

HISTORY, TOPIC SURVEY

"Scully's historical significance lies in the fact that he brought the great achievement of abstract expressionist painting into the contemporary state." (Artur C. Danto , 2007)¹

Dealing with the work and artistic involvement of Sean Scully is, in my opinion, an extremely complex and exciting undertaking. Studying his enormous oeuvre is an excellent opportunity to formulate deeper connections in the fields of painting, sculpture, literature, and art education. The researcher gets an endless variation of the meeting of these art branches and visual art education, if he studies the artist's various manifestations in depth, reads his essays, listens to, watches his performances, interviews.

The personal motivation of the subject of my research is very important, the Akademie in Munich where in the picture I was a student of Sean Scully at Künste . In 2007, I graduated from the five-year undivided painting and graphic arts course. His exhibition was opened for the first time in Hungary at the Vass Collection in Veszprém in 2009, which was made possible with the help of the Walter Storms Gallery in Munich. After that, we met again, ten years later, in 2020, in Budapest. In that year, Irish-American visual artist Sean Scully's (1945) retrospective exhibition entitled *Passenger / Átutazó – A Retrospective* opened at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest.

In the course of my research, relying on my collections and my own experiences, I examine Sean Scully's influence on the contemporary art world. I am looking for the answer to how his work fits into the broader context of abstract painting and what innovations he brought to the art medium. How do I feel his influence, both in terms of his approach to artistic creation and his teaching philosophy? Using quantitative methods, studying, analyzing and understanding literature, exhibitions I visited, and film reports, I also reveal Scully's relationship with artists, writers, philosophers, art critics and art movements, both as a visual artist and as a mentor. Using a similar method to what Scully does, who, having developed his own tracking

¹ in Arthur C. Danto, "Sean Scully," in *Unnatural Wonders: Essays from the Gap Between Art and Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)p. 77-84.

system , presents his solutions to the proposed formulas, among other things, on blackboard pictures. His extensive interest in the world is associated with an in-depth attitude in both fine arts and philosophical or literary fields.

In my opinion, the actuality of the artist, known mainly for his paintings, is unquestionable. For decades, he stuck to his stance with his minimalist and abstract expressionist paintings, while world trends were constantly changing. *All _ the same and all different dig we are* ” (Sean Scully, On the Line with Kelly Grovier : Backs and Fronts)²

Sean Scully started his career when Tom Wolf wrote his book *The Painted Malt* about the death of painting. Nowadays, the time of his "sensible minimalism" has come, as he said in an interview with the Punjabi MANJAC Cultural Institute.

Finally, I try to articulate where the American-Irish visual artist, who lives and works in New York, Königsdorf - Mooseurach , Germany, and previously also works in Barcelona, is placed in the broader canon of art history, taking into account his contribution to the continuous development of abstract painting.

SEAN SCULLY'S ARTISTIC VIEW OF THE ART WORLD ITS PRACTICED EFFECT

Sean Scully as an artist and teacher is, in my opinion, important for several reasons. Since Scully is a globally recognized artist, his unique approach to abstract painting has had a significant impact on the art world. Studying his artistic vision and development can provide insight into the development of abstract painting as a genre and its place in contemporary art.

I discuss the thesis in the third chapter, entitled: *The role of the visual artist in contemporary universal art history*. The third chapter consists of the following sub-chapters: *Comprehensive characterization of his art, Sean Scully's abstract world, the metaphor of "being in between", Early works, Figurative or abstract? (1960-1980),*

² Sean Scully, *On the Line with Kelly Grovier: Backs and Fronts*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMskVSHTDY0&ab_channel=SeanScullyStudio (megtekintve 2023.01.31)

Morocco, The Great Impact, Turning Point MoMa PS1, New York, Wall of Light paintings from the 1990s, Landline paintings.

I analyze the data collected from the case study and content analysis approaches using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The research provides a comprehensive and detailed picture of Scully's work. Including a thorough description of his main series, an examination of the visual elements of his paintings, sculptures, graphics and photographs.

The aim of the research is to thoroughly examine Sean Scully's artistic vision and techniques, and gain a deeper understanding. I explore his artistic development and development within the abstract art movement, as well as his role as a teacher and mentor. The essay also reviews the impact of Scully's work on the art world and its role in contemporary art. In other words, the goal is for this paper to contribute new insights and knowledge to the previous experience and to provide a comprehensive picture of Scully's artistic and educational importance, to provide a thorough and in-depth exploration of his artistic heritage.

I will present, among other things, his early figurative paintings from the 1960s and 1970s, his new figurative series *Elutheria* (2017), and in my in-depth interview I will also get an answer to why he broke with representational painting in favor of abstraction. Sean Scully's Moroccan-influenced texture research results in works rich in composition and materiality. The inclusion of Moroccan textures brought a new dimension to Sean Scully's abstract language, creating a synthesis of cultural inspiration and artistic innovation.

I examine his painting toolbox, its use in, for example, the *Wall of Light* series: how he uses color and texture in this series and how these elements have evolved over time. I also study how he uses geometric shapes and plays with composition and balance to create dynamic and captivating works. I will explore his detours into sculpture, textile art and other mediums and how they relate to his paintings. I also draw from his writings, for example *INNER: The Collected Writings and Selected From the text collection Interviews of Sean Scully* (2018).

In my dissertation, *The Abstract World of Sean Scully*, I can help shed light on Sean Scully's influence on the contemporary art world with the help of an in-depth interview with Scully, as well as relying on my personal experiences and insights. I am trying to find an answer to how his thoughts and ideas about art and the creative process are reflected in his works.

