

Winter 2005

# Theory of Colors

by  
Mercedes Roffé

*Translated from the Spanish by Margaret Carson*



belladonna\* books

458 Lincoln Place, Suite 4B Brooklyn, NY 11238

[www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com](http://www.belladonnaseries.blogspot.com)

deadly nightshade, a cardiac and respiratory stimulant, having purplish-red flowers and black berries





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belladonna\* production and design, Bill Mazza.  
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belladonna\* is a reading series that promotes the work of women writers who  
are adventurous, experimental, politically involved, multi-form, multi-cultural,  
multi-gendered, impossible to define, delicious to talk about, unpredictable,  
dangerous with language.

Rachel Levitsky and Erica Kaufman, editors, belladonna\* books.  
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# belladonna\* catalog

## 2000

1. Mary Burger, *Eating Belief* OOP
2. Camille Roy, *Dream Girls* OOP
3. Cecilia Vicuña, *Bloodskirt*,  
trans. Rosa Alcalá OOP
4. Fanny Howe, parts from *Indivisible*
5. Eleni Sikelianos, from *The Book of Jon*
6. Laura Mullen, *Translation Series* OOP
7. Beth Murray, *12 Horrors* OOP
8. Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Audience* OOP
9. Laura Wright, *Everything Automatic* OOP

## 2002

21. Deborah Richards, *Put A Feather In It*
22. Norma Cole, *BURNS*
23. Jocelyn Saidenberg, *Dusky*
24. Gail Scott, *Bottoms Up* OOP
25. Carla Harryman, *DIMBLUE* and *Why Yell*
26. Anne Waldman, *[THINGS] SEEN/UNSEEN* OOP
27. kari edwards, *a diary of lies* OOP
28. Bhanu Kapil Rider, from *The Wolf Girls of Midnapure* OOP
29. Rosmarie Waldrop, *Trace Histories* OOP
30. Tina Darragh, from *rule of dumbs*
31. Chris Tysh, *Mother, I*
32. Jennifer Moxley, *The Occasion*
33. Zhang Er, *Cross River . Pick Lotus*
34. Tonya Foster, *A Swarm Of Bees In High Court*
35. Lauren Gudath, *Animal & Robot*
36. Alice Notley, *IPHIGENIA*

## 2004

53. Joanna Fuhrman, *Belladonna\* Moraine*
54. Nada Gordon, *Song of My Ownself*
55. Catherine Daly, *Surplice*
56. Caroline Bergvall, *GONG*
57. María Negroni, *Art and Fugue*
58. Lourdes Vázquez, *May the transvestites of my island who tap their heels*
59. Belladonna\* Bilingue: *Womens Work In Translation (vol. 1)*
60. Belladonna\* Bilingue: *Womens Work In Translation (vol. 1)*
61. Jaimy Gordon, *A Month of Love*
62. Rachel Daley, *You and Me Story*
63. Latasha N. Nevada Diggs, *Manuel is destroying my bathroom...*
64. Joan Retallack, *THE REINVENTION OF TRUTH*
65. Renee Gladman, *Untitled, Woman on Ground*
66. Nicole Brossard, *Matter Harmonious Still Maneuvering*

## 2001

10. Lisa Jarnot, *Nine Songs* OOP
11. Kathleen Fraser, *Soft Pages*
12. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Draft 43: Gap*
13. Nicole Brossard, *Le Cou de Lee Miller/The Neck of Lee Miller* OOP
14. Lee Ann Brown, *The 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time/Reverse Mermaid* OOP
15. Adeena Karasick, *The Arugula Fugues VII-VIII* OOP
16. Aja Couchois Duncan, *Commingled:Sight*
17. Lila Zemborain, *PAMPA* OOP
18. Cheryl Pallant, *Spontaneities*
19. Lynne Tillman, chapters from *Weird Fucks* and "Dead Talk" OOP
20. Abigail Child, *Artificial Memory—vol 1 & vol 2 (\$6 set)* OOP

