

Mike Goldby

*Promises*

November 25 - December 22, 2023

When I desire you a part of me is gone: my want of you partakes of me. So reasons the lover at the edge of eros. The presence of want awakens in him nostalgia for wholeness. His thoughts turn toward questions of personal identity: he must recover and incorporate what is gone if he is to be a complete person.

–Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*

To be at the edge of eros, for Carson, is to be at the boundary of desire, the moment when a love ignites. Shifting focus from the pleasant aspects of new love, Carson calls attention elsewhere, to the painful reckoning the desirous individual undergoes as they are split into two: part former self and part a consuming want of another. But what is to be made of the other edge of eros, the boundary demarcated by the dissolution of a love or a desire? To me, it seems possible that this second edge is one of unification. That, through an estrangement, the individual reckons not with a splitting, but with a fusion as they fight to restore their own discrete wholeness.

In *Promises*, Mike Goldby negotiates this latter edge and the encounter of the self—in all its frustrations and glories—in the dissipating wake of eros. The images that comprise this exhibition were selected from Goldby’s personal archive and illustrate both literally and thematically the intimacies that are created through establishing distance. The images are quotidian—a lilac bush, a bathroom selfie, a drink—but in practice they represent tentative discoveries, made through a perspective in flux. In *A Lover’s Discourse*, Barthes talks about how a telephone can “[resume] its trivial existence” once you’re no longer waiting for your lover to call; but, by the same token, a lilac bush might adopt a sublimity as it transforms into a clarifying source of hope.

Of course, it’s never as simple as all this. Life, generally, and periods of transition, in particular, are full of antithetical energies, feelings, and interests constantly wrestling for recognition—often undermining one another in the process. Goldby captures this friction tangibly and elegantly. By shielding each photograph with sandblasted glass, he introduces a physical reminder of the initial distance that necessitated these “discoveries” and he mirrors—through the experience of the viewer—the residual longing that informed each and every one of them. Put plainly: the more you want to see them, the closer you get, the harder they become to see.

Obfuscation is no stranger to Goldby’s practice. *Promises* marks an evolution of an idea first hatched in *Silver 35*, an earlier body of work. In that series, the images, which mostly featured glimpses of strangers on the street, sat behind a tinted, reflective film that

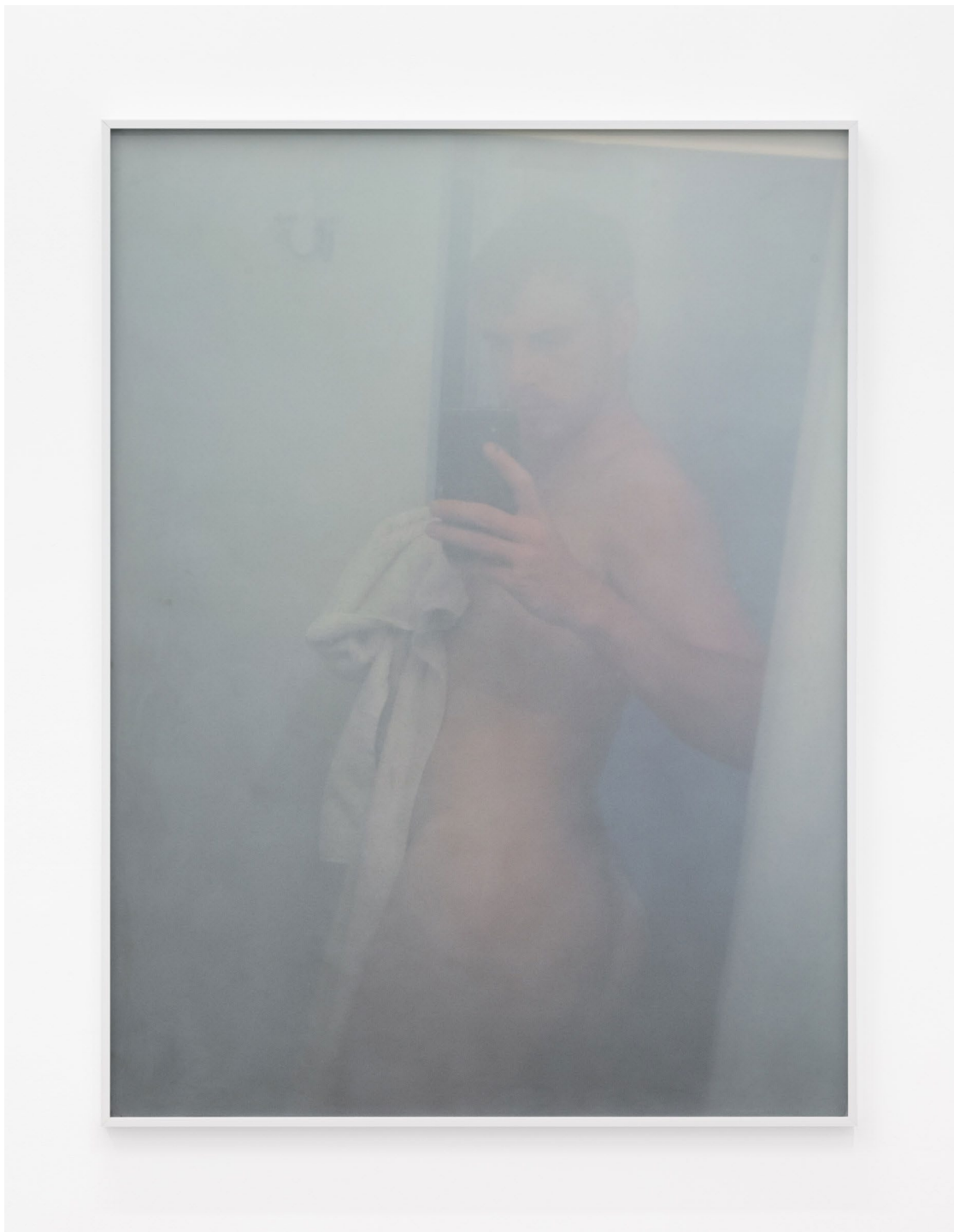
simultaneously obscured the work from the viewer while ensnaring them within it. *Promises* gently turns this idea on its head. Formerly embraced into an indifferent public realm, the viewer is now invited into a highly personal and private one, but is forced to stay at arm’s length. Goldby furthers this gesture of distantiation through a series of poems, written only to be pasted to the back of each piece, out of sight of any hopeful readers.