INTERACTIONS SEAN SCULLY ART TEACHER AND MENTOR

The fifth chapter, About teaching, is an important and extensive part *of the thesis, recalling the period spent* with the painter and art teacher Sean Scully, with the help of personal conversations, photo documentation, and own video recordings. Scully is still a living artist, delivering fresh information every day. He exhibits regularly, works a lot and considers his virtual presence important. I am referring here to the official Instagram page, website and YouTube channel of "Seanscullystudio". Of course, I wondered what else could be asked of Sean Scully, who writes a lot himself, publishes his own collection of texts (eg: *Inner*), gives lectures and is a humorous and interesting public figure. The answer is the relationship, the experience between him and me. The relationship between teacher and student, which Scully often talks about, permeates everything. Sean Scully is open and honest about his world, but his mysteriousness can be discovered in his way of thinking. He reveals connections in each of his written or oral expressions, works of art, and educational methodology, which are extremely thought-provoking. Scully is a master of metaphor.

As a teacher and mentor, Scully loved experimentation and risk-taking in his students, but he also emphasized the importance of discipline and technical mastery. Your criticisms and feedback indirectly helped shape my work. I am currently teaching myself and I can count myself lucky to be able to apply the experiences I gained during my studies in Germany and the attitude of my former master to art education in various ways. The presentation of his teaching methods includes an examination of Scully's influence on the contemporary art world, which I present in a complex way, because in my opinion it is not possible to separate the teacher's and artist's character. After all, his role as an art mediator is decisive even after the end of his teaching period.

"Basically, what I do with the students is always just expand on what they're doing. I do not teach based on theory. I am not an ideological person. In this sense, I am

different from other teachers at the Academy. You know, most people teach from their own point of view. In fact, there was a kid who came to my class, a boy, and then the teacher, Marcus Ohlen, said, 'He's not my type.' And I thought it was very strange that he treated people according to his own style preconceptions. So I didn't do that."

SCULLY ON HERSELF AND OTHERS

"Sean Scully is one of the greatest abstract painters of our time. He is also one of the most outspoken. Since the late 1960s, Scully's visual expressiveness has been linked to a verbal dynamism that no less arrests her art. His form ranges widely, from brief reflections in condensed eloquence to meditations through essays on the writings of artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Giorgio Morandi and Mark Rothko - Scully, with brutal lyricism and the ease of aphoristic expression. At once biographical and political, poignant and unsettling. Almost 200 texts in Inner : Sean Scully's collected writings and selected interviews provide a unique perspective on one of the most compelling artistic imaginations of the past half century. Here, readers will discover the exhaustion of a mind that tirelessly grapples with the deepest questions of art, cultural history, and what it means to be a creator in the contemporary world. The volume is accompanied by key images that illustrate Scully's words..." (Kelly Grovier in: Inner : The Collected Writings and Selected Interviews of Sean Scully)

CASE STUDIES ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

A case study approach includes the presentation, interpretation, and transmission of his empirically known main series, exhibitions, and travels. The trips to the Munich Akademie der Bilden They happened during the five years we spent together in Künsten , which I was a part of with Scully's class. We traveled to New York in 2006, to the Aran Islands in Ireland, Barcelona in Spain or Weimar in Germany in 2004. Both the visits to Europe and the United States were connected to one of Sean Scully's professional introductions.

Wall of Light exhibition organized in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006 , the opening of which I participated with my group mates from Munich. It was a special event - no longer as students, our meeting in Veszprém in 2009. He is less known, but his first exhibition in Hungary, entitled *Emotions and Structures* , was

organized in 2009 by the Vass Gyűjtemény and the House of Arts in Veszprém (his first exhibition here was not the *Átutasó / Passenger* exhibition organized in 2020 at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest). The thesis looks back to the recent past, which is very different from the Akademie because of the time that has passed since then *der in Bilden* My experiences and interpretations as a student of Künste .

The express purpose of my visit to London in 2019 was to see Scully's *Sea Star* exhibition. Similarly, in the same year, I also saw the *Human* exhibition at San Giorgio Maggiore church in Venice. Therefore, continuing to research and get to know his work, I took part in discussions or events related to his art in order to deepen my relationship and connection with his work.

I got back in touch with Sean Scully after seeing the *Sea Star exhibition* at the *National Gallery in London*. It is important to mention that I wrote the dissertation mainly in English, with a small part relying on German language books, catalogs, digital resources and my own in-depth interview. Since then, our continuous correspondence with Sean Scully has also been in English, so I thoughtfully and consciously use original work titles, place names, and other references in foreign languages. In Hungarian, the bilingual catalog published for the 2009 exhibition entitled *Emotions and Structures* held at the Vass László Vass Collection of the Modern Gallery in Veszprém, as well as the Hungarian language catalog and some articles for the 2020 exhibition entitled *Átutasó / Passenger* held in Budapest ; of course, I quote from these and use the Hungarian translations.

SCULLY "IN BETWEEN WORLD"

THE POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP OF REALITY AND ILLUSION IN THE FINE ARTS, PRESENTATION OF OWN WORKS, PARALLELS

Why am I analyzing the relationship between reality and illusion based on Sean Scully's work and my own experiences? After all, fine art and its products do not form an integral part of existing, lived reality in the first place. Thus, visual art itself is an illusion. Or not? The works of art, in terms of their content, are not part of reality, but their physicality cannot be questioned. They are embodied on various support surfaces,

canvases, paper, stone, wood, metal, Plexiglas. The change and subjective transposition of reality through perception.

Sean Scully thinks from interdisciplinary medium to medium: painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, duplicating graphics , boxing , dance, music. " Putting things together ," says Scully. He deