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## STANDARD COLORS / COLORS STANDARD

Jordi Colomer

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18.12.2021 – 26.02.2022

**Opening December 18th, 2021, from 12:00.**

STANDARD COLORS / COLORS STANDARD presents a selection of unpublished works, photographs, and videos, made by Jordi Colomer over the last three years. The walls of Mexico City, a secondary road in Chile, windmills in La Mancha, and an industrial zone in Barcelona are the scattered settings for these modest individual actions where spaces are transformed temporarily by the use of color as a mediating element.

Jordi Colomer aims to outwit the authority of codes and representations by using simple pieces of paper; classrooms move to the street, traffic distorts, and through concrete actions, myths find their alternatives defying standard models.

Regarding the origin of these works, Colomer pinpoints a visit to the house-studio of the architect Barragán in Mexico City –a paradigmatic example of the use of color in architecture– and the encounter with the geometric paintings of Josef Albers hanging on its walls. The abstractions by Albers present at the house, belong to the series *Homage to the Square* and it was the German artist himself who, on one of the many trips that Josef and Annie Albers made to Mexico, fascinated by pre-Columbian art, offered them as a gift to his friend Barragán. The Mexican architect made reproductions of the paintings through mechanical impressions, perhaps to resize them and scale the images to the room accordingly. Even though the copies are displayed in the house, the original paintings remain hidden in the archive. As a pedagogue and theorist, this use of printed paper was also familiar to Albers who proposes its use instead of the mixture of paint in "Interaction of Color" (1963), one of the most important books on the

study of color and a classic of art education. The book provides exercises around the principles of color such as relativity, intensity, temperature, or optical illusions; exercises that Colomer himself had practiced as a student.

After visiting Barragán's house-studio, Colomer proposes to reinterpret the "Interaction of Color" exercises freely, this time outside the classrooms, in the context of the street. For this, he stocked with colored construction paper found in the store closest to his house, with a unique chromatic repertoire popularly used in Mexico for signs, advertisements, or decoration. The new exercises were improvised during walks in which pieces of paper were placed against colored walls. In the photographs, captured by auto-timer, the presence of the artist participating in the process records the will to silently integrate into the city, fantasizing about an occupation, an unavoidable task, a work syndrome. These images, which make up the **Standard MEX** (2019) series, show a chain of random encounters that contaminate the abstract, purely optical exercises, with doses of urban reality. It is also a proposal for a color chart that investigates a certain stereotype of "the Mexican".

This questioning about the construction of imagery taking the city as the territory to invent solitary occupations, also appears in the series **El Dorado** (2019). Made during the same period in Mexico City, this work also responds to a dynamic of exploration of the city's susceptibility for diverse interpretations: "a foreigner" –the artist himself– begins the search for El Dorado, or "Lo Dorado" (the golden), this time with tools of our day. There is nothing heroic about the expedition that consists simply of locating the places that bear that same name on a digital map of the city, continuing on the indicated route, and photographing them in full light: making them visible. In this case, El Dorado is not a single place, it is plural and eccentric, concrete, humble. The richness that its name evokes in the various settings seen in the photos –party rooms, picnic areas, restaurants– lies in its virtues of convening, gathering, and celebrating.



EUROPA! 2021



*Celeste Payne / No Pare, 2020*

Colomer lived in Chile for several weeks during the 2020 COVID19 confinement, where he continued to work on the use of color and its perception beyond the optical. The images that compose ***Celeste Payne / No Pare*** (2020) show a completely different space from that of the Mexican city and take us to a road under construction adjacent to the house he was staying. Just like in Mexico City, the pieces of construction paper were purchased at the nearest store, however this time they offered a different color chart, a unique "Standard Chile". In this case, the interaction was carried out with the traffic signs dominated by the color orange. The medium for the colors must now be a body, logically that of the person who lives in the nearest house, "el tío Juan", who thus becomes, through color, a sort of burlesque authority that dominates the space. A celestial blue is added to the orange paper dress that camouflages him, one that is difficult to decode by passing motorists. In the Mapudungún language *Payne* means celestial.

A similar strategy is followed by the works already carried out back in Barcelona. In ***RED RPC*** (2021) we meet again with the artist, this time static and firm, in a pose that alludes to military training, in a disciplined attitude. Here the red paper

has not only become the dress that covers the body of the central character but has also become a national flag and flagpole; all in one. The setting shows the facades of closed industrial buildings, workplaces on pause.

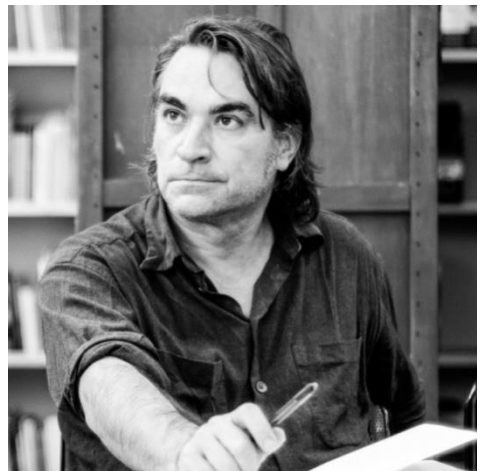
Similarly, the video ***EUROPA!*** (2021) begins in an industrial zone where the character\*, this time in motion, takes on a superhuman scale. His meandering, starry blue dress evokes Mickey Mouse as the sorcerer's apprentice, a circus character, or the giants of popular festivals. Nevertheless, his activity gives him away as the embodiment of the European Union. The stilted colossus dressed in blue strolls around the streets posting signs with the colors of his flag –blue and yellow– between warehouses and abandoned corners. Nobody seems to pay much attention to him. He wanders between cars and architectures that show his disproportionate height, greeting passersby, sharing a cigarette, amidst the enthusiasm and disappointment of being ignored. At the end of the tour, we find him playing ball with a group of children dressed in white, under a splendid Sunday sun.

Finally, the two photographs of the *Alfabet* project included: ***Alfabet (X)*** and ***Alfabet (doble X)*** (2021) transport us to the mills of La Mancha. These two images announce the first chapter of a larger project where Colomer will develop a new investigation around architecture linked to fiction. The mills, the typography, and the character that conform the scene refer us to white, to the non-color made up of all the colors. These three elements, in turn, draw the letter "X" which acts as a footnote. The "X" refers to an indefinite out-of-field, an unknown: the giant's arms that reflect the blades of the windmill as in an infinite mirror, the woman's body, the letter "X", and so on x times.

\* Europe is portrayed by Guillem Barbosa.

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Jordi Colomer (Barcelona, 1962) works in the field of sculpture, installations, photography and video art. All of his production is tinged with a marked performative sense with which he puts to the test the usual uses of architecture and urban space. Colomer is interested in the city's system of representations and our ability to subvert them. Underlying themes such as nomadism, the peripheral, the popular imagination, humor, community, the provisional, fiction and utopia emerge from this investigation.



He was the representative for the Spanish pavilion of the 57 Venezia Biennale (2017) curated by Manuel Segade, with the project *¡Únete! Join Us!* His work has been shown in several museums, art centers and biennales such as Museo Reina Sofia and Matadero (Madrid), Jeu de Paume and Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Belvedere 21 (Vienna), Bronx Museum of the Arts (New York), Arte Alameda (México), Manifesta 10 (St. Petersburg), Manifesta 12 (Palermo), 7 Bienal del Mercosul (Porto Alegre), MAAT (Lisbon), Bozar and Argos (Brussels) or the ZKU, Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (Berlin).