

Biography Sean Scully

- 1945** Born in Dublin, Ireland
- 1949** Family emigrates to London
- 1960** Apprentices in a commercial printing shop in London and joins a graphic design studio
- 1962 – 1965** Attends evening classes at the Central School of Art, London with an interest in figurative painting
- 1965 – 1968** Studies painting at the Croydon College of Art, London
- 1967** Discovers a 1961 Mark Rothko exhibition catalogue and immediately abandons figurative painting altogether
- 1968 – 1972** Bachelor of Arts at Newcastle University, England with First Class Honors, remains as a teaching assistant. Also teaches one day a week at the Sunderland College of Art. Creates large scale paintings composed of a complicated intersecting line and grid system resulting in an multilayered optical field
- 1969** Travels to Morocco. The stripes and colors of local textiles and the southern light makes a deep impression
- 1972 – 1973** Makes first visit to America as recipient of John Knox Fellowship with a residency at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Experiments with new techniques and exhibits new works upon return to London
- 1973** First major solo exhibition at the Rowan Gallery, London. Show sells out
- 1973 – 1975** Holds teaching positions at Chelsea School of Art and Design and Goldsmith's College of Art and Design, London
- 1975** Emigrates to the United States
- 1977** First New York solo exhibition at the Duffy-Gibbs Gallery
- 1978 – 1982** Adjunct professor at Princeton University, New Jersey. Develops important friendships and contacts in the academic and art world
- 1980** Travels to Mexico. Inspired by the trip, begins using watercolor to transcribe the experience of color and light directly onto paper
- 1981** 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. Stops work on Minimalist series. Stops taping stripes and starts painting them freehand. Brushstrokes become clearly visible. Color and space return. Color is explored extensively through layering and over-painting. Completes the large (20 ft, 11 panels) manifesto painting *Backs and Fronts*, 1981
- 1982** Summer residency at the Edward Albee artists' colony in Montauk, Long Island where he produces small composite works on found panels, piecing together disparate shapes and thickness to create architectural paintings. Back in New York, paints first mature work, the triptych *Heart of Darkness* combining rigid geometry with expressive texture and color
- 1983** Becomes an American citizen. Receives a Guggenheim Fellowship
- 1984** Awarded an NEA Artist's Fellowship. International breakthrough, marked by his inclusion in the MOMA's group exhibition. An international survey of recent paintings and sculptures
- 1985** First solo exhibition in an American museum: Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Major museums begin to acquire his large-scale Modernist paintings at a time when Postmodernism was the big trend. The paintings become more physical, architectural and aggressive

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- 1987** Adds new body of work to include less complex, flatter and smaller scale paintings. First use of the inset technique-embedding a small canvas into a larger one
- 1987 – 1990** Mexico multiple times. Works on paper show influence of new sources of visual stimuli
- 1988** Steel is introduced into the paintings
- 1989** First solo exhibition and tour in a European museum. Exhibition travels from the Whitechapel Gallery, London to Palacio Velázquez, Madrid, and Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich. Shortlisted for the Turner Prize, alongside Paula Rego, Lucian Freud and Richard Long
- 1992** Revisits Morocco in December to make a film on Matisse for the BBC
- 1993** Shortlisted a second time for the Turner Prize, alongside Hannah Collins, Vong Phaophanit and Rachel Whiteread. *Catherine* Paintings exhibited for the first time at The Modern Art Museum of Forth Worth, Texas
- 1994** New studio in Barcelona, Spain
- 1999** New studio in Chelsea, New York
- 2000** Made an Honorary Member of the London Institute of Arts and Letters
- 2002–2007** Professor of painting at Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich, Germany
- 2003** Receives Honorary Degrees, Doctorate of Fine Arts from The Massachusetts College of Art, Boston and the National University of Ireland, Dublin
- 2005 / 2006** »Sean Scully Wall of Light« exhibition and tour at The Phillips Collection, Washington DC; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas; Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio and the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2006** Dublin City Gallery / The Hugh Lane, Dublin, opens the Sean Scully Gallery, a permanent installation of paintings by the artist
- 2007** Marries Swiss painter Liliane Tomasko
- 2007 – 2008** *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 Hernández, 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. Awarded Honorary Degree, Doctor of Letters by Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK
- 2011** A monumental stained-glass window by Sean Scully has been unveiled at one of Europe's most magnificent cathedrals in Girona, Spain
- 2012** Retrospective exhibition and tour at Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland and Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz, Austria

Currently lives and works in New York, Barcelona, and outside Munich

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