Ultimately, this body of work is a negotiation: a dialogue between a self and the ghost of the absent lover over where to draw the line—or the edge—between them. It is host to confusions and clarities, concealments and disclosures; and it embodies the complicated truth that, try as we might, we can never restore a former wholeness, we can only ever shape a new one. Because, after a love, one’s wholeness can no longer exist, will not seal shut, without holding the traces left by the other.

- Kate Kolberg, 2023

Mike Goldby (b. 1991, Toronto, CA) completed his BFA in Integrated Media at OCAD University in 2013. He has exhibited internationally in Toronto (Franz Kaka, Gallery 44, Sibling, Jr. Projects, Tomorrow, Art Metropole, Division), New York (MAW Gallery), Brussels (Mon Cheri), Berlin (Future Gallery), and Paris (Galerie Chez Valentin). His work is included in the public collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne where he will be included in the upcoming NGV Triennial, opening Dec 3, 2023. Goldby currently lives and works in Montreal/Tiohti:áke where he is an MFA candidate at Concordia University.

For inquiries or to request additional information please contact [fk@franzkaka.com](mailto:fk@franzkaka.com)



*Set My Spirit Free (07/31/2023)*, 2023  
Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
48 x 36 in (121.9 x 91.4 cm) Unique  
MG-231



**Franz Kaka**





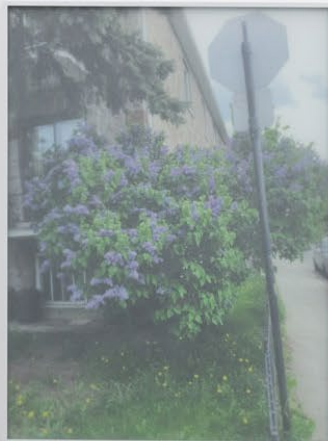
*Sunken Cost Fallacy (08/17/2021), 2023*

Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm) Unique  
MG-236



*The Drop (05/21/2023), 2023*

Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm) Unique  
MG-237

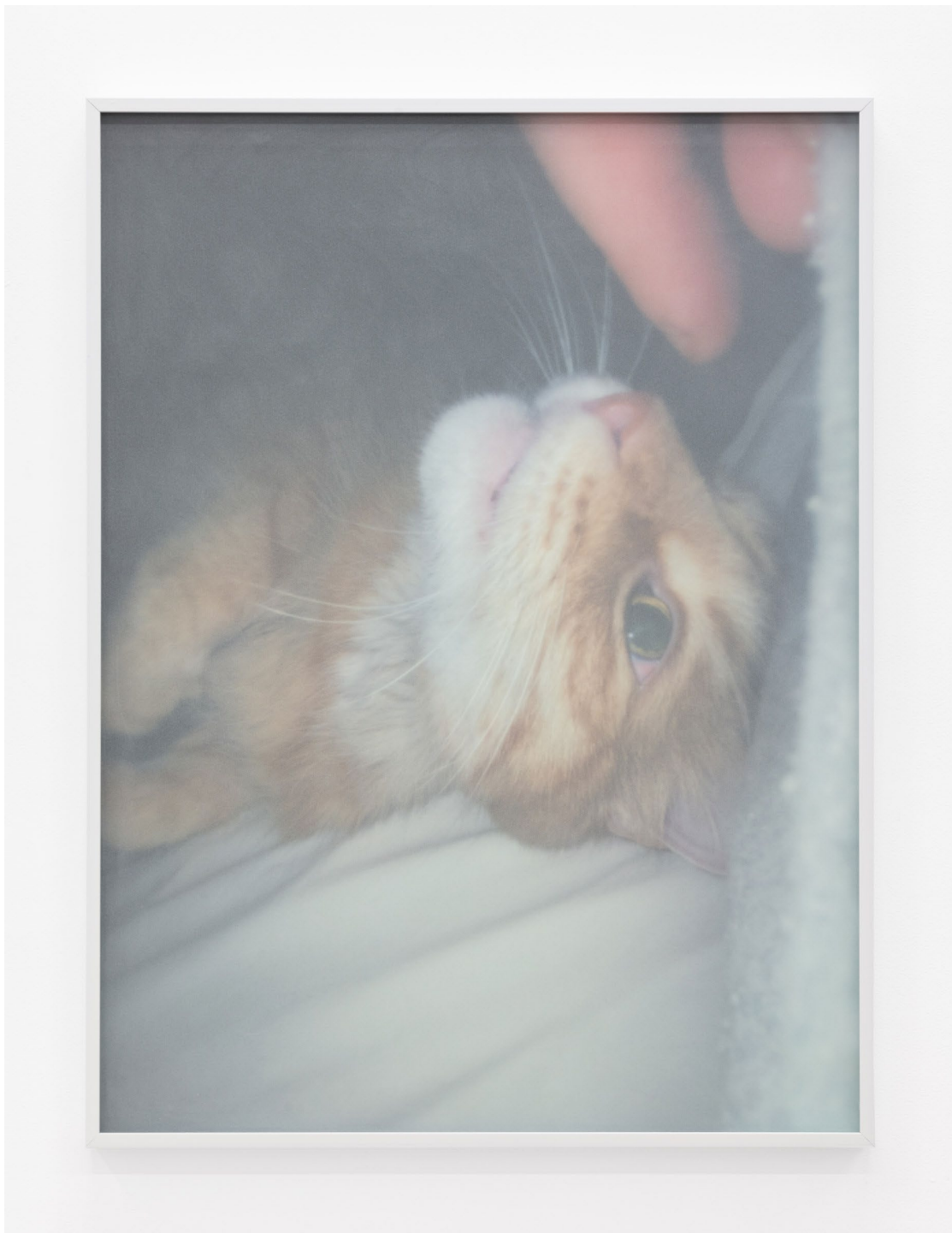






*Fluoxetine 10mg (09/19/2023), 2023*

Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem on Kozo pasted to rear of frame  
32 x 24 in (81.3 x 61 cm) Unique  
MG-235



*Rumination Station (06/17/2023), 2023*

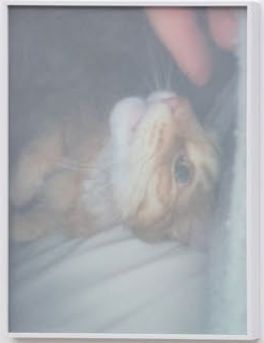
Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
32 x 24 in (81.3 x 61 cm) Unique  
MG-233





*Safe in the Hands of Love (05/07/2023), 2023*

Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm) Unique  
MG-232







*Don't Know What (05/20/2023), 2023*  
Digital print in custom frame, sandblasted glass, poem by artist printed on Kozo paper (on verso)  
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm) Unique  
MG-234



