



Favela da Rocinha, Brazil

Sarah Stern and Gary Mark Smith

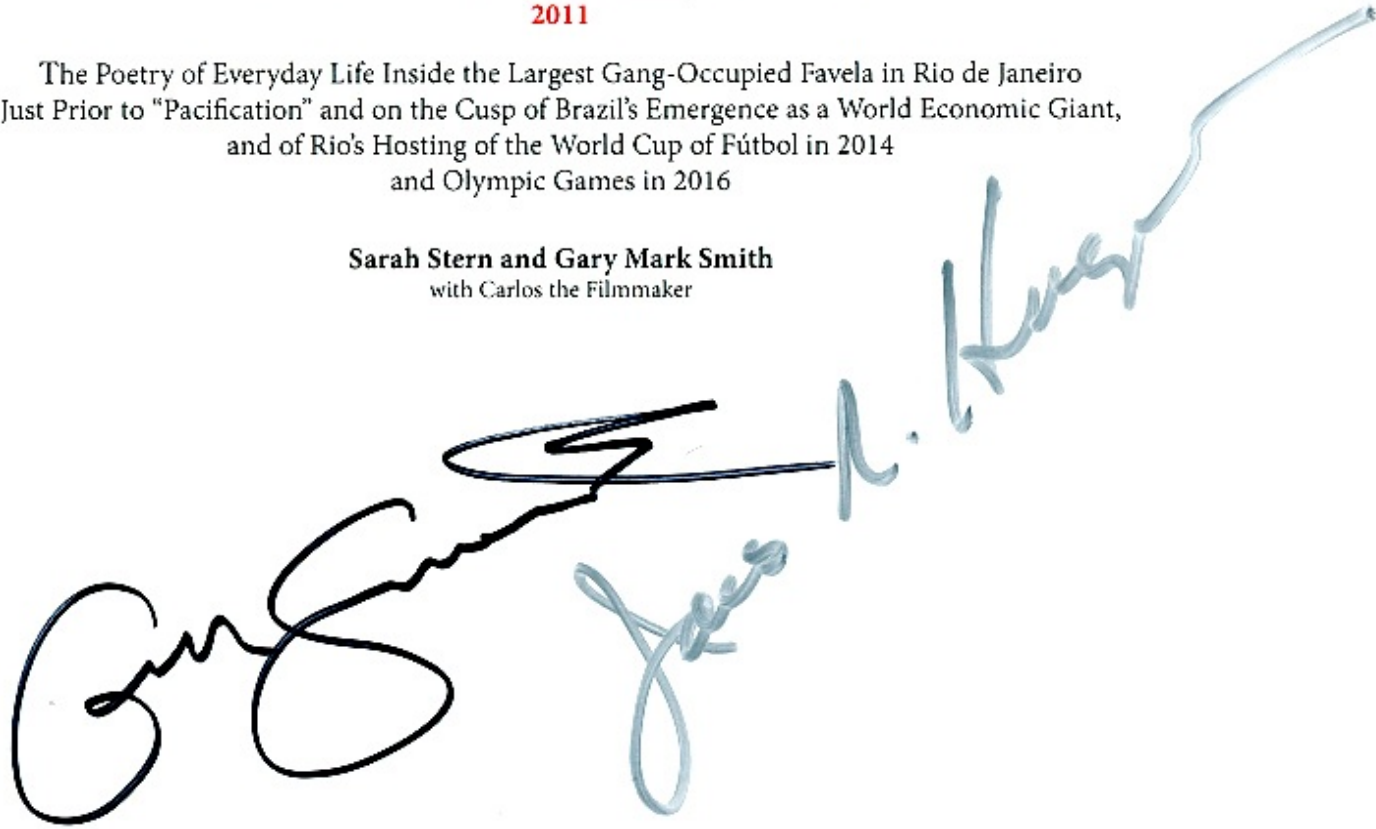
forward by
James R. Hugunin

Favela da Rocinha, Brazil

2011

The Poetry of Everyday Life Inside the Largest Gang-Occupied Favela in Rio de Janeiro
Just Prior to "Pacification" and on the Cusp of Brazil's Emergence as a World Economic Giant,
and of Rio's Hosting of the World Cup of Fútbol in 2014
and Olympic Games in 2016

Sarah Stern and Gary Mark Smith
with Carlos the Filmmaker

The image shows three handwritten signatures in blue ink. On the left is a large, stylized signature that appears to be 'GS' for Gary Mark Smith. In the middle is a smaller, more fluid signature that appears to be 'S. Stern' for Sarah Stern. On the right is a long, sweeping signature that appears to be 'Carlos' for Carlos the Filmmaker. The signatures are arranged diagonally across the lower half of the page.



Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro

The ExtremeOphiles by James R. Hugunin

“Foreword” to *Favela da Rocinha, Brazil* (2012) a documentary photobook produced by Gary Mark Smith

Photos by Gary Mark Smith, Sarah Stern and Carlos Beltrán at: <http://www.streetphoto.com/Museum15Rio-1.html>

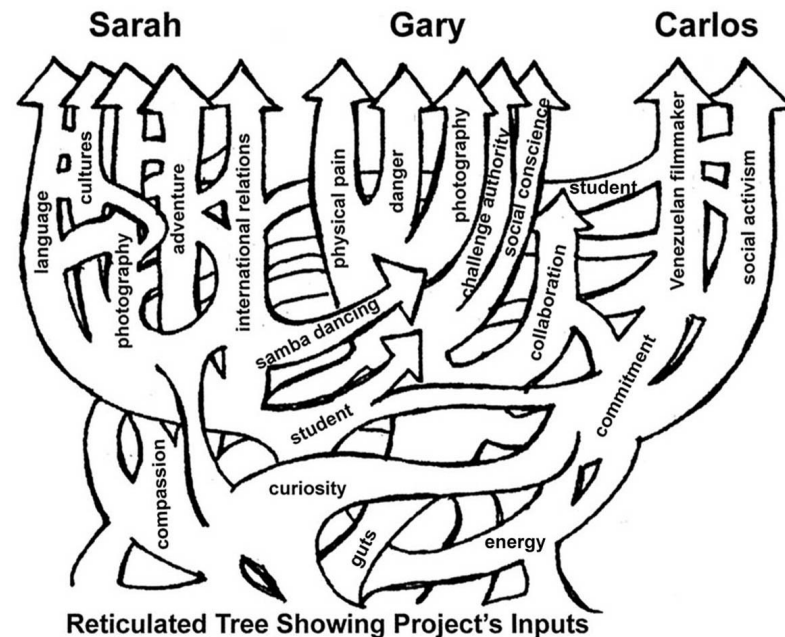
Extremeophiles construe life as possessed of an as-yet-unmapped elasticity They have a tendency to come in threes They are drawn to **danger sites** and **adrenaline aesthetics** They prefer gaps and unequal margins Sometimes their names are **Gary (55) Sarah (19) Carlos (25)** and can be found in **South America Brazil** with cameras digital still and motion aimed within a *favela* called **Rocinha** within Rio de Janeiro under a hot sun The mutual **energy** sparking between these three individuals **radiating** outward is palpable A proof of **mirror neurons**

I am going to put words into **Gary Smith’s** mouth an alumnus of the University of Kansas or it could be **Sarah Stern’s** a student at KU or **Carlos Beltrán’s** a recent graduate of KU from Venezuela words that encompass the complexity of their collaborative **three** week documentary project ***Favela da Rocinha Brazil The poetry of everyday life in the largest un-pacified favela in Rio de Janeiro on the cusp of Brazil’s emergence as a world economic giant*** carried out in May and June of 2011 during a Rio winter in what media hype damns as a **global cesspool**:

*What determined our **judgment** our **concepts** and **reactions** was not what **one** of us was doing at any particular **now** an individual action but the whole **hurly-burly** of our actions the **community’s reactions** to our presence and the*

*interventions of local **gang members** (including having camera equipment confiscated/returned) all this **background** against which we **lived** **argued** **photographed** and were **being filmed** while photographing therein an **adrenalized activity** to be described within the background of human actions and connections going back more than a few years*

Extremeophiles **Gary Sarah Carlos** share common **roots** mingle **traits** express their **commonalities** and **divergences** This can be **diagramed** in a reticulated **tree** that makes the **network** underlying this project **visible**





Sarah + Ben

Gary Mark Smith

I first meet **Gary** when he is completing his **MA** in street photography at **Purdue University** in Indiana participating in **graduate** critiques His energy and passion for **photography** is shocking Here is a person working out **personal and physical demons** from behind a lens Following his **career** since has been like reading about the **daring-do** of some larger-than-life figure two encounters with **lightning strikes** dodging an **erupting volcano** outwitting **sadistic police** doing the **hard-scrapple** in disguise along the conflict-ridden **Afghan-Pakistan border** in 2001 It soon becomes obvious to me that when the **newspapers** are just starting to get coverage of a natural or man-made disaster **Gary** is probably already there **in place psyched working up his subjects** recording events via his **keen eye fast-trigger finger** The guy is the most prolific photographer since **Garry Winogrand** Doubts So go ahead Google him You'll find that while **Stern** and **Beltrán** jogged on the beach **Smith** took 99 photos in 10 minutes

