

ugh

Ugh

: *“It fades and fades and fades.”*



HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN

Richard Bevan

PREVIEW
23 FEBRUARY 6PM

EXHIBITION
24 FEB — 14 APR 2023

In the Lost and Found

The phrase "It fades and fades and fades" appears towards the end of Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse* (1977). If, as language, it feels to approximate a sigh, that's because we've probably been there, where Barthes was: caring deeply and helplessly about something that couldn't last, because almost nothing does; perhaps a little consoled that emotional pain doesn't persist forever either, and if it doesn't vanish it does at least shapeshift. When another R.B., Richard Bevan, takes that linguistic fragment and amplifies it, presenting it for inspection on the window of Hidde van Seggelen's gallery, it's accompanied by the word "ugh", three times, in differentiated and antic fonts. If "It fades and fades and fades", unmoored from context, has the rhythmic intensity of a pop song lyric, it's as if others—us perhaps included—are singing along to life's bittersweet choruses. A unison "ugh", you might imagine, would also lighten the moment.

Barthes, in that book, was concerned with how you find a communicable language for the weightless feelings that our lives often seem to hang upon, how artfully you might preserve them. Emotions are abstract, so eloquent substitutions are required. Bevan's exhibition here—multipart and diverse where previous shows have been tight and economical, though equally concerned with how seemingly small gestures can ramify, expand, touch—takes that search for a vocabulary of inwardness, and for a kind of permanence in the face of the endlessly temporary, into the field of the visual.

Here, for example, is a looped film of a seashell, a bit bashed about with age, continually rotating on a little turntable. Set into a chunk of concrete, this was a doorstep used by Bevan's grandmother; now it's an heirloom. (Before that, presumably, it was a sea creature's home.) Someone passed, faded out of this life, but an object—visually interesting enough from every angle to deserve this treatment—remains. At the close of the video, a small black cat barges in, lucky charm and comic relief and signal of an ending, before everything loops round again, is kept going. The shell isn't the person, but it's a bridge to her

memory; and being remembered, for many, is the closest thing to immortality we have. Looking at this, it doesn't matter whether, specifically, you inherited a shell from your grandmother. We've all experienced a version of these dynamics; we all know a version of the tune.

In the exhibition's other video—around an hour long, but its development is so glacial that it might be mistaken for a lightbox photo—a cold can of the Japanese sports drink Pocari Sweat slowly, yes, 'sweats', beads of condensation evaporating in unpredictable blink-and-you'll-miss-it style. Given another context, this image might register differently, but here it feels like a body, and the whole murmurs of entropy. Watching it, nevertheless, which places you insistently in time, is a reminder that you are alive, here, using some of your precious span on this. It's meditative, and outwardly modest, even edged with ridiculousness. But it also scales up, as you watch and think. If, relatedly—considering that even inanimate things can loop back to the body, to fragility—you're alerted to the fact that the gallery owner is wearing an unusual, damaged-looking gold ring, another nested narrative arises. This wedding ring belonged to Bevan's great-grandmother and came down in turn to his grandfather, a miner, who wore it continually until he lost it, and later found it in his coal fire, where it had suffered heat damage. After his passing, Bevan had several cast copies made, and usually wears his: an aide-memoire across the generations for him, a reminder for the rest of us that the world is full of this tender, unimpeachable sentiment: people holding on, often via keepsakes, to those they've lost. As a species, it's one of our best, most commendable, most plangently involuntary qualities.

Objects don't usually pass through this life unscathed, and nor do people—fragile, living, sweating people. A photograph depicts Bevan's own arm, on which is a scribbly tattoo templated by his daughter, aged five. Bevan then had a bike accident and broke his wrist. The spectral image now points back doubly: to a time of innocence and freewheeling doodling on his daughter's part, and to a pre-scarred Bevan. In the gallery, redoubling the breakage, the before-and-after, the photograph is

wrapped around a corner, angled on the break. (The wobbly font for this text was handmade by Bevan as he recovered.) The pain, evidence clarifies, was productive. His young daughter contributes to two other works here: a pink sweatshirt—note the formal link between sweat and sweatshirts—imprinted with a block of text that she drew, and which she called at the time, with an ontological precocity destined to be replaced soon enough with other ways of seeing reality, "a drawing of a big sentence". And she appears in another photograph: lying on Bevan's studio floor, reading one of his artist's books, and dressed as a Disney princess. Though she's now older and would likely be mortified to see herself in this now-discarded phase, Bevan wanted to preserve it, too, the innocence and excitement, before it faded.

