

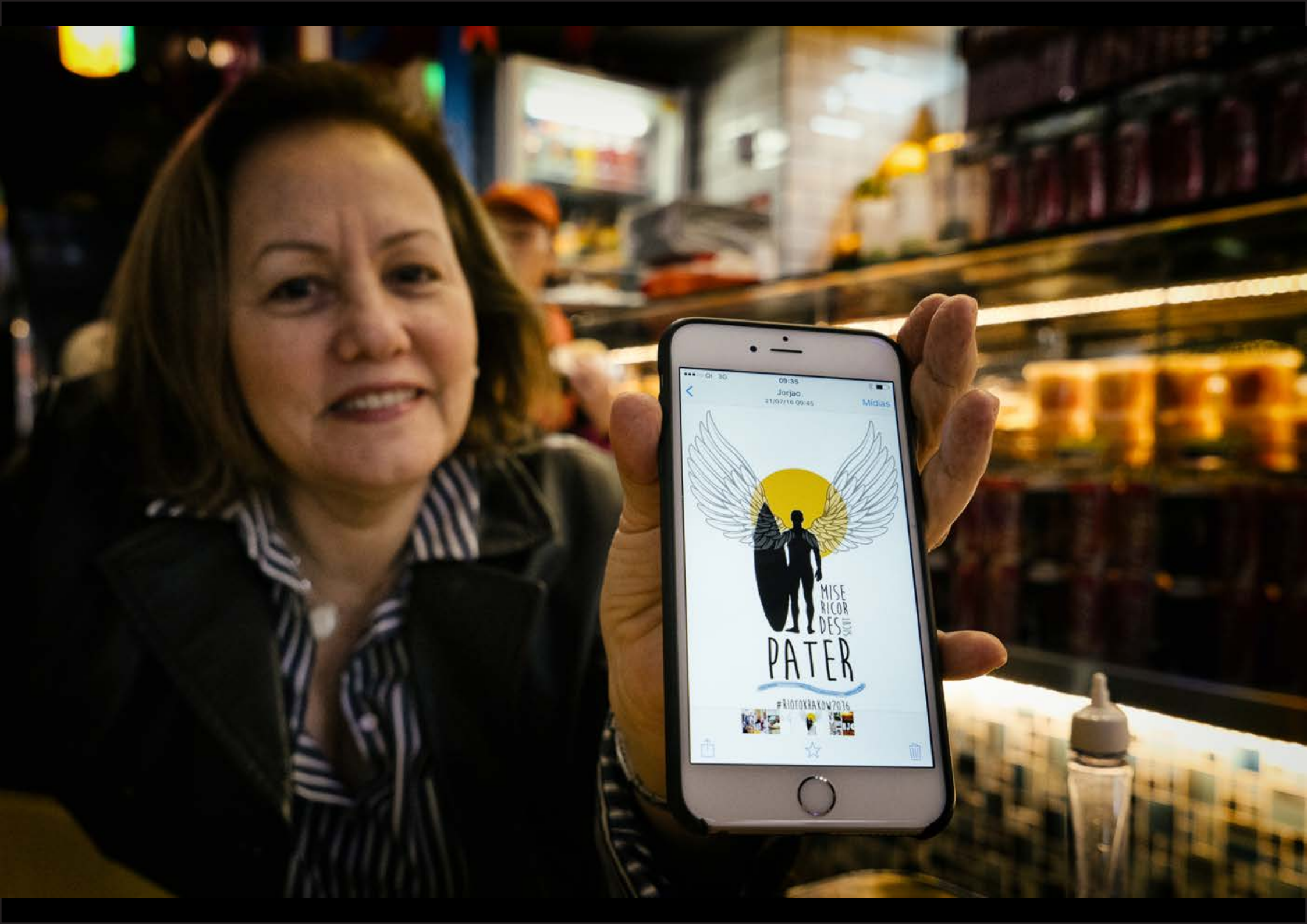
THE HOLY SURFER FROM RIO DE JANEIRO





SHORTLY, THE OLYMPIC GAMES ARE TAKING OFF IN RIO DE JANEIRO – BUT THE CITY’S CHURCHES ARE BUSY WITH A COMPETITION OF THEIR OWN. CLERICS AND LAY FOLK IN THIS VERY CATHOLIC CITY ARE RUNNING AGAINST THE CLOCK TO CHASE MIRACLES: STORIES OF SAVED LIVES AND HEALINGS THAT A LOCAL SAINT HAS WROUGHT. THE CHURCH ELDERS OF RIO ARE PUSHING THE VATIKAN TO DECLARE A PERSON CALLED GUIDO SCHAFFER A HOLY MAN: A FORMER SEMINARIST, MEDICAL DOCTOR, SAVIOR OF MANY HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE CITY – AND, MOST BRAZILIAN OF ALL, A PASSIONATE SURFER AND SPORTS FAN. WHEN HE DIED 7 YEARS AGO, TAKEN BY A WAVE, CATHOLICS ALL OVER THE CITY STARTED TO TALK OF HIS GOOD DEEDS. THE PROBLEM IS: IN ORDER TO CANONIZE HIM, THERE NEED TO BE MIRACLES. THESE ARE DIFFICULT TO FIND AND PROVE. A COMMISSION FROM ROME PASSED TIME IN TOWN TO INSPECT THE EVIDENCE. SOME PRIESTS ARE NOT EVEN WASTING THEIRS: THERE ALREADY ARE STATUES AND A SHRINE FOR “HOLY GUIDO”. PRAYING LEAFLETS AND BOOKS ARE SOLD, SHOWING AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG MAN ON A SURFBOARD IN THE WAVES. THERE IS A TRADE IN MEMORABILIA. GUIDO’S SURFBOARD HAS BEEN LOCKED AWAY: THE CHURCH CONSIDERS IT A RELIQUARY. GIORGIO PALMERA’S PHOTO REPORTAGE SHOWS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF RIO IN A DESPERATE RACE TO ATTRACT A YOUNGER CROWD: AFTER ALL, THIS SPORTS LOVER AND MAN OF GOD IS SEEN AS A PERFECT ANTIDOTE TO THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES, WHO SPEAK TO THE CITY’S YOUNG MUCH MORE EASILY. BUT THE REPORT THEN ENTERS THE SERIOUS SIDE OF THINGS. PALMERA TRACES THE FOOTSTEPS OF SCHAFFER’S WORK WITH THE HOMELESS AND CRACK VICTIMS OF RIO. HE LOOKS INTO THE ABYSS OF URBAN POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN THE OLYMPIC TOWN: SCHAFFER, THE HOLY MAN IN WAITING, CAN INDEED GUIDE US TO BOTH SIDES OF RIO – ITS CARELESS BEACH LIFE FOR THE UPPER CLASSES, AND ITS UNDERWORLD OF POVERTY, DRUG ABUSE AND DESPAIR.

THIS CAN OPTIONALLY COME WITH A REPORT IN GERMAN, ENGLISH OR PORTUGUESE BY THOMAS FISCHERMANN, PRICE WINNING JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR FOR DIE ZEIT (GERMANY) ([HTTPS://WWW.TORIAL.COM/THOMAS.FISCHERMANN](https://www.torial.com/thomas.fischermann))

