

SEAN SCULLY_BIOGRAPHY

1945

Born in Dublin, Ireland on 30 June.

1949-59

Family moves to London.

Grows up in a working-class area of South London and attends local convent schools. Paintings in Catholic churches have an important influence on him. The nine-year-old schoolboy wants to become an artist.

Becomes interested in American *Rhythm & Blues* music and starts a music club of his own. Retains his interest in popular music all his life.

1960-62

Apprentices at a commercial printing shop in London. Joins a graphic design studio.

1962-65

Attends evening classes at the Central School of Art, London with an interest in figurative painting.

1964

Regularly visits Vincent van Gogh's painting *Van Gogh's Chair* (1888) at Tate Gallery, London (Now in The National Gallery, London). Its directness has a profound effect on the young artist.

1965

Decides to dedicate himself entirely to art studies. Studies at the Croydon College of Art, London, until 1968. Is interested in van Gogh, Emil Nolde, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Henri Matisse. Discovers Abstract Expressionism.

1968-72

Attends Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. After graduation remains as teaching assistant. At the same time teaches Art one day a week at the City of Sunderland College of Art, Houghton-le-Spring, England.

His technically flawless paintings consist of a complicated grid system of intersecting bands and lines, which form a rich optical field. The illusion of depth and space is activated by colour contrasts. The influence of Op Art is clearly visible.

Visits Morocco in 1969. The stripes and colours of local textiles and carpets and the southern light make as deep an impression as they did on Eugene Delacroix, Matisse and Paul Klee.

1970

Awarded the Stuyvesant Foundation Prize.

1972-73

Awarded the Frank Knox Fellowship. Makes his first visit to the United States. Attends Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Experiments with new techniques: Starts using tape and spraying paint in paintings composed of grids of interlaced vertical, horizontal and diagonal bands and stripes. All expressiveness is omitted.

1973

After returning to England has his first solo exhibition at the Rowan Gallery, London. Sells out the entire show.

Inset #2 is a temporary break in his rigid grid system and prefigures his device of the inset canvas, which becomes a distinctive feature of his work from the beginning of the 1980s.

1973-75

Teaches at the Chelsea College of Art and Design and Goldsmith's College of Art and Design, London.

1975

Awarded a two-year Harkness Fellowship. Moves to New York. Lives with the artist Catherine Lee. American art, especially Minimalism, and his friendship with Robert Ryman encourages him to simplify his expression.

Creates *Change* series, 50 acrylic works on paper. This pivotal series reflects the changes in his personal life. At the same time it prefigures the large, spatially hermetic dark canvases of the following years.

1977

Has his first solo exhibition in New York at the Duffy-Gibbs Gallery.

1978

Marries Catherine Lee.

1978-82

Teaches part-time at Princeton University, New Jersey, USA. Develops important friendships and contacts in the academic and art world.

At this time his palette is reduced to shades of grey monochrome "Black paintings". The composition is pared down to thin horizontal or vertical lines.

1979

Decides together with his wife to choose from his works every year one especially important or typical work to be named after her. This marks the beginning of his private collection, the series *Catherine Paintings*.

1980

Travels to Mexico. Inspired by the trip, he begins painting from nature, transcribing his experience of colour and light directly on the paper with watercolours. Before 1980 used watercolour only occasionally.

1981

Has first retrospective at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England. The exhibition travels within the United Kingdom under the auspices of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Starts to withdraw from Minimalist aesthetics. Colour and space return. Stops taping his stripes and starts drawing them freehand. Brushstrokes are clearly visible. A soft painterly outline becomes characteristic of his works. Gets his richness of colour by overpainting in many different layers.

The large polyptych *Backs and Fronts*, his manifesto painting is completed.

1981-84

Professor at the Parsons School of Art, New York, USA.

1982

Spends part of the summer working at the artists' colony founded by Edward Albee at Montauk, Long Island. Produces small works on panel.

Reaches maturity with *Heart of Darkness*. Combines rigid geometry with expressive texture and colour.

1982-83

Combines and recombines canvases to make polyptychs.

1983

Becomes American citizen.

Paul, his nineteen-year-old son from a previous marriage, dies in a car accident in London.
 Receives the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.
 Receives the Guggenheim Fellowship.
 Begins his first collaboration with a printer. This prefigures his long-term commitment to printmaking using various graphic techniques.

1984

International breakthrough.
 Dedicates his painting Paul to his deceased son.
 Receives the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship
 Selected for the exhibition entitled *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*.

1985

Has his first solo American museum exhibition at the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA. The exhibition travels to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.
 Major museums acquire large-scale Modernist paintings by Scully at a time when Postmodernism is the dominant trend.

The paintings become more physical, to the point where they can stand freely on the floor without any need for support, although they are conceived to hang on the wall.

1987

Changes to a less complex, flatter and smaller scale of working.

1987-90

Makes a number of visits to Mexico. Exposure to new sources of visual stimuli can be seen in new watercolours and works on paper.

1988

Incorporates, for the first time, the element of steel in a painting, *Why and What (Yellow)*

1989

Has his first solo exhibition in a European museum at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. The exhibition travels to Palacio Velázquez, Madrid and to Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

1990

Maurice Poirier's monograph is published by Hudson Hills Press, New York. Photographs by Scully published for the first time, in black and white as illustrations and in colour in the paintings section.

