

Camilla Wills, *The path*

5 September – 9 November 2025

“You are after wisdom and it’s crushing.”<sup>1</sup> There is progression in this place, but no progress – a sequence of steps rather than always moving forward. Starting in the first gallery of Kunsthalle Winterthur, hundreds of containers line the walls, displayed on a continuous acrylic glass shelf, bearing pots filled with paint and collaged with the printed titles: “Camera” / “Months months months months” / “daddy no caps” / “Prizes”. In the time of making the show, Wills emptied and cleared out all the paint she had in her studio. Before content is pre-content, Wills says. Pre-content is the level of speaking that is like milk. Getting to this level could be like trying to get back to a condition of childhood or the formation of a sexual impulse or witnessing a death. To a state of being that is open to the world but not informed by society. A monochrome painting cut in two hangs in the first space too. It stands for what the pots are not doing: paint unleashed into form. The pots withhold this release, their labels a proposition of what might materialise.

*Journalism* are the second axis in the exhibition and are collages featuring journalists with obscured eyes. Sylvia von Harden was a journalist during the Weimar Republic, famously portrayed by Otto Dix, who shows her smoking, drinking and wearing a monocle, her features distorted and exaggerated. Marie Colvin was a *Sunday Times* war correspondent who bore witness to several conflicts in the 1990s and early 2000s. She lost an eye while reporting on the Sri Lankan civil war and was killed in Syria in 2012. There is a double portrait of her. Julian Assange, WikiLeaks founder and an Australian investigative journalist, is shown winking through a prison van window on arriving at Westminster court in 2019. The journalists seem to stand for those who put conflict into words. One eye suggests narrative and experience, it suggests having seen something real. The second eye is turned inwards, away from the world. The show carries with it the contemporary experience of constant wars and their mediation alongside art’s production. Many of us, Wills included, grew up in an era in which coverage of war is delivered by a media infrastructure that blends reportage with targeted advertising, celebrity news, seasonal product reviews, relationship advice etc. These works seem ambivalent about vision as

the primary source of clarity, and question the assumption that what is seen can offer any kind of guarantee in visual art.

Wills’ works are labyrinthine puzzles on the impossible identification with an image and its label. They are about belief and its undoing. Collage and sequencing are the prominent methods in her artwork, as she deals with what is already there and intensifies its core expression. Sometimes this method will reshuffle meaning, but it is not predictive. It aims to rupture visual and linguistic motifs, by breaking up established representations and holding them in a suspended state in order to free up space to think again in less familiar ways. Collage is the historical medium of things that don’t add up; it can turn recognition into misrecognition in an instant. Wills asks, why is it that feeling torn up, vibrating, not whole often seems closer to a truth? She is interested in the strange fact of an artwork, and where the energy of conviction and drive of authorship come from, and what pulls these actions away from the common, everyday realm of the anonymous. The works rely on one another to dissolve unified readings and instead build up definition that does not originate solely in one work by one artist. *The path* resembles speaking in a conversation.

1 Fanny Howe, *Holy Smoke*, originally published 1979

Camilla Wills, (\*1985) is a British artist and publisher based in London. Together with Eleanor Ivory Weber, Wills founded Divided Publishing in 2019. They publish artist writing, critical theory, philosophy, poetry and fiction. The aim is to actively and broadly distribute discourses and literature emerging in the art world and academia in paperback form. Wills’ artistic practice operates on an editorial plane that is similar to her work as a publisher.

Thank you to dépendance, Brussels for their support.