Mike Goldby  
b. 1991, Toronto, CA

#### Education

2024 MFA, Concordia University, Montreal, CA  
2013 BFA, OCAD UNiversity, Toronto, ON

#### Solo Exhibitions

2023 *Promises*, Franz Kaka, Toronto, CA  
2021 *Liste Art Fair Basel*, presented by Franz Kaka, Basel, CH  
2018 *Silver 35*, Sibling, Toronto, CA  
2015 *Core Exposed*, Mon Cheri, Brussels, BE  
2014 *Stress Sketch*, Jr. Projects, Toronto, CA  
2013 *Premier Life*, Tomorrow Gallery, Toronto, CA

#### Selected Group Exhibitions

2023 *NGV Triennial*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU  
2022 *Trip Like I Do*, Franz Kaka, Toronto, CA  
2017 *Every. Day. Objects.*, Art Metropole, Toronto, CA  
2017 *puddling.info*, Northern Ontario, CA (Organized and curated by Caleb Dunham and Connor Olthius)  
2016 *Chroma Lives*, Toronto, CA (Curated by Lili Huston-Herterich and Erin Freedman)  
2016 *Unkempt*, MAW Gallery, New York, US (Curated by A.C. Repairs Co.)  
2015 *MON CHERI*, Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris, FR  
2015 *Surface and Strategem*, Division Gallery, Toronto, CA  
2015 *You Won't Believe (...)*, Division Gallery, Montreal, CA (Curated by Loreta Lamargese)  
2014 *Athletic Valentin*, Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris, FR (Curated by CURA Magazine)  
2014 *Degeneration of Painting*, Fondazione 107, Torino, IT  
2014 *Gang Signs*, Future Gallery, Berlin, DE  
2014 *Bien ou Bien?*, Mon Cheri, Brussels, BE  
2014 *Different Things from Different Places*, Gallerie Annarumma, Naples, IT  
2014 *Interferenze*, Galleria Massimodeluca, Venice, IT  
2014 *UNTITLED NY* at The Independent, New York, US (Curated by Brad Troemel and Lauren Christiansen)  
2013 *Grid Systems 2013*, Art Metrople, Toronto, CA  
2013 *The Coffin Factory*, Toronto, CA (Curated by Manden Murphy)  
2013 *SPIT, www.Odx.org* - The Leslie Spit, Toronto, CA (Curated by Aleksander Hardashnakov)  
2013 *From The Cloud*, Video in Cyberspace (Screening), Brooklyn, US (Curated by

Faith Holland)

2013 *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Vista-Suite – Elephant and Castle Shopping Center, London, UK (Curated by Bethan Moonan-Howard and Frances Malthouse)  
2013 *From The Cloud*, Video in Cyberspace (Screening), Providence, US  
2012 *BYOB Glasgow*, The Glue Factory, Glasgow, Scotland, UK  
2012 *Grunge Texture*, XPACE Cultural Center, Toronto, CA (Curated by Stephanie Davidson)  
2012 *BYOB II*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, CA

#### Curatorial Projects

2011 *FREE 4 ALL* – Barmecidal Projects in collaboration with Jillian Kay Ross  
– <http://barmecidalprojects.com>

#### Selected Press

2013 “Toronto-Based Artists You Should Know” by Emily Kuriyama for Complex Mag  
2013 “Meet 2013 GradEx Medal Winner, Mike Goldby (Integrated Media)” OCADU Home Page  
2013 Dust Magazine Blog Feature  
2013 “Review: Premier Life at Tomorrow Gallery” by Lucas Soi for San Francisco Arts Quarterly  
2011 “Why Are There No Great Women Net Artists” by Jennifer Chan for the June 2011 Issue of Pool  
2011 “Duchamp’s Ideal Children: Internet Art, the Avant-Garde and the Readymade” by Ginger Scott for the June Issue of Pool  
2011 “Curating the Zero World: Barmecidal Projects” at Motherboard.tv  
2011 “Barmecidal Projects: FREE 4 ALL” by Natalie Saltiel for Rhizome  
2011 “Barmecidal Projects and the Paradox of the Virtual Gallery” by Nicholas O’Brien for Bad At Sports (Includes Interview)  
2011 Blog Feature by DIS Magazine

#### Awards

2013 OCAD University Integrated Media Medal Winner  
2013 Nora E. Vaughn Award  
2013 Project 31 Integrated Media Award  
2013 First Capital Realty Award  
2012 Project 31 Integrated Media Faculty Scholarship

#### Collections

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU  
First Capital Realty, Toronto, CA