For years and years he's been **optically** sweeping the streets often shooting **street-sweepers** as an oft-repeated subject **No kidding** His photographs **swept** me off my feet **No kidding** The **man** with the slippery name **Smith** got the **gift of gab** He can **talk** you into or out of **anything anywhere anytime** It is one of many **survival adoptions** developed over time by the species **extremeophile** No surprise then that **Gary** manages to attract two other fellow **adrenaline-adventurers** into his **web** of photographic intrigue No surprise that they find him **irresistible** Just speak the words **Brazil** and **favela** or **samba-dancing** and **danger** around **Gary Sarah Carlos** in



the same sentence and **watch what happens** It is of course precisely *this* which **Beltrán's** film about their photographic and outreach activities in a long-standing Brazilian **danger-community** sets out to capture A visual document that **informs** even as it **parodies** Reality TV's extreme survival shows A **documentary** not unlike **Walker Evans** and **James Agee's** uneasy insertion into the lives of **Alabama sharecroppers** during **The Great Depression** that becomes the object of **another level** of documentation not unlike Russian Constructivist film-maker **Dziga Vertov's** famous **film-within-a-film** *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) What could be more appropriate in our media-saturated milieu What could a better vehicle to engage the remarkable endeavors of **Gary Mark Smith** whose **danger-activities** and *persona* are nearly as interesting and thought-provoking as his **right-on-the-mark** photographs **photographs** from the streets of **global poverty** because says **Gary** addressing his increasing impoverished fellow **Americans**: *Man it's coming to a street near you and it'll be too soon for comfort and in a place as easy as America's had it it's not going to be a pretty sight* **Gary** sees forces of **globalization** as tending to equalize disparities *between* what were once **First World** and **Third World** economies shifting those **economic contrasts** between nations to those between classes *within* global states **Brazil's** economy will jump into **global prominence** he thinks due to the **2014** Fútbol World Cup and **2016** Olympics Moreover **Brazil** will ultimately benefit by the **test of poverty** it's endured resulting in a populace more **resilient** than us *soft Americans* used to our luxuries In other words these **Rocinha photographs** may prove a **prophetic** preview of our own American **pauperization** even as it provides insight into the government's initial gradual and peaceful intervention into the community Several months after our **Extremeophiles**

left Brazil on **November 13 2011** people in Rocinha awoke to a less pacific intervention as **armored vehicles** blocked streets and **Huey helicopters** buzzed overhead spearheading an armed sweep by **BOPE** (Rio's elite police) who eventually **snagged** drug lords "**Nem**" and "**Peixe**" in their pervasive **dragnet** Such military-like invasion was received with **ambivalence** by many *favela*'s residents who **feared** police **abuse** of average citizens

And Sarah Stern

Sarah meets **Gary** some five years ago Gary is mentor to high school students It was **photography** and **adventure** at first sight Impresses Gary with her smarts dedication to mastery of photography Her potential seems unlimited **Wowed** by Gary's passion and commitment to his art by his taking the bull of life by the horns and bending it to his will Sarah sees the guy she wants to learn from **emulate surpass** even Learns **Spanish** in high school later **Portugese** becomes interested in **Hispanic culture** Majors in **Strategic Communications** at KU Becomes a **Global Scholar** with trips to **Paraguay** and **Bolivia** and **Ecuador** and **Peru** and **Argentina** all before **Brazil**

Concerned about the **poor** Finds that she **fits in** The **street energy** there matches her energy *Simpático* And **Samba** dancing **Three steps** to every bar In **Brazil** In Rio Three weeks in Rocinha **Three steps** to the **dance** three steps to any bar **Sarah** and **Gary** and **Carlos** and some local guy or gal **At a bar** Three steps **One Two Three** Rhythmic like doing street photography **Get into the rhythm** Like street sweeping The **rhythm** Like negotiating dance doing a **human-machine samba** around the people of and **gang members**