That photograph, in its goofy coloured frame—part of Bevan's countermanding and soothing use of comedy—will stick around. All of us have our photographs, of course—that's part of what makes the sentiment behind this one so sharable. But most snapshots don't actively vibrate with the awareness that the captured moment couldn't last. What art can do, in transmuting the personal into or towards the universal, in twining imagery and ideas and feelings, is operate as a kind of balm of vast problem shared—espousing that our inability to preserve ourselves or anyone or anything else is where the hurtful beauty is. If we keep transitoriness to mind, accept that life comes bundled with pain, we can appreciate those we love while we have them, honour them when they're gone. And a few of us can take those hard-to-grasp, hard-to-articulate feelings and make something like a legible, embracing system. The invitation card for Bevan's show features an antique image of 'Married Couple Rocks', or Meoto Iwa: yoked-together rock formations off Ise Bay in Japan. They're conjoined by ropes of rice straw that must be periodically renewed or the connection is lost. In the context of this exhibition and its own sedulous renewing of bonds, that metaphor needn't be spelt out. Pretty much everything fades and fades and fades, but we can intervene. And where we can't—ugh—that's just how it is.

—Martin Herbert

Richard Bevan

Born 1980, Maesteg (UK). Currently based in London.

Richard gained his BA in Fine Art from Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff (2002) and gained his MA in Fine Art Media at the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2008). He was then an Associate Artist at LUX, London 2012-2013.

In 2003 he won the Young Artist Scholarship at the National Eisteddfod of Wales Montgomeryshire, and 2016 won the Gold Medal in Fine Art at the National Eisteddfod of Wales Monmouthshire.

Recent presentations of work include solo exhibition with Hidde Van Seggelen, Hamburg (2023), TEFAF, Maastricht (2022), PAN Art Fair (2021), Amsterdam Tokyo Art Book Fair (2021), ASP, ICA, London (2020), Little Vehicle, Super Gallery, Nagoya (2020), The Gallery In The Expanded Field, blip blip blip, Moscow (2020), Solo show, Cairn Gallery, Pittenweem (2019), Maquettes, The Block, London (2018), A Portrait of Beth Harmon for a Screen Play, Tender Books, London (2018), MULTIPLEXING, LUX, Cineworld, Glasgow (2018), Chess Club, Closeup Film Centre, London (2018), Utrecht, Tokyo (2016), LIKE GOLDEN PETALS SCATTERING, Tenderbooks, London (2016), Off Print, Tate Modern, London (2016).

He has been awarded, The Elephant Trust Award (2017), ACE Air Residency, Printed Matter, New York (2016), Artist International Development Fund Award, Arts Council England (2016), Gold Medal in Fine Art National Eisteddfod of Wales, Newport (2016), Film Commission, O:4W, Cardiff (2012), Film Commission, Cell Projects, London (2011), New Work Commission, CoExist Gallery, Southend-on-Sea (2011), Film Commission, g39, Cardiff (2009).

