

Tudor Bratu
The Burden of Proof
17.01 – 14.03.2026

The Burden of Proof brings together a body of photographic work by Tudor Bratu that focuses on individuals who exist at the threshold of social visibility. Rather than approaching his subjects from a distance, Bratu aligns himself with what he encounters, allowing the images to articulate the fragile relationship between public space, denied privacy, and the lived realities of those who remain structurally overlooked. His photographs do not seek narrative closure or dramatic resolution; instead, they linger in moments of suspension, where presence itself becomes precarious.

Bratu's practice resists spectacle, embellishment, and the conventions of documentary photography. There is no decisive moment, no claim to explanation or redemption. The images point to ongoing conditions—social, economic, and psychological—that leave people exposed within systems that promise care, progress, or stability but consistently fail to deliver them. Abandonment here is not exceptional; it is embedded in the everyday fabric of streets, homes, and transitional spaces.

A significant part of the works presented in this exhibition originates from analogue photography. This choice is not nostalgic, nor purely aesthetic. Analogue processes introduce a degree of unpredictability and vulnerability into the image-making itself. Scratches caused by damaged film, light leaks, chemical irregularities, or the visual breakdown that occurs in the final frames of a roll are all present in the works on view. These are not flaws to be corrected or erased. On the contrary, Bratu deliberately preserves these marks, allowing the material conditions of the photograph to remain visible.

These imperfections operate as more than technical accidents; they become integral to the meaning of the images. The scratched surface, the partial loss of information, or the instability of the image echoes the fragility of the lives depicted. Just as the film bears the traces of wear, limitation, and exposure, so too do the individuals portrayed exist within environments marked by neglect, precarity, and erosion. The medium and the subject mirror one another: both carry scars, interruptions, and gaps that cannot be seamlessly repaired.

By refusing digital correction or visual “clean-up,” Bratu rejects the impulse to normalize, aestheticize, or sanitize reality. The images insist on their own vulnerability, foregrounding the fact that what we see is incomplete, contingent, and shaped by circumstance. In this sense, the photographs function not as polished representations, but as evidence—records of conditions that persist, often unnoticed, within the social landscape.

Installed as a sequence, the works create a quiet yet insistent confrontation. Bodies at rest or collapse, gestures that go unresolved, and environments that oscillate between exposure and indifference form a visual rhythm marked by repetition and dissonance. The white spaces between the images are as important as the images themselves, offering room for reflection, memory, and projection. The viewer is not guided toward interpretation, but invited into a space of attention and responsibility. *The Burden of Proof* ultimately asks what it means to witness. The photographs do not speak for their subjects, nor do they claim to resolve the injustices they reveal. Instead, they insist on presence—on acknowledging lives that are too often relegated to the background of public consciousness. In allowing both the image and its material support to remain fragile, marked, and unresolved, Tudor Bratu positions photography as a site where visibility, accountability, and vulnerability intersect.

- Kiki Petratou