in the *favela* learning to keep **in step** One false step and your **camera** can get **confiscated** stolen returned if you got the right rhythm and the help of **Sarah** former vice-president of the **Hispanic American Leadership Organization** of Lawrence Kansas Latin America in the **Heartland** Latin America in her heart lands her as **number two** of three on this documentary project **Three companions** to the bar Three companions to **Brazil** to **Rocinha** to **danger** and **friendship** toward photography and film **fun** too people dancing their way into her frame she dancing her way into their hearts Three Musketeers **kinda like the movie** You remember **honor** and **precision** wielding cameras like **swords** about the **mean streets** of Rocinha taking careful **aim** staring down any **threat** and fighting for **justice** through photographs Her way of **returning** to a trip years later is through her **photographs** *I can feel the emotions and remember the situations* she reports of past **excursions** and then of her recent **immersion** in what media slur as a **slum** in what she calls a **community** of some 150,000 **vibrant people** but gang-run by **Amigos dos Amigos** (Friends of Friends or ADA) who consolidated two former rival **drug-trafficking** organizations were under threat of forced government **pacification** to suppress them during the **global attention** Rio will be getting with the upcoming **world class games** to be held there

With Carlos P. Beltrán

Serious about his **still** photographs for some **three years** but always interested in **music** and **film** Eventually does a body of still images on Caracas's **barrios** but deeper into the editing process as **videographer** a noted **hot** young

commercial film **director** from oil rich **Venezuela** From being a **high school** exchange student in Atwood **Kansas** on to major in **Journalism** at KU His award-winning short **documentary** *Pasión* (2010) **celebrated** the passion and mental focus of a **young** Venezuelan **Carlos Guevara** as he overcame a **congenital** limb-stiffening **disease** *arthrogryposis multiplex* to become a successful **drummer** with two major **musical groups** Seeing a similar **resiliency** in barrios inhabitants Beltrán started to **document** the harsh life in Caracas's **shanty towns**

Born into the **middle-class** but driven by **curiosity** about the other **60 percent** of his fellow citizens who despite **oil revenues** enriching its upper classes live in what he was told as a kid were places you **never** go into **Result** Beltrán's **film** *The Slum Culture: Hope for the Barrios* (2011) Hope through **social policy** education self-sufficiency will and stamina Carlos meets **Gary** at KU Wanting to compare **Caracas's** poor communities with Brazil's he joins the **Extremeophiles** **Three Musketeers** walking through streets of **Rocinha** full of energy **curiosity** at its peak like a sensitive electronic instrument sometimes a **welcome guest** sometimes met with **suspicion** but always **inspecting** and **admiring** the **networks** **fields** **territories** of that complex community Slowing down the **chaos** temporarily and provisionally enough to extract **intensifications** **performances** **refrains** with their **cameras** creating organizations of **monochromes** **colors** **movements** *One for all all for one* as they take a bit of **chaos** in-frame to form a **composed** chaos that becomes **sensory** from which they extract a **chaoid** sensation capturing the *favela's* energy Shooting **35 mm** black and white analogue stills and filming with the remarkable **Canon EOS 5D Mark II**



Carlos P. Beltrão

digital camera **Carlos** captured roundtable **discussions** among our adventurers their **reflections** on the people and **interactions** with the locals' giving conflicting **perspectives** on the *favela* Redacted into an energetic 15-minute **short film** the result synthesizes the **Musketeer's** activities over their three week **immersion** in the heart of **Rocinha**

Rocinha

Named ***the little farm*** Rocinha is Rio de Janeiro's **largest** *favela bairro* with approximately 150,000 inhabitants squeezed into only 0.86 square kilometers It is located in **Rio's South Zone** between the **wealthy** districts of **São Conrado** and **Gávea** Built on a **steep hillside** overlooking Rio and near a beach it contrasts markedly with its nearest neighbors Brazilians contrast the *favela* with the *asphalt* their term for the city proper Nothing happens in Rocinha without *Amigos dos Amigos* knowing about it This **gang** is akin to a watch dog bark *Hark hark Bow wow Don't anybody touch me I growl if anyone enters my territory* At times *things got hairy* **Negotiations** were necessary to **roam** there with a **camera** A camera was **taken but returned** after community intervention a personal meeting with the **gang lord** making it clear the Musketeers were **teaching** photography at a local **NGO** to locals producing a **book** and **movie** about Rocinha and **donating** the **proceeds** to the *favela* Great **freedom** to photograph was eventually **granted** after a face-to-face with the local gang lord **Antonio Francisco Bonfim Lopes**

Rocinha developed within a **racist** and **elitist** society from shanty town in the **1920s** to impoverished **urbanized**