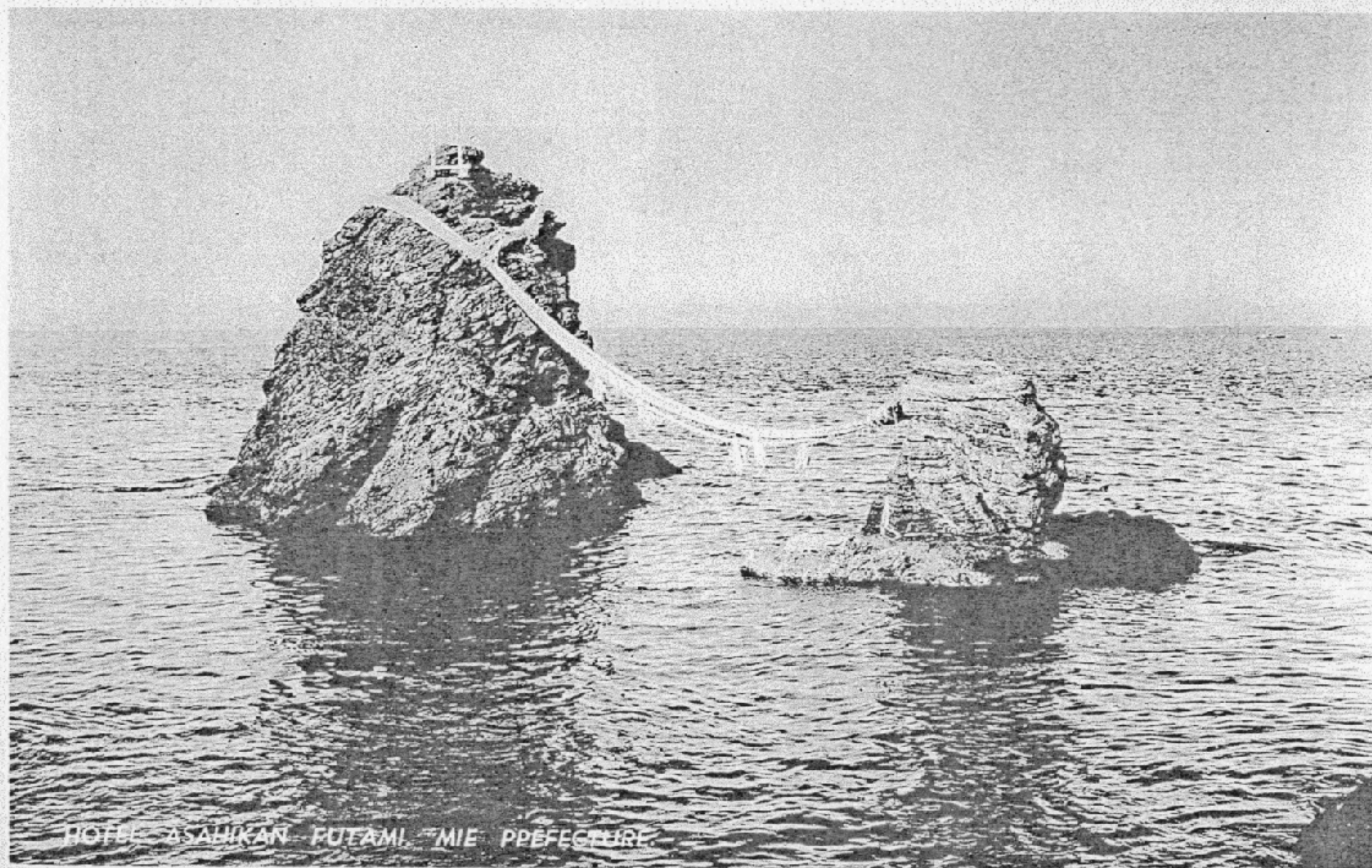
'It fades and fades and fades. bgh, bgh, bgh'

Installation view

HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN, Hamburg

24 FEB - 14 APR 2023





HOTEL ASAHIKAN FUTAMI MIE PREFECTURE

二見浦 夫婦岩

THE COUPLED ROCK IN FUTAMI BEACH

天皇陛下三重縣御巡幸記念
昭和二十六年十一月二十四日(御駐泊)

伊勢二見浦 朝日館

'It fades and fades and fades, ugh, ugh, ugh'

Invitation card

HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN, Hamburg

24 FEB - 14 APR 2023

No title 'Pocari'
4k Video
57 minutes and 54 seconds
2023





No title 'Pocari'
4k Video
57 minutes and 54 seconds
2023



'It fades and fades and fades. bgh, bgh, bgh'
Installation view
HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN, Hamburg
24 FEB - 14 APR 2023

No title 'ring'
Ring (in gold, silver and bronze) to be worn by gallerist,
vinyl text set in 'Radius Left'
2022



Hide wears the ring

No title 'ring'

Ring (in gold, silver and bronze) to be worn by gallerist,
vinyl text set in 'Radix Left'

2022



No title 'ring'

Ring (in gold, silver and bronze) to be worn by gallerist,
vinyl text set in 'Radius Left'
2022



No title 'ring'
Ring (in gold, silver and bronze) to be worn by gallerist,
vinyl text set in 'Radius Left'
2022

No title 'studio Princess'
C-type from iPhone photograph in yellow frame
50 x 70cm
2023





