

WILLIAM POPE.L

BLACK PEOPLE ARE CROPPED



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WORKING IN (THE) COLOR

"When Pope.L shakes his head he makes drawings that keep him from laugh-crying to death," writes Helen Molesworth about William Pope.L's "Skin Set Drawings." Made with very low-key materials, this extended corpus of drawings deals with the absurdities and perversities of intentional language, especially racist language and language associated with categorizing and naming color. "Black People Are Taut," "Brown People Are The Green Ray," "Blue People Are What We Do To Homosexuals," "French People And Roma," "Purple People Are The Perfect Cone For The King Not His Body," "Red People Are The Niggers Of The Canyon" are some examples of this ongoing series made by the self-proclaimed "friendliest black artist in America."

The book offers a selection of drawings, made between 1997 and 2009, some sketches, and two critical texts by artist and writer Iain Kerr and Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston) Helen Molesworth, as well as one of the artist's own text.

William Pope.L (b. 1955, New Jersey) is a visual and performance-theater artist and educator who makes culture out of contraries and confronts issues of race, sex, power, consumerism, and social class. Among his best-known works are the "crawls," a series of performances staged since 1978, in which he inches his way through busy city streets on

his belly, back, hands, and knees in an attempt to draw attention to the plight of those members of society who are least empowered. He has been making multi-disciplinary works since the 1970s, and has exhibited internationally. He now lives and works in Chicago.

Second printing.