

Bradley Ertaskiran

Margaux Williamson
Public House
March 13 to May 3, 2025

In Margaux Williamson's paintings, delicious and romantic bits of life are strewn about the canvas—beer cans, a moody forest, a black river—often ranging in and out of focus, in an overall effect that is richly chaotic. Looking at Williamson's assemblage of seemingly dislocated objects, we seem to get in our own way, trying to assert a sense of order, recall a memory, or ascribe a plot. But there are no stories here. These painted things are not *hers*, not like a magpie collecting trophies. And they are not *ours*, for they are unbound to our realities, visual, narrative, or otherwise. What is foregrounded is the paintingness of painting: the canvases' flatness, their rigidity.

Within the limitations of the frame, Williamson flips between perspectives; lopsided planes and skewed surfaces create the sensation of being suspended between multiple points of view. She paints what is around her, from one day to the next. One canvas centres on a window in a courtyard; it is both day and night, we are both inside and out. How did we get here?

Behind these choices lie Williamson's fascination with time: how does one describe water without attaching measures of moment and place? Without the glimmers of sunshine on a flowing stream, or the pale hum of an uninterrupted swimming pool, without the pulse of a rising and falling tide? Maybe only pieces of water will do.

Her paintings have their own rules; they insist on their own timeline and path, retaining echoes of passing through many spaces without being limited to any. This is not only a world that is flipped about, but many worlds at once. It might be tempting to try to string these suspended moments into a rational whole, but the paintings offer us another possibility: repose and surrender in the glorious, bewildering, moving absence of linear time.

Margaux Williamson (b. 1976, Pittsburgh, USA) currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada. Her work has been presented in recent solo exhibitions at White Cube (Hong Kong); Esker Foundation (Calgary); Thunder Bay Art Gallery, as well as in group exhibitions at Bradley Ertaskiran (Montreal), Goldfinch (Chicago), James Cohan (New York). Williamson has a forthcoming solo exhibition at MOCA Toronto in April 2025. Her work can be found in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg), Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Bruce Bailey Collection, Longlati Foundation (Shanghai), Tumurun Museum (Indonesia), and the Australia China Art Foundation. Her first book of paintings, *I Could See Everything*, was published by Coach House Press in 2014, alongside shows at the Mulherin+Pollard Gallery (New York), and Frith Street Gallery (London). Her feature-length film, *Teenager Hamlet*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and is archived on UbuWeb. Her work has been covered by Frieze, Artforum, the New York Times, Momus, Ocula, the Believer, The Globe and Mail, Vogue and others.

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