## 2003

37. Caitlin McDonnell, *Dreaming the Tree*
38. Eileen Myles, *We, the Poets*
39. Suzanne Wise, from *The Blur Model*
40. Lydia Davis, *Cape Cod Diary*
41. Elaine Equi, *Castle, Diamond, Swan*
42. Maggie Nelson, *Something Bright, Then Holes*
43. Summi Kaipa, "One: I Beg You, Be Still" from *Was. Or Am.*
44. Julie Patton, "Car Tune" & *Not So Bella Donna*
45. Joan Larkin, *Boston Piano*
46. Minnie Bruce Pratt, *The Money Machine: Selected Poems*
47. Anne Tardos, *A Noisy Nightingale Understands a Tiger's Camouflage Totally*
48. Michelle Naka Pierce, *48 Minutes Left*
49. Veronica Corpuz, *Untitled*
50. Leslie Scalapino, "Can't is 'Night"
51. Jen Benka, *A Revisioning of the Preamble*
52. Susan Briante, *Neotropics: A Romance in Field Notes.*

## 2003

67. Eileen Tabios, *THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)*
68. Susan Howe, *118 Westerly Terrace*
69. Corina Copp, *Play Air*
70. Lyn Hejinian, *Lola*
71. Mercedes Roffé, *Theory of Colors*
72. hassen, *Salem*
73. Mónica De la Torre, *Doubles: An Excerpt*

Pamphlets published in conjunction with the Belladonna\* reading series and are 6 to 20 pages. Books are \$4 ea.; \$6 signed editions; add 50¢ postage per item. Checks payable to Rachel Levitsky.

The title is one more color.

– *Marcel Duchamp*

## **Le Gué**

(O. Redon)

*nubes*

*nubes*

*resplandor*

*caballos*

*caballos*

*sombras*

*cueros*

*roca tallada*

*a punta de plumín*

*tinta*

*tinta y luz*

*y a pesar*

*del retumbar de los cascos*

*en la grava*

*qué silencio*

*¿no?*

*qué profundo*

*e íntimo*

*silencio*

## **Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten**

(Arvo Pärt)

like a dawn?

like a golden bright slow serene dawn

like an unfolding?

like a light that unfolds and unfolds you

that "breaks"?

yes, that breaks

like the day

like a memory

and the bells?

blue plains

and a yellow and white and bronze turret

and within the arch

the sky waving

"peeling"?

yes, peeling

as the hours peel, mauve

like a tunnel

like a dome

*Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*

(Arvo Pärt)

*¿como un alba?  
como un alba serena y rosa y lenta y clara  
¿como abrirse?  
como una luz que se abre y te abre  
¿que “despunta”?  
que despunta, sí  
como el día  
como un viaje*

*¿y las campanas?  
llano azul  
y torrejón amarillo y blanco y bronce  
y en medio, bajo el arco  
el cielo ondeando  
¿“repicando”?  
repicando, sí  
como repican, malva  
las horas  
como un túnel  
como un claustro*

**Le Gué**

(O. Redon)

clouds  
clouds  
brightness  
horses  
horses  
shadows  
trees  
  
rock incised  
by dint of needle  
  
ink  
ink and light  
  
and despite the hooves  
pounding on the gravel  
  
what a silence  
— listen  
  
what a deep  
intimate  
  
silence

## Allégorie

(O. Redon)

*ojos*  
*niños*  
*hiedras (o un laurel)*  
*un arco y un*  
*bajorrelieve*  
*de un lado, al pie,*  
*un ángel azorado*  
*mirando*  
*una bola de cristal (como si no creyera)*  
*del otro,*  
*la rosa de Magritte*  
*redonda y grande y roja*  
*y una calavera con su traje de plumas*  
*de sol*  
*de sangre*  
  
