



NEW RELEASE

## Thomas Brasey Boaventura

Texts by Christophe Mauron, Sascha Renner  
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**The history of Swiss settlers in Brazil raises the tragically topical issue of emigration.**

In 1819, driven by starvation and economic crisis, about 2,000 Swiss people emigrated to Brazil. After a deadly journey, they founded Nova Friburgo in the mountains near Rio de Janeiro. Unfortunately, their lands barely provided enough to feed, and the settlers scattered. Some returned to Rio where they lived in poverty and crime, others headed North where coffee could be grown, and made prosperous business there, particularly thanks to slavery.

In this survey, Thomas Brasey documents the nowadays town of Nova Friburgo and evokes in a strongly personal way the adventure of the Swiss settlers. Beyond the historical scope of his approach, he raises the tragically topical issue of emigration, and remembers us that not so long ago western Europeans left their continent by boat in search of a better place to live.

*»The history of the Swiss immigrants who left for Nova Friburgo in 1819 is a unique case in emigration history of the modern period. Its very early character — to my knowledge Nova Friburgo is the first settlement created from the ground up in Latin America by local and European promoters of the expedition — distinguishes it from later initiatives, starting in the second half of the 19th century, that would see millions of Europeans leaving the “Old World” to try their luck across the Atlantic.*

*To the personal and local reasons that motivated their departure can be added the effects of trading and agricultural crises provoked by the eruption of an Indonesian volcano. It is a remarkable example*

*of a “connected history” and of an episode that resonates with our current events: a migration with climatic and economic origins.»*  
— from the text by Christophe Mauron

**Thomas Brasey** (\*1980) lives and works in Lausanne, Switzerland. After completing a PhD thesis in organometallic chemistry, he eventually got tired of tinkering with matter and started studying photography. He obtained a bachelor in visual communication at the University of Art and Design Lausanne (ECAL) and has since then been working as a freelance photographer.

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### Exhibitions

Musée gruérien, Bulle, Switzerland  
16.12.2017 – 15.04. 2018  
Booksigning December 20th, 2017, 6.30pm

COALMINE, Winterthur, Switzerland  
27.04. – 23.06.2018

Usina Cultural, Nova Friburgo, Brazil  
14.05. – July 2018

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