

Intensely Embracing

The Kunstmuseum Bern is showing a comprehensive retrospective of Irish-American artist Sean Scully (b. 1945), a leading representative of abstract contemporary art. Scully creates a surprising scope of strongly atmospheric artworks. The exhibition and catalogue were produced in close cooperation with the artist. Scully comments on the large-scale paintings hanging in the show, comments that we find repeated together with the plates in the catalogue. Scully's statements open up new perspectives on his art.

In 2011, thanks to the generous support of several private patrons, the Kunstmuseum Bern was able to purchase *Grey Wolf* (2007) for its collection. Additionally, the artist donated *Blue Wall Window* (2007) and *Wall of Light Pale Yellow* (2010) to the museum. The exhibition is the first large-scale retrospective of Sean Scully's work in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. It is a joint project with the famous Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz (second exhibition venue). The presentation gives an overall view of the artist's pivotal paintings from all the phases of his creative development as well as works that can be publicly viewed for the very first time.

Resolute in personal goals

Born in Dublin, Sean Scully grew up in a working-class district in South London. He decided to pursue the career of a painter already at the age of nine. After finishing an apprenticeship as a printer, Scully went to night school where he learnt the techniques of painting. He became acquainted with Mark Rothko's art, which made a great impression on him. Ultimately it induced Scully to definitively turn to painting abstract pictures, despite the fact that at the time conceptual and new-media art were very much in fashion. After receiving a scholarship that allowed him to spend time in New York, Scully had his first one-man show in a gallery, and all the paintings were sold. During the 1980s he acquired international fame, and meanwhile Scully's art is represented in some 100 museum collections all over the world.

Impressions in the memory captured on canvas

Scully says of his art that he paints impressions, moods, and atmospheres stored in his memory. Much of the emotional impact of the artist's paintings lies in his selection of colors. They are often strongly contrasting. With a preference for brown, black, and red tones while using a stiff brush, he paints layer over layer of different colors letting the underlying tones shimmer through in an irregular manner. Luminous areas of color seem to communicate with one another as well as with viewers. Intrepidly, Scully adopts specific pictorial arrangements consisting of various combinations of vertical and horizontal colored bands or rectangular color fields. Grid structures found their way into his art since he became devoted to abstract painting in the mid-1960s. However, he constantly disrupts basic structures imaginatively in infinite ways – such as by abruptly shifting lines or positioning stripe patterns diagonally. Or he fuses individually painted canvases into larger ones, making a composite work of varying sizes and thicknesses. Scully's artworks radiate a self-awareness and beauty that entice the viewer's gaze to explore their pictorial space.

A uniquely orchestrated exhibition

The artist closely collaborated in the production of both the exhibition and the catalogue. The rooms in the Kunstmuseum Bern were reconstructed especially for the exhibition and all the dividing walls in the basement were taken out. This provided more space in which the large-format artworks could fully develop their commanding presence. In conjunction with every painting, beginnings of sentences were put forward for the artist to complete. Sean Scully's resulting statements are presented in the exhibition, revealing new dimensions of his powerful work to our visitors. You can also find all his statements printed in the catalogue published in German and English especially for the exhibition.

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Exhibition

Opening: Thursday, March 8, 18h30

Duration: 09.03.2012 - 24.06.2012

Curators: Matthias Frehner, Annick Haldemann

Admission: CHF 18.00 / red. CHF 14.00

In Cooperation with:



where the exhibition will be shown from July 22 until October 7, 2012

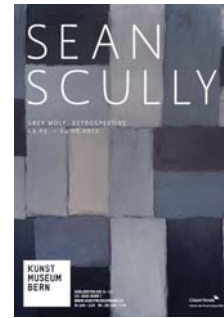
The Catalogue



Sean Scully.

Hrsg. / *Edited by* Kunstmuseum Bern, Matthias Frehner, Annick Haldemann und / *and* Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Brigitte Reutner, Stella Rollig. Mit Beiträgen von / *Essays by* Matthias Frehner, Annick Haldemann und Brigitte Reutner. Gestaltung: Marie Louise Suter, Kunstmuseum Bern. Ca. 200 Seiten / *pages*. Deutsch / *English*. Jovis Verlag, Berlin. ISBN, 978-3-86859-183-5. CHF 38.00

The Poster



F4
89,5 x
128 cm
CHF 20.00

The Special Events

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 11h: 11./25. März, 1. / 22. April, 6. Mai, 3./10./24. Juni und Dienstag, 19h: 13. März, 10./17. April, 1./8./15./22./29. Mai, 19. Juni

Public guided tours in English: Tuesday, March 20, 7:30 pm; Tuesday, May 8, 7:30 pm, Exhibition fee, no reservation is needed

«Sean Scully - Art Comes From Need»
Dokumentarfilm von Hans A. Guttner im Kino Kunstmuseum: Sonntag, 4. März, 11h / Sonntag, 11. März, 11h / Sonntag, 1. April, 11h.
www.kinokunstmuseum.ch

Einführung für Lehrpersonen: Dienstag, 13. März, 18h und Mittwoch, 14. März, 14h. Anmeldung: T 031 328 09 11, vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch
Kosten: CHF 10.00

Kinderworkshop: Sonntagmorgen im Museum – Afrika und grauer Wolf
Sonntag, 25. März und 24. Juni, 10h30. Anmeldung: T 031 328 09 11, vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch
Kosten: CHF 10.00

«Between Figures #1, 2, 3»: **Literarische Annäherung an Sean Scullys Werk durch junge AutorInnen. Eine Zusammenarbeit mit StudentInnen der HKB**
Sonntag, 6. Mai, 12h (nach der öff. Führung)
Dienstag, 15. Mai, 18h (vor der öff. Führung)
Sonntag, 10. Juni, 12h (nach der öff. Führung)
Ausstellungseintritt, Anmeldung nicht erforderlich

The Exhibition and the catalogue are supported by:

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