

# Joshua Hammer - A Look Into Brazil's Makeover of Rio's Slums



Photo by Claudio Edinger

The Brazilian government's bold efforts to clean up the city's notoriously dangerous favelas is giving hope to people who live there - By *Joshua Hammer* - Photographs by Claudio Edinger - ***Smithsonian* magazine, January 2013**

Marcos Rodrigo Neves remembers the bad old days in Rocinha, the largest *favela*, or slum, in Rio de Janeiro. A baby-faced 27-year-old with a linebacker's build and close-cropped black hair, Rodrigo grew up dirt poor and fatherless in a tenement in Valão, one of the favela's most dangerous neighborhoods. Drug-trafficking gangs controlled the turf, and police rarely entered out of fear they could be ambushed in the alleys. "Many classmates and friends died of overdoses or in drug violence," he told me, sitting in the front cubicle of the Instituto Wark Rocinha, the tiny art gallery and teaching workshop he runs, tucked on a grimy alley in the heart of the favela.

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