Gary Mark Smith

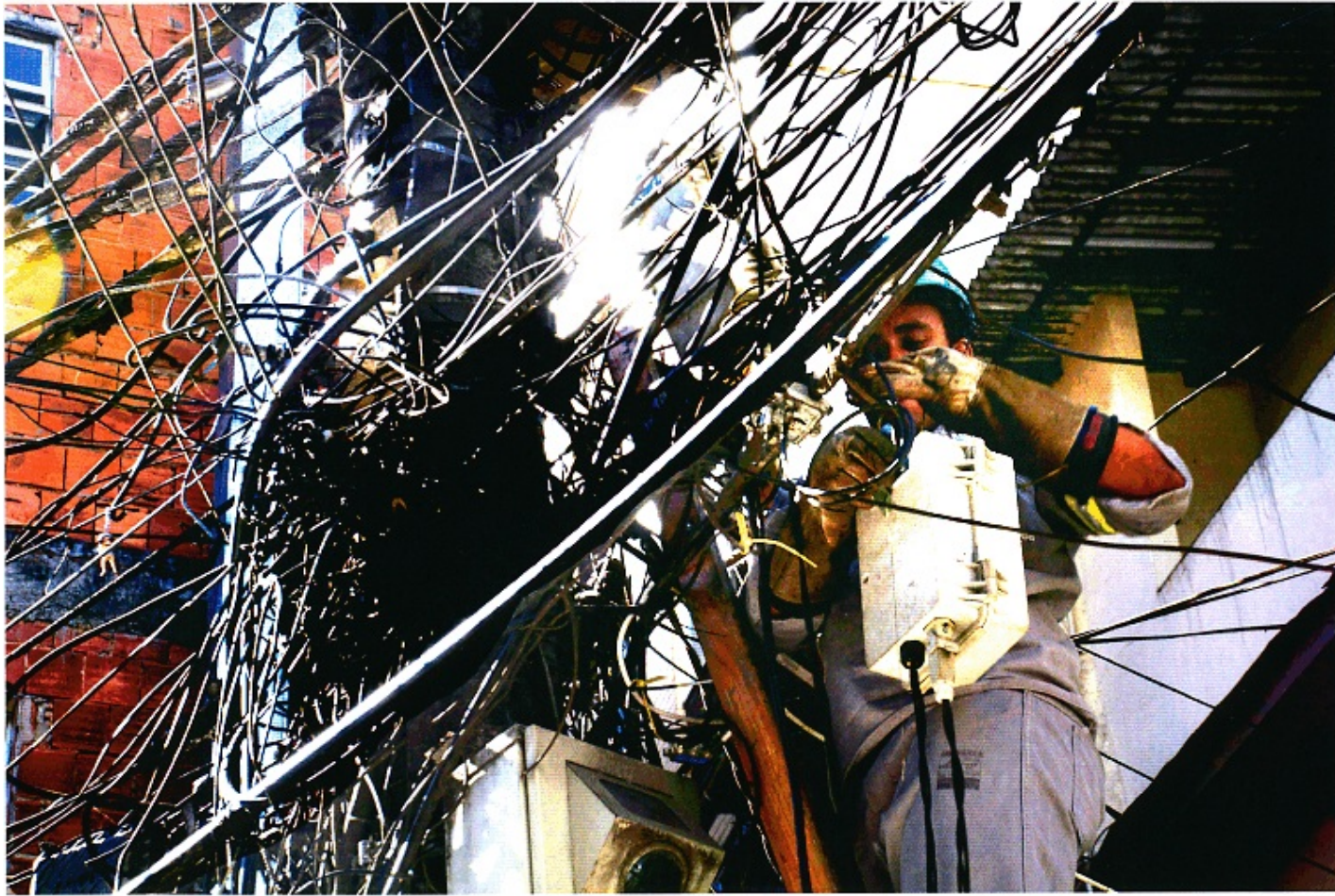
community with a **well-developed infrastructure** with hundreds of **businesses** **banks** **medicine stores** **bus lines** **cable television** its own channel **TV ROC** and one failed **McDonald's** franchise Most **houses** many three and four stories tall and even one **eleven story** structure with 58 apartments for let are made of **concrete** and **brick** Rocinha's **population** soared in the 1960s through the 1970s when two **tunnels** were constructed giving **residents** easier **access** to the Southern Zone for **jobs** As the population grew **sub-zones** of differing **income** levels and quality of **housing** developed within the larger **community** Now a small **middle-class** exists **Opinions** differ as to whether this contributes to the **community** or not Some people choose to **reside** there to save **money** on utilities Most residents have basic **sanitation** **plumbing** and often free **electricity** and are **service workers** in the South Zone (**Zona Sul**) of Rio de Janeiro These residents are served by **numerous** non-governmental civil organizations (**NGOs**) and non-profit **educational organizations** staffed with both **Brazilian** and **foreign** teachers and volunteers and workers fighting the **poverty** and statistics that put formal **education** at only **4.1 years** average with **less than one percent** of the population going beyond a **high school** education The **density** of population and its **diversity** many are descendants of **slaves** who were only freed in 1888 then **systemically excluded** from **mainstream** Brazilian society make it a **unique environment** for **social movements** to arise within Replacing the **violent pacification** programs of the recent past the Brazilian **government** has tried **less drastic** measures to **assist** the community while forcing gangs into becoming less visible to the increasing media attention from outside Brazil Although an *Eco-limits* program ringing the *favela* with **irons bars** linked with **cables** to discourage **destructive expansion** into the surrounding