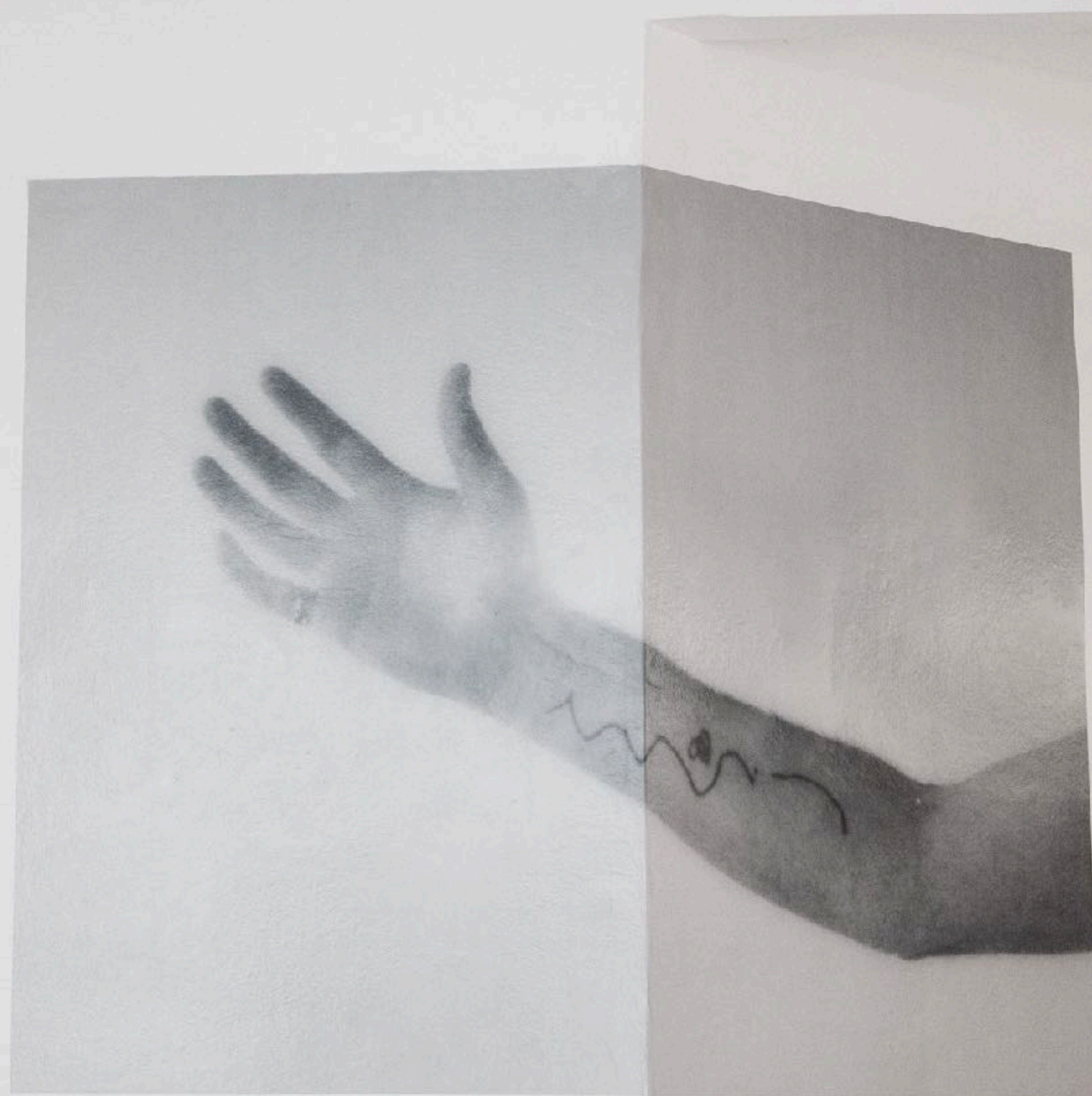
No title 'studio Princess'
C-type from iPhone photograph in yellow frame
50 x 70cm
2023



'It fades and fades and fades. bgh, bgh, bgh'
Installation view
HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN, Hamburg
24 FEB - 14 APR 2023



Drawing of a big sentence (sweater)
Screen print on fabric
Available in sizes small, medium and large
2022



No title (Tattoo With broken Wrist)
Folded photograph
Dimensions variable
2023

'It fades and fades and fades. bgh, bgh, bgh'
Installation view
HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN, Hamburg
24 FEB - 14 APR 2023