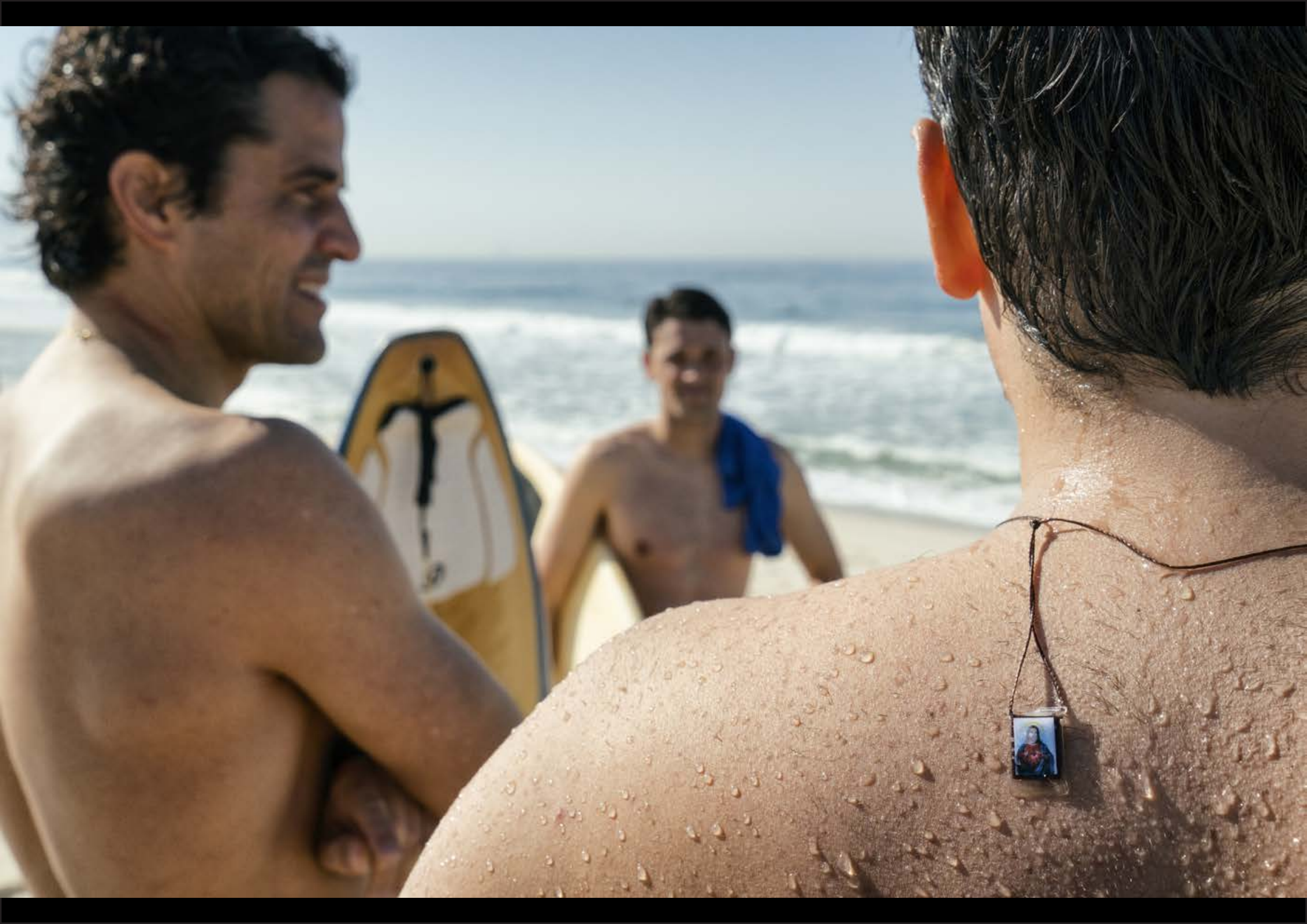


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