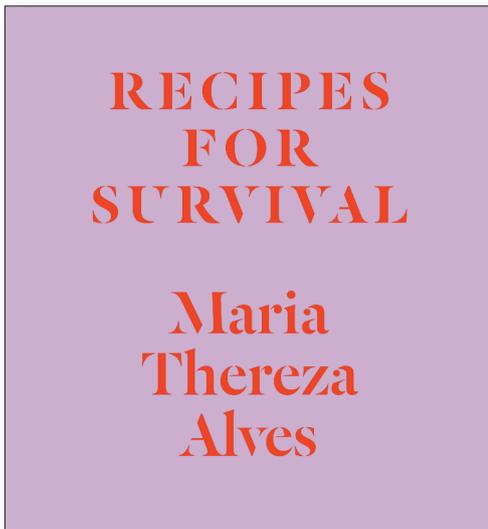




University of Texas Press



Recipes for Survival

BY MARIA THEREZA ALVES

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL TAUSSIG

"These photographs are extraordinary. They trace a direct connection with Alves's subjects that is rare and impossible to fake. This is very different from a lot of documentary work being done today, and I think it will be a revelation to many."

- David Levi Strauss, School of Visual Arts, author of *From Head to Hand: Art and the Manual*

"This is a very powerful and beautiful depiction of life under the weight of poverty and histories of slavery, colonialism, and exploitation capitalism in Brazil. It is profoundly moving."

- Kathleen Stewart, University of Texas at Austin, author of *Ordinary Affects*

In 1983, when acclaimed Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves was an art student at Cooper Union in the United States, she returned to her native country to document the backlands of Brazil, where her family is from. Working with the local people in a collaborative process that has become the hallmark of her mature work, Alves photographed their daily lives and interviewed them to gather the facts that they wanted the world to know about them. Unlike documentation created by outsiders, which tends to objectify Brazil's indigenous and rural people, Alves's work presents her subjects as active agents who are critically engaged with history.

Recipes for Survival opens with evocative, caption-less black-and-white photographs, most of them portraits that compel viewers to acknowledge the humanity of people without reducing them to types or labels. Following the images are texts in which the villagers matter-of-factly describe the grinding poverty and despair that is their everyday life—incessant labor for paltry wages, relations between men and women that often devolve into abuse, and the hopelessness of being always at the mercy of uncontrollable outside forces, from crop-destroying weather to exploitative employers and government officials. Though not overtly political, the book powerfully reveals how the Brazilian state shapes the lives of its most vulnerable citizens. Giving a voice to those who have been silenced, *Recipes for Survival* is, in Alves's words, "about we who are the non-history of Brazil."

Maria Thereza Alves is a Brazilian-born artist descended from the country's indigenous, African, and European peoples. She is best known for her award-winning work *Seeds of Change* (2004–2018), which links ecology and colonial history. One of the founders of Brazil's Green Party in São Paulo, Alves received the 2016–2018 Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics, awarded to artists who take great risks to advance social justice in profound and visionary ways.

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