

Continental Colors at Noysky Projects

Exploring the symbolic power
of color as expressed in Western
literature and industrial design



Willem Besselink, foreground, and Carsten Becker

Opening reception

Sunday, July 10, 2-5pm

On view

July 10 - 20, 2022

Exhibition hours

Thursday-Saturday, noon-5pm
and by appointment

Images and press info

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JP-7hW85UJpiWdKXPUMbTxZwSy1HAwYc?usp=sharing>

Press inquires

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — Noysky Projects presents *Continental Colors*, an exhibition by [Carsten Becker](#) (Berlin) and [Willem Besselink](#) (Rotterdam, NL) that explores the symbolic power of color as expressed through European and American literature and industrial design. The exhibition pairs [Frontviews](#) collective (Berlin) with Noysky Projects (LA) as part [B-LA Connect](#), a week-long cultural exchange between Los Angeles and Berlin-based collectives, hosted by project spaces around LA.

For the exhibition, the two artists explore the regulations, norms and systems of color: Becker compares DIN and RAL, European color matching systems used for pigments, with the classic American military hue, “Olive Drab”; while Besselink investigates the imaginary colors mentioned in literature from the Golden State. Both artists decontextualize color from their historic, literary, and emotional backgrounds in search of the patterns of logic, allowing the viewer to experience underlying concepts behind the use of color.

Becker’s interest in color standardization came through extensive research into totalitarian systems and transgenerational trauma, specifically with regard to the difficult reckoning of his grandfather’s role as a Nazi during World War II. In his exploration of DIN and RAL catalogs from 1917-1925, Becker focused on standardized colors, like “Dunkelgelb” (Dark yellow), introduced by the German armed forces in 1943, and “Olive Drab”, the camouflage color of the U.S. Armed Forces, which helped to shape their countries’ respective identities during WWII.

In his series *Romankleuren (Novel colors)*, Besselink processes colors mentioned in novels written and set in Los Angeles. He uses self-created sets of rules as vehicles to make them visually tangible. His drawings result into a coded network of colored lines, whose angles change with each subsequent chapter. In his paintings, Besselink translates the poetics of imaginary colors into quantifiable color blocks. Orange ribbons, derived from Karen Tei Yamashita’s novel *Tropic of Orange* (1997), span the exhibition space and superimpose the architectural system.



Carsten Becker, *Kreuzgelenk (Reinorange)*, 2021, 23 ¼ x 33 inches, archival pigment print



Willem Besselink, *The White Boy Shuffle—Paul Beatty*, left, *Golden State—Ben H. Winters*, *Tropic of Orange—Karen Tei Yamashita*, 2021, 19 ½ x 27 ½ inches (each)

In *Continental Colors*, Becker and Besselink dissect the symbolic power of colors as represented in historical documents and literature. By arranging hues into new forms and media, they offer unfiltered access to the works and their inherent systems: In Becker's *Reinorange (Pure orange)*, a seemingly cheery mechanical joint has insidious undertones, given the color and standardized parts were both used by the German military police. In Besselink's drawings, the optimistic radiance of golden lines turns brittle when the viewer realizes that Ben H. Winters' novel *Golden State* (2018) is one about a dystopian surveillance state.

About Frontviews

Frontviews is a group of international artists and theorists. Based on flexible collaborations we develop concepts of contemporary art in Europe. The initiative was founded in 2012 and is registered in Berlin as a non-profit association for arts and culture. Three principal points shape their agenda:

1. The detection of acute tendencies in contemporary art
2. The ongoing quest to initiate collective cultural encounters
3. To develop conversations and exchange with artists from other countries, particularly those in Europe

About the artists

Carsten Becker (b. 1973, Würzburg, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne (1994-99) and is a two-time winner of the Deutscher Studienpreis (Körber Foundation). His works have been shown nationally and internationally at Architekturzentrum Wien, Kunstquartier Bethanien Berlin, Palazzo delle Stelline Milano, Daily Lazy Projects Athens and Paradiso Amsterdam.

Willem Besselink (b. 1980, Venray, Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam, Netherlands. He studied at the Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam; Freie Kunst, Universität der Künste, Berlin; Humboldt University, Berlin; and Academy Minerva, Groningen, NL. His works have been shown in Germany, The Netherlands, Russia, as well as Los Angeles and New York.