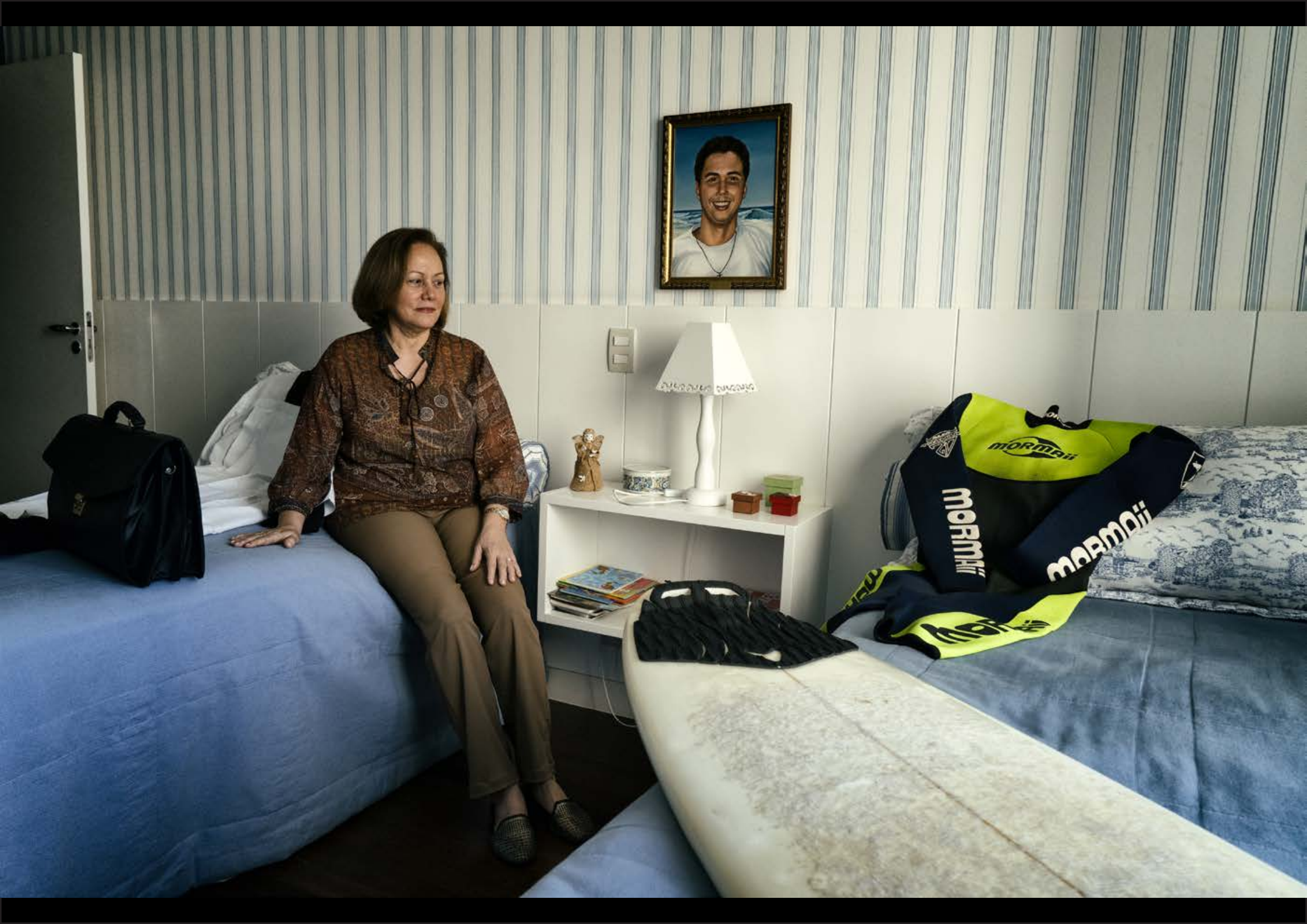