Sarah Bern

Atlantic Forest was futile more welcome and **successful** has been the ongoing government funded **Growth Acceleration Program** Under its **auspices** a **community center** has been constructed In addition **cablecars** **bicycle paths** a **walkway** designed by **Oscar Neimeyer** and **sports complex** with facilities for training potential **athletes** for the 2014 **Olympics** spaces for **arts and crafts collectives** one of which to **Sarah's** delight is a **Samba** school encouraging **local involvement** a source of much **pride** for the locals

Rocinha although only one of 550 other *favelas* has achieved **global recognition** for both its **negative** and **positive** aspects **Mikhail Gorbachev** visited in 1992 Some **episodes** of the Brazilian **television series** *Cidade dos Homens* (*City of Men*) were **filmed** in there The Hollywood blockbuster *The Incredible Hulk* gives us an **aerial view** of Rocinha in impressive **helicopter footage** from which one can gauge the **enormity** of this *favela* and its **complex** assortment of seemingly endless **chaotic construction** American journalist **Robert Neuwirth** discusses Rocinha in *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, A New Urban World* (2004) a text which touts the **will** and **creative spirit** of people in **difficult situations** Noting that according to **United Nations** data by **2030** over **half the world's** **population** will be **experiencing** these dense urban **forces** and **becomings** he puts the idea of **sustainability** into an altogether **different context** sustainability as it relates to **self-organizing communities** Neuwirth **breaks** with the **predisposed** notions of “**slums**” “**ghettoes**” and “**shanty towns**” to unveil as do **Gary Sarah** and **Carlos's** **photographs** and **film** a tremendous **spirit** and unyielding **determination** at work within **unsanctioned** communities



Gary Mark Smith

Kay Fochtman a German graduate student from Leipzig researching his **Geography** thesis on *favela tourism* observes in an online **interview** about his recent month stay in **Rocinha** that:

There were so many things I liked and it's all about the people The way they treat each other the way they help one another Of course these social interactions are born out of necessity but they do work People share things the owner of one apartment has a TV everybody comes in to watch TV one of the guests has a washing machine so he can offer the people to wash their clothes others have a computer and internet access people share people help each other People know each other I was out of water for several days and I wanted to buy some water down at the little market and one of the workers just offered me to use his shower and I barely knew him I was overwhelmed I liked that there is a big sense of community that you are respected And I too respect the people living under the conditions they live in and knowing how to survive with dignity and pride I liked learning about all the things that matter all the knots that are holding this community together That is just something you can read about but never really understand unless you didn't experience it at first hand Living in Rocinha felt like two things living in a state-within-a-state and on the other hand living in a small village where everybody knows his neighbor

Such comments echo **Gary Sarah** and **Carlos's** experience It is this **dignity pride** and **mutual support rhythm vibration** and **resonance** that is probed in the imagery of our **Three Musketeers** and that is contributed to by **Gary's guiding** of his *compadres* and his photographic **workshop** instructing local youth **Sarah's befriending** of inhabitants through her love of **Samba** dancing and all captured in **Carlos's** short film *The Making of Rocinha Brasil* (2012)