1991

Expands the use of steel, setting oil on linen *Insets* into large steel panels.
 Begins regular use of the checkerboard motif, which was hinted at in the early Hidden Drawing and Taped painting series.

1992

Lectures at Harvard.
 In December, revisits Morocco to make a film for the BBC on Matisse, who visited Morocco in 1912-13.

1993

Has his first exhibition of *The Catherine Paintings* at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX.

1994

Makes first paintings at his new studio in Barcelona.

1995

Participates in the Joseph Beuys Lectures 1995 on the state of contemporary art in Britain, Europe and the United States, Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University, England.
Starts making three-dimensional Floating Paintings. These are rectangular vertical sheet metal boxes attached to the wall along one of the narrowest sides. The other sides are covered by painted vertical stripes.

1996

Visits Morocco. The portfolio *Atlas Walls of 1998* includes several photos from this trip.

1997

Photographs exhibited for the first time, Sala de Exposiciones Rekalde, Bilbao, Spain.

1998

Participates in a colloquium held in conjunction with the exhibition *Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-1992)*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

1999

Visits Santo Domingo. The portfolio *Santo Domingo for Nené* consists of photos taken during this trip.
Paints Chelsea Wall, the first painting in the new studio in Chelsea, New York City.

2000

Becomes an Honorary Fellow of the London Institute of Arts and Letters.

2001

Becomes a member of Aosdána, an Irish affiliation of artists engaged in literature, music and the visual arts.

2002-07

Professor of painting at Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich, Germany.

2003

Receives the degree of an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from the Massachusetts College of Art, the United States, and the National University of Ireland.

2004

Retrospective exhibition opens at Sara Hilden Art Museum Tampere, Finland, and travels to Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Weimar and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

2005

Sean Scully: Wall of Light exhibition opens at The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC and travels to Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

2006

Marries artist, Liliane Tomasko.

Dublin City Gallery – The Hugh Lane, Dublin opens the Sean Scully Gallery, a dedicated, permanent installation of paintings by the artist.

Exhibition of Prints at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Awarded Doctor Honoris Causa, Universitas Miguel Hernandez, Valencia

Elson Lecture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

2007-08

Sean Scully A Retrospective exhibition and tour at Miro Foundation, Barcelona; Musée d'Art Moderne, Sainte-Etienne, and Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO), Rome.

Awarded Honorary Degree, Doctor Honoris Causa, Universitas Miguel Hernandez, Valencia.

Elson Lecture at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C

2009

Retrospective exhibition and tour *Konstantinopel oder die versteckte Sinnlichkeit. Die Bilderwelt von Sean Scully (Constantinople or the Sensual Concealed. The Imagery of Sean Scully)* at MKM Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg and Ulster Museum, Belfast

Son Oisín is born

2010-2011

Tour of important early works: *Works from the 1980s* at VISUAL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow; Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds and Wilhelm-Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen am Rhein

Awarded Honorary Degree, Doctor of Letters by Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK

2011

Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI opens their new expansion with solo exhibition of Sean's 8 part Liliane paintings and related works.

2012

Opens nine solo Museum exhibitions from Philadelphia, PA to Rome, Italy, including the Retrospective: Grey Wolf at the Kunstmuseum Bern and Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz.

2013

Becomes a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, England

2014

Awarded an honorary doctorate Fine Arts from the National University of Ireland's Burren College of Art.

His painting 'Green Robe Figure', 2005 is included in the exhibition *Post-Picasso.Reaccion Contemporaneas* at the Picasso Museum in Barcelona. The exhibition examines the responses of contemporary artists to the life and work of Pablo Picasso.

Sean extends his series 'Landline paintings' started in 2000. A majority of the work is done on aluminum panels, composed of horizontal stripes using colors that reference his student period.

2014-2015

Opens fourteen solo exhibitions around the World, including the first major retrospective by a western artist in China. The retrospective show travels both to Shanghai and Beijing.

Museum Liaunig/Neuhaus in Austria opens their new building expansion with a solo exhibition 'Sean Scully. Painting as an Imaginative World Appropriation' featuring seventeen paintings and four watercolours.

Participates for the first time at the Venice Biennale with a solo exhibition under the title 'Land Sea' at the Palazzo Falier in Venice, Italy.

Opens a new studio space in Tappan, New York.

Publishes a new book on essays by Arthur C. Danto on Sean Scully.

His permanent installation at the 10th century church Santa Cecilia in Barcelona, Spain opens to the public.

He is awarded the V Congreso Asociacion Protecturi, Madrid, Spain for his contribution to the Spanish religious heritage.

A new sculpture in corten-steel *Boxes of Air* is made. Five more sculptures are produced, further developing this expression in depth.

2016-2017

Confirms second major show in China, "Resistance and Persistence," which travels from the Art Museum of the Nanjing University of the Arts to the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, and the Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan (2017).

He is also the subject of solo museum exhibitions in Budweis, Czech Republic, Valencia, Spain, and Garrison, New York.

Revisits the techniques first introduced in the late sixties with spray painting.

Awarded Harper's Bazaar Art International Artist of the Year Award, Hong Kong, China.

Currently lives and works in New York and in the Bavarian countryside south of Munich.