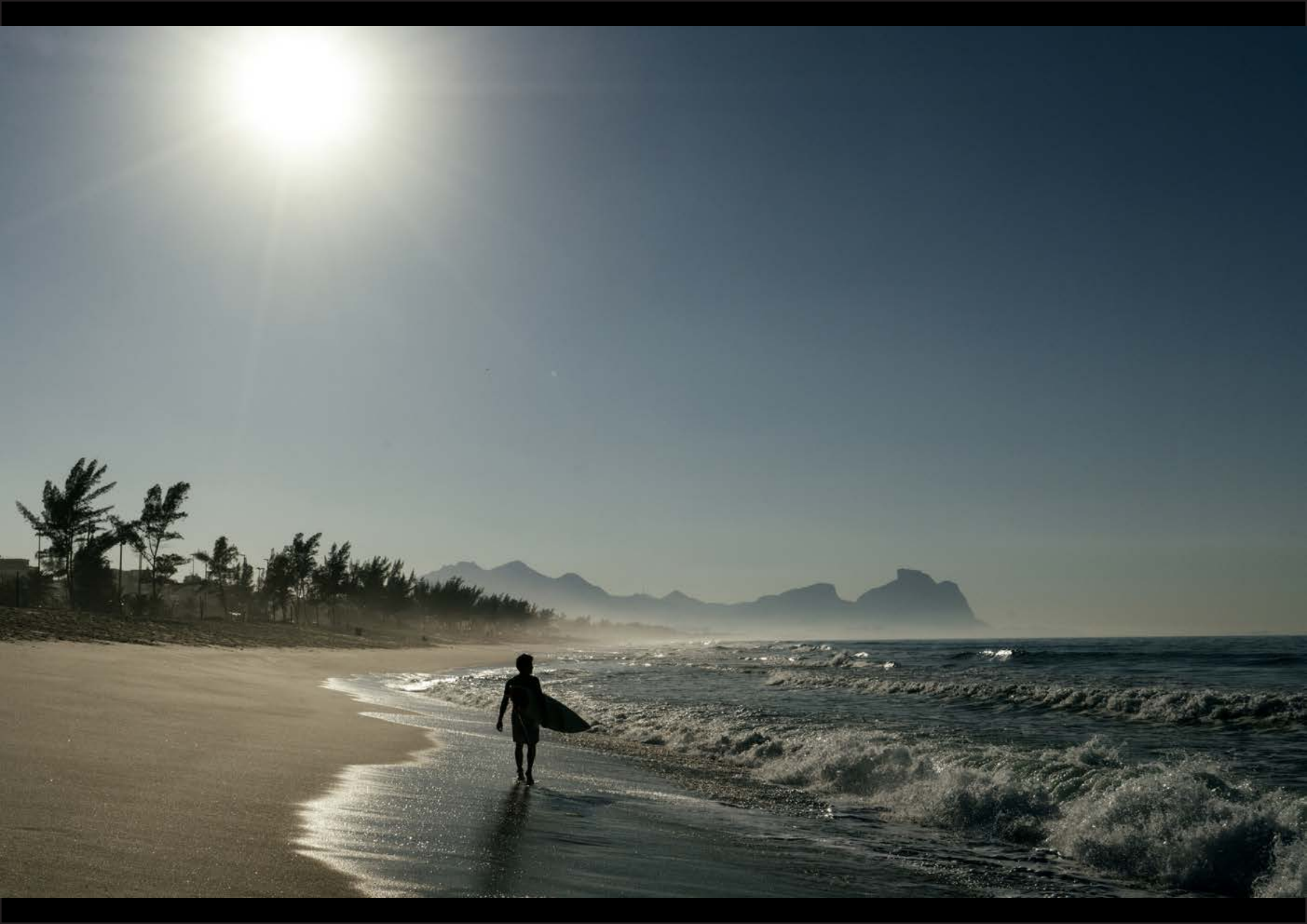












A PROJECT BY:

GIORGIO PALMERA

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