

# The Memory of Brumadinho

*Black and indigenous bodies buried in a sea of Vale's scraps*

Wagner Maia da Costa

| Brasil |

translated by Edmung Ruge





Wagner Maia da Costa







Wagner Maia da Costa







Wagner Maia da Costa







Wagner Maia da Costa

**T**he photographic essay *The Memory of Brumadinho* was undertaken by independent photographers in Brumadinho and Rio Paraopeba, Minas Gerais, in January 2019, three days after the bursting of the dam in Córrego do Feijão, a water and iron ore reserve owned by the Vale do Rio Doce company — a socio-environmental crime, as the area's residents



say. Between the tears and anguish we felt in so many situations experienced there, we often found ourselves simply lowering our cameras to listen to the local and native peoples.

These photos, the most difficult among them taken by a photographer used to covering protests in cities like Rio de Janeiro, reveal the difficulty we had in attempting to trace a narrative amid the pain we felt in seeing, in a single day, some 18 bodies being removed from the sea of ore waste in Brumadinho. Residents shared their stories of resistance with us as we too experienced a river stained with mining waste.

We heard stories like that of a riverside villager lamenting the end of his only sustenance, the Paraopeba river. In the cover photo, the leader of the Aldeia Nao Xohâ tribe is depicted in a moment of reflection, expressing the pain of losing his only river, a sacred element in the tribe's rites of passage and sustenance. To photograph the tribe was to reconsider their pain, to photograph with respect for others and their loss.

---

## | References |

RODRIGUES, José Carlos. Tabu do Corpo. Editora Fiocruz. 2006. Rio de Janeiro.

SOULAGES, François. Esthétique de la photographie. Paris: Armand Colin, 2006, cap. 5.

SONTAG, Susan. Ensaio sobre a fotografia. Brasil 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_. Diante da dor dos outros. Companhia das Letras. São Paulo. 2003.