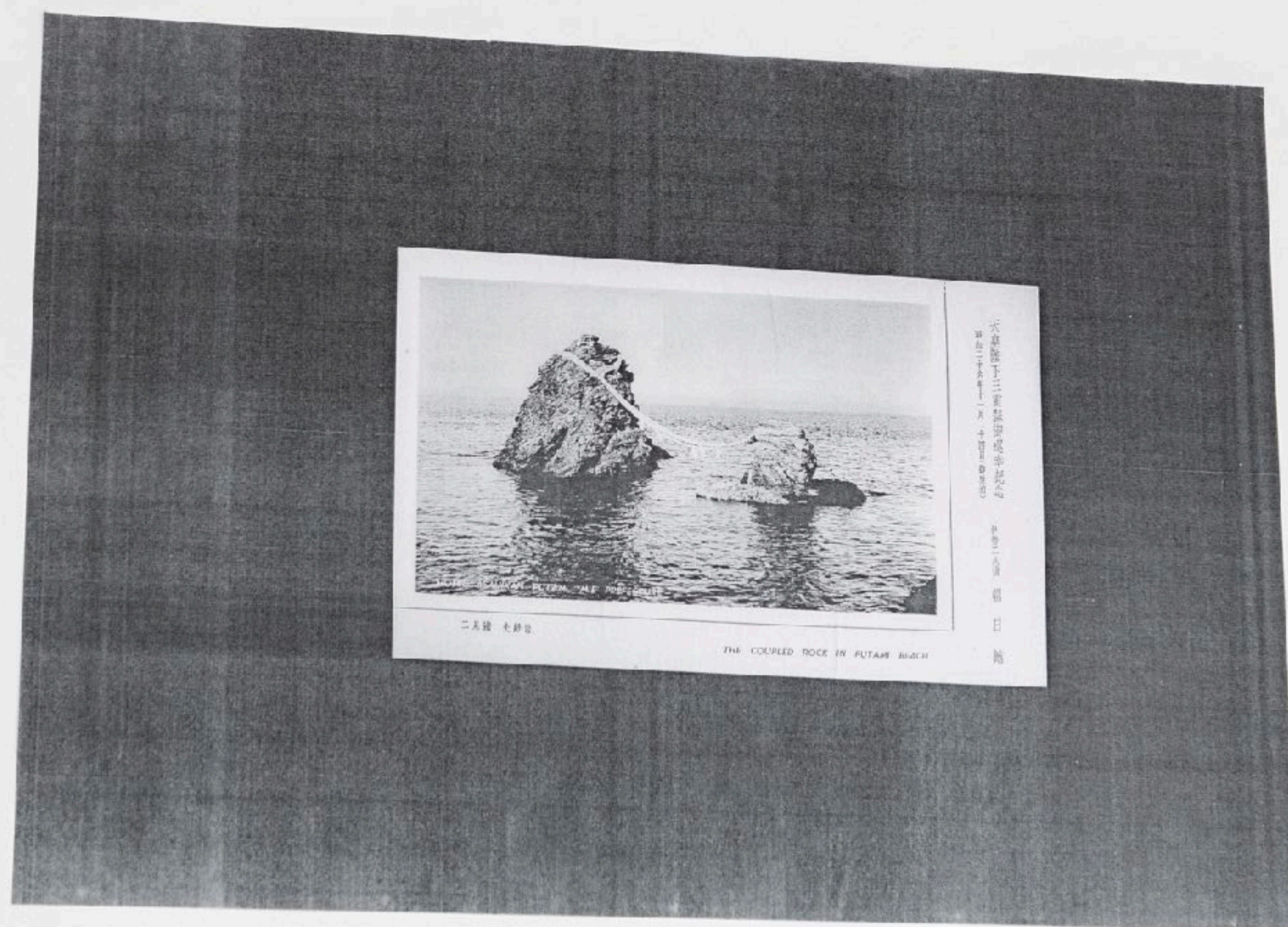
No title (shell)
4k video to be displayed on CRT monitor
10 minutes 33 seconds
2022



No title (shell)
4k video to be displayed on CRT monitor
10 minutes 33 seconds
2022



No title (shell)
4k video to be displayed on CRT monitor
10 minutes 33 seconds
2022



No title (coupled rock)
Fly poster of photocopied postcard
Dimensions variable
2023



