



## ***Bête noire***

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In western European culture Black has powerful and contradictory associations, often purposefully at play at once. Black is the colour of mourning and loss and recollection, and yet it is also the colour of restraint, censoriousness and ascetic withdrawal from the world. Black is both a remembrance band and a censor's bar.

Late in life Francisco Goya painted what are known as his *Pinturas Negras*. These works reflect on the fate of humanity in a dark light of war. The paintings depict poverty, illness, madness and night creatures originally rendered directly on the walls of his house for his own eyes. The (academic) title of the group is both physically and thematically descriptive. War was a kind of night.

Recent development of the absolute black pigment, Vantblack and its commercial appropriation by a British artist reiterates structures of commodity and ownership in the art production and reminds us *what is unseen*.

Black is a veil. Unable to see, we want nothing more than to see what is happening. Unseen we can do as we please.

Black is the colour of new technology and its clinical[im]permanence, a glossy black screen. Black signifies the activities of night.

Black is also deeply spatial and we use imaginative soundings to plumb its limit.

Black is the universe and the holes in its fabric.

***Bête Noire*** reflects on some conceptual options and opportunities around the creative use of colour black (and de-saturation) in the context of contemporary art practices.

Curated By SCAN Spanish Contemporary Art Network

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