking her community. Since then, as she lives in the main entrance of the Akroá village, the girl is always alert about strangers entering her community's territory. Brazil, 2022.