Working the Project

Three taxis pass until one agrees to take our **Three Musketeers** into Rocinha **Color** spills down the hillside **five** types of **music** blast away Erratic double bass **blast** percussive beats the thick overdrive **bass** coating the cadence to cultivate an aurally anomalous **canvas** for dueling overly distorted **guitars** to flail away to a distanced but direct method of **mayhem** Welcome to our *favela* the **music** seems to say as **motorcycles** scurry **hither 'n thither** (well-seen in one of **Gary's** photos where a figure-in-motion on a **billboard** sign in the **background** seems to literally help **propel** a speeding **motorcyclist** down the **street**) as our **documentarians** set out to find their respective **quarters** prearranged through the **Two Brothers Foundation**

2Bros is an **educational** support group **co-founded** by KU Professor **Paul Sneed** who has launched a Latin **website** *Projecto Rocinha Real* It was he who taught **Sarah** Portuguese and gave **logistical** support for **Gary** to launch the *GMS Projecto Rocinha Real* **Photography Workshop** Thanks to Professor's Sneed's organization **Gary** and **Carlos** take up **residence** on top of their sponsor's roof **Sarah** is placed with two women but must **share** a bed with them in the cramped quarters Thus begins their **adventure** to make **new friends** through their passion to **photograph** and **teach** photographic visualization to **residents** at the **2Bros** school in Rocinha The **workshop** involved themes like *visually bold and intellectually stimulating basics* and entertainingly utilized **colorful props** in the classroom colored **bandanas** which **Gary** brought from the States and eventually gave to the **students** comical round Brazilian **Globo**

snack crackers to teach **shape** and **form** fruits and vegetables and a **watermelon to carve up** and **shoot** in relation to the usual objects found in the **classroom** and so forth **Carlos** and **Sarah** she having taught high school students in Kansas assisted **Gary** in providing the young **students** with not only an entertaining **experience** but got them to feel the **empowerment** of having **creative control** and **self-expression**

Besides teaching our **Extremeophiles** pursue their own **photographic** tasks outside the classroom After several days of **working** alongside a local guide **Gary** disregards **warnings** sets off alone:

*There I was **by myself** in the 5-foot-wide **alleyway** next to the house where I was living on the roof closing the door to the street waving my artistic license and getting to work with an empty **filmcard** Immediately I encountered a small neighborhood **boy** whom I'd gotten to know a bit through **smiles** thumbs up and fist bumps as I passed back and forth in the preceding days He did a **dance** for me as I **photographed** him in the low alley light then fired me a thumbs up and took off **running** down the **pathway** toward his house*

Gary presses his shutter at the **decisive moment** fitting this child's **enthusiastic gait** arms and legs **pummeling** the air into a superb **formal interaction** with surrounding **space** a compositional *tour de force* which also speaks of **self-determination** and **hope** It recalls **W. Eugene Smith's** famous image *Walk to Paradise Garden* (1946) where two small **children** walk toward the light and the challenge of an unknown **future**



Susy Clark Smith



Sarah Stern



Sarah Stern

Soldiering on **sweeping** the street with its street **vendors** catering to impulse making rich pickings for his **camera befriending** and **photographing** Carlos a **street-sweeper** along *Rua Valao* (which locals call *Open Sewer Street* as such enmeshment of raw **sewage** runs seven feet **below** this wide thoroughfare) **Gary** was pleasantly **surprised** and his **presence** in Rocinha seemed **fated** to be when he was told by his **subject** that Brazilian **Portuguese** for street-sweep is *garri* (pronounced Gary) **Sweeping** the street at the **intersection** of **exclamation** and **decisive moment** through his viewfinder **Gary** manages to put **99 images** on his **memorycard** by the time **three** (out of 358) **frantic** and **angered gang** members suddenly appear and **menace** and **push** him around trying to define **dominant** from **submissive** The tone of these **engagers'** voices the degree of **desire** and **anger** indicated by their **glaring** eyes **Gary's** firm stance signal **offense** versus **defense** those who **need** and one that **owns** Under protest his camera is **confiscated**

Twelve days of **diplomacy** is initiated when **Sarah** introduces the **Extremeophiles** and their **educational mission** over the local **Rocinha** radio station Her plea gains **support** from locals for their **project's goals** and **community** pressure leads **Nem** the gang-boss to **Google** and confirm the **credentials** of our intrepid **adventurers** Much to their surprise the **Musketeers** are invited to meet **Nem** to make peace at a **gang festival** *We will not be separated* goes through each of their **minds** as they fight **fear** and jockey for a **position** at the raucous **party** so as to **remain** within a coverlet of **security** **Gary** explains their **goal** is to carry out a **long-term** observation of the *favela* and **government**

intervention there **before** **during** and **after** the 2016 **Olympic Games** When the **gang** understands the **Musketeer's** profound commitment to the **community** (neither police **spies** nor **tourists**) they **return Gary's** equipment and give **permission** for **uncontested** photography within the *favela*

