

GEORGE POPOVICI

PANDEMIC

photographic series



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Asociația CENTRUL DE FOTOGRAFIE ANALOGICĂ
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The spirals of movement evoke progressive development, expressing the evolution and expansion of both the material world and a broader constellation of ideas. Finally, the figure performing the dance is ONE—a symbol of totality and synthesis, an evocation of Adam's Edenic state and of the primordial unity from which all things originate.

Prof. Cristina Talpan, PhD

























DUAL BEWILDERMENT















Reflections on the Exhibition Concept of Pandemic

Prof. Cristina Talpan, PhD

It was a pleasure to respond to the artistic challenge proposed by George Popovici, a lecturer at the George Enescu National University of Arts in Iași, who invited us to participate in a genuine “revolution of the gaze” through his photographic exhibition Pandemic. In this artistic endeavour, Popovici succeeds in simultaneously encoding and decoding a contemporary health and humanitarian crisis that has profoundly affected the human body and everyday life. He offers us a sensory experience and an interpretation of bodily states and actions as part of a particular history, culture and society, as well as the result of a complex series of signifying operations distinguished by their message, meaning and spectacular visual character.

Working in a style that is sober, precise and, at the same time, compelling, George Popovici maps the body subjected to the conditions of the pandemic. Within this visual territory, we can distinguish several configurations: the body as language, expressing a system of signs through the multiplication of the model and transmitting the vibrations of consciousness; the body as space, suggesting a scenario composed of other signs; the body as object, generating discourse through the statuesque attitudes of the figures seated on a bench; and the body as reference, defined through objects—particularly masks—that shape the silhouettes and bear witness to their very existence.

These images cannot be approached solely from an abstract perspective. They offer compelling opportunities to interpret the bodies captured by the camera through a communicative framework, in which the face, appearance, torso and limbs are transformed from simple anatomical components into microtexts that can be analysed in relation to their specific communicative environment.

From this perspective, we can identify the characteristics and dynamics of the bodies, initially presented in group compositions and subsequently individualised. These images enable an investigation into the expression of bodily limits, tensions and exhaustion, while also questioning the mythology of the healthy body. In the present context, the body is subjected to suffering; it struggles to survive and attempts to construct an indefinite form of longevity.

The camera's sensitive gaze captures this condition through individual bodily struggles and exertions marked by morphological limitations—the boundaries articulated by bones and joints—as well as by physiognomic tensions, facial expressions and a corporeal geography that brings together the body's interiority and exteriority. The images explore the relationship between transitive bodily actions, which operate as communicative manifestations, and intransitive bodily expressions, which can only be experienced through perception.

The almost entirely unclothed bodies evoke humanity's aspiration to return to its origins, to a paradisiacal, Adamic state. They suggest the desire to transcend the primordial transgression that brought punishment and death, culminating in the separation of the soul from the body.

Through the manner in which the photographs are displayed, George Popovici constructs a genuine journey through contemporary forms of communication. He suggests that the semiotic boundaries of bodies are mobile delimitations rather than impenetrable walls. Today, these bodies are subjected to the forces of new signs and emerging rituals that manifest themselves within the sociocultural sphere as a consequence of global phenomena.

The exhibition offers an innovative interpretation of contemporary society, articulated by the photographer through human bodily expressions that move, with complexity and precision, from forms of communion, intermingling and identity to the possibility of their mutual substitution.

Bodily gestures are intertwined with masks that amplify the human being's inner voice and introduce allusive elements of a symbolic nature. Their expressive force belongs to the realms of convention, suggestion and style. Here we can identify the tension between being and appearing—a relationship that, in Nietzsche's thought, acquires a "tragic" connotation and is understood through the opposition between content and form, interior and exterior, essence and appearance.

It therefore becomes clear why the mask has been deliberately adopted for a specific purpose: it is shaped by the need for protection against an external threat. At the same time, it functions as a mechanism through which reality is deceived or displaced, initiating a process of transformation within the contemporary human being.

Through the photographic images presented in *Pandemic*, George Popovici offers a powerful expression of both the suffering and the triumph of the human body. Emerging from a complex visual investigation, the exhibition constitutes an important point of reference for any analysis of the human condition or of the new phenomena that place life—and its multiple forms—at their centre.