*margaritas*  
*células*  
*zapallos*  
*moradas*  
*caracolas*  
*algodón (o humo o nubes)*  
*babushka (o niña y parasol)*  
*y un limón*  
*un pez*

## Ship of Fools

(A. Prior)

In the blue of the canvas  
not fire  
but a play  
of light  
coming from the void.  
From that absolute  
pristine and perfect  
void  
out of which we all come  
now and then  
like sparks of a fire  
that play  
  
now and then



## *La nave de los locos*

(A. Prior)

*En el azul de la tela  
lo que hay no es fuego  
sino juegos  
de luz  
venida del vacío.  
De ese absoluto  
perfecto y prístino  
vacío  
del que venimos todos  
cada tanto  
como chispas de fuego  
y juego  
  
cada tanto*

## Allégorie

(O. Redon)

eyes  
children  
ivy (or laurel)  
an arc and a  
bas-relief  
on one side, in the corner  
an angel astonished  
looking at  
a crystal ball (as in disbelief)  
on the other,  
Magritte's rose  
round and big and red  
and a skeleton with his cape of feathers  
sun  
and blood  
  
daisies  
cells  
pumpkins  
purple  
shells  
cotton (or smoke or clouds)  
babushka (or girl with parasol)  
and a lemon  
a fish

*un antifaz  
y un ala de luciérnaga*

*leer un pórtico  
como leer un altar  
un cristal o el agua  
o un espejo*

*puerta o puerto de luz*

*u n a  
a s c e n s i ó n*

## **Breaking the Vicious Circle**

(R. Varo)

My fate  
is to bear in my soul  
a white, sterile forest

nothingness in my eyes

and in my hands  
the hoop that hangs me

a nest on my head forces  
my birth

meanwhile, a crow  
waits for the dawn  
to break the spell  
that joins its gaze and mine

## ***Rompiendo el círculo vicioso***

*(R. Varo)*

*Mi sino*

*llevar en el alma un bosque  
blanco, estéril*

*en los ojos, la nada*

*y en las manos, el aro que me ahorque*

*un nido en la cabeza me conmina  
a nacer de mí*

*un cuervo, mientras tanto  
espera que amanezca  
que se rompa el hechizo que conjugan  
su mirada y la mía*

a mask

and a firefly's wing

reading a gate

as if reading an altar

a crystal or a body of water

or a mirror

a door or a portal of light

a n

a s c e n s i o n

## ***Ostie (tour du Castello)***

(F. A. Ravier)

*una plancha de metal*

*azul*

*un papel azul*

*una película*

*el crujiir de la cinta – el*

*aletear del extremo*

*suelto*

*contra el riel*

*y el girar del rollo*

*en vano*

*en el*

*vacío*

*círculo blanco sobre negro*

*en la pantalla*

*y la sala a oscuras*

*murmurando*

## **Encounter**

(R. Varo)

if you wait

I'll tell you

who you are

Let me in

I am not completely

dead

I am you

**El encuentro**

(R. Varo)

*si me esperas*

*te diré*

*quién eres*

*ábreme*

*no estoy del todo*

*muerta*

*soy tú*

**Ostie (tour du Castello)**

(F. A. Ravier)

a metal plate

blue

blue paper

a *film*

the film whirring flapping

its end

against the spool

and the reel turns

in vain

in

emptiness

white circle over black

on the screen

and in the dark theater

whispering

## **Marine Bleue**

(G. Lacombe)

*como si hubieran caído  
al mar        los ojos de Argos  
la cola de un pavo real*

*y sin embargo  
el tramado de la tela  
al través*

*lluvia*

*sonora  
verticalidad*

*contra el dócil        mudo  
curvarse de las olas*

## **Marine Bleue**

(G. Lacombe)

as if the eyes of Argus  
had fallen        into the sea  
a peacock's tail

the sideways  
weave of the canvas

rain

sonorous  
verticality

against the docile        mute  
curl of the waves