'It fades and fades and fades. bgh, bgh, bgh'
Vinyl on gallery window
Dimensions variable
2023

'It fades and fades and fades. ugh, ugh, ugh'
Vinyl on gallery window
Dimensions variable
2023





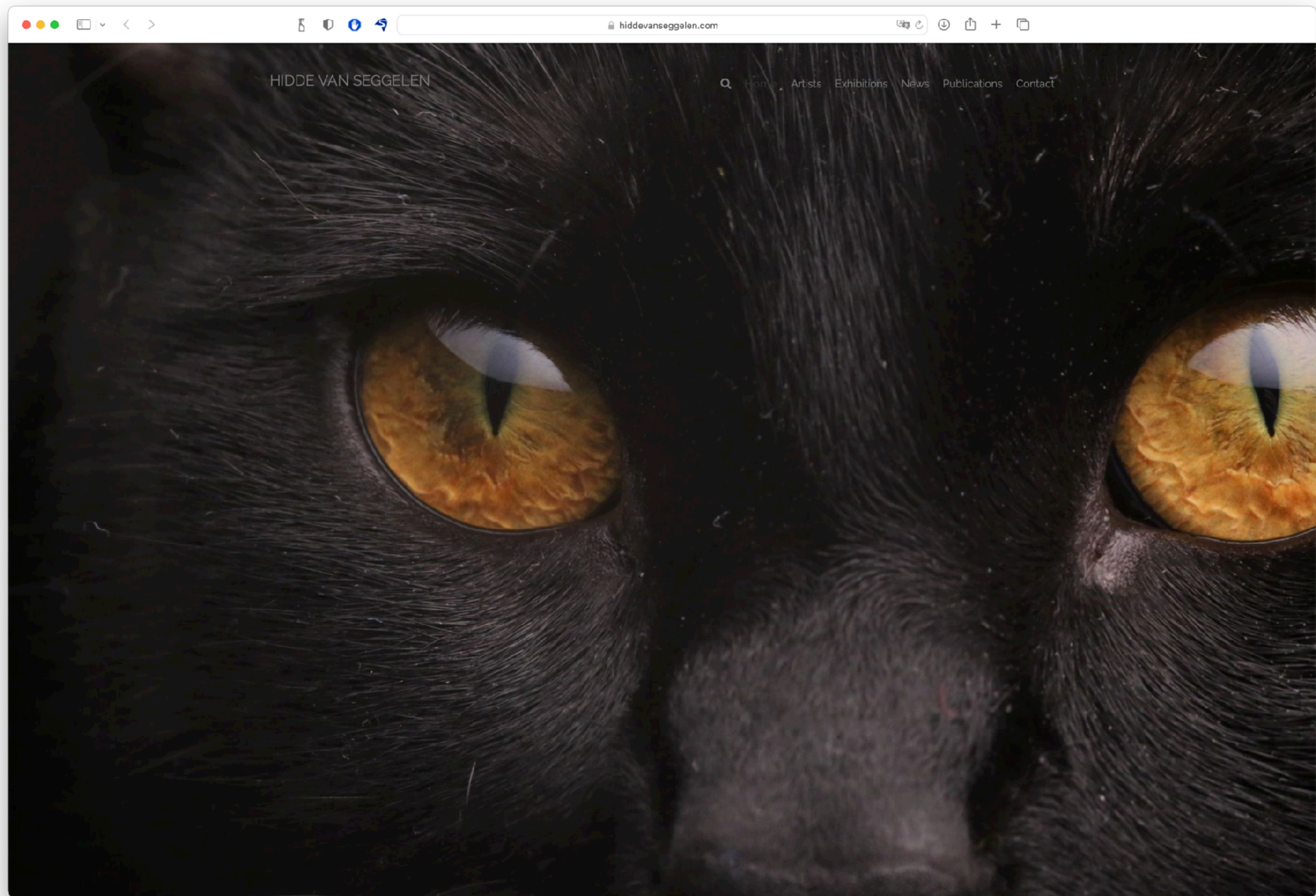
No title (black cat)
Fly poster on Mittelweg, Hamburg
Dimensions variable
2023

Radius Left

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 " ? ! .

Radius Right

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v w x y z
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 " ? ! .



No title (black cat)
Gallery website during exhibition
2023

HIDDE VAN SEGGELEN

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