The **Musketeers** roam **Rocinha** for three weeks **recording** colorful formal possibilities of the **environment** An **overview** of the *favela* and a **resident** therefrom is given **formal** astuteness in **Gary's** monochromatic shot of a young **man** leaning against a **rock** formation **Rocinha** far below **Contrasting** with the **stasis** in Gary's shot Carlos captures two kids one on a **skateboard** one pacing him with a **bicycle** an **innocent** motion never-ending **innocent** motion a **spiritual** richness of which Carlos comments:

The youth of Rocinha do justice to the inherent beauty of the place Not corrupted by whatever lurks at night between hidden faces and lost bullets some kids enjoy their weekends unaware (or perhaps accustomed) to the consequences of living under precarious "material" conditions The streets seem to move too Everything around me becomes alive even the rocks the cement the naked bricks holding up the structures of thousands of pathways alleys and window-frames remarks Carlos As soon as the camera lens comes off the world becomes a wet canvas waiting to be dried out onto my 35mm frames Movement that's the most potent action I experience as I aim my viewfinder E-motion Rocinha is evolving always changing but always remaining the quintessential definition of a favela

Sarah's image of a **typical** four-story block-constructed **building** is tightly framed to create a **cubist-like** flatness with

layering of bands of **color** and **textures** two levels of which are **connected** by a **red** ladder The **pile** of building **blocks** arrayed below and its **hodge-podge** assembly imply the **protean** expansion of the *favela* Shifting to an **intimate** portrait of **residents** within such a **housing** complex **Sarah** turns her sympathetic **eye** toward a young **mother** in joyous **love** of her **child** (captured in **black** and **white**) a life-affirming **oblique** shot of the two hanging out a **window** **Sarah** recalls the inspiration leading up this **shot**:

*We had just finished **climbing** up the wet slippery rocks arranged in a make-shift path up to the **poorest** area of the favela **Gary** went ahead cane in hand camera in the other surprising us as usual **Carlos** followed balancing his **video camera** in one hand the other grasping the camera hanging around his neck Arriving to rest at the top of the **hill** we spied a small **girl** curiously eyeing us **Smiling** generously she walked around in front of her home and her **mom** and **baby sister** appeared in the door to see the visitors rare in an area where **tours** never come I got several **photographs** of just the **girl** but the three of them together put a **twist** on the commercial **family portraits** I shoot back in the USA I loved the **sass** in girl's stance the same sass seen in any **young girl** in any part of the world the same **curiosity** and the same **light-heartedness** here in the heart of **Rocinha***

While **Sarah** engages the residents **Gary** serially tracks the **maze** of electric and television **cables** spanning the narrow streets the photographs both **document** the creative efforts of the **residents** in **circumventing** paying for power and entertainment as well as stand as **metaphors** for the many **levels** of complex **social interconnection** (from the **network** of streets and alleys to the **drug trafficking** to shared **experiences** and **globalism** to extended **familial**

ties) all which **combine** to create the **energy** pulsing within this vital **community** All the while this **activity** is being sucked into **Carlos's** digital camera to **emerge** later as a high-definition video **record** of such fugitive **encounters**

In Summation

Gary Sarah and Carlos's intense and passionate **photographic** sojourn brought them **together** as **comrades** and **guardians** in arms during the **endeavor** itself but that same **extreme** also contributed to **tearing** them **apart** as production **collaborators** thereafter **Tension** not only with **gang** members but also **among** the three very individualistic **Extremeophiles** was palpable **Three** creative **idiosyncratic** minds can be a **volatile** mixture when **sentenced** to the same blank **canvas** without the comfort of **danger** at their door But the **artwork** was worth the **effort**: 1) three **distinctive** bodies of **documentary** photographs made at the end of an era in **Brazil** when a famous (media would say "infamous") **favela** was at the height of a **Hole-in-the-Wall** gang-held reign 2) a **successful** photographic **workshop** with local **residents** 3) new **friends** made and a fruitful **cross-cultural** exchange begun and 4) a cinematic **overview** of the entire **project** directing **attention** to both **negative** and **positive** aspects of this **exotic** teeming **Brazilian** community as it **evolves** into an uncertain future

The End



Gary Mark Smith (2nd from left); Sarah Stern (2nd from right); Carlos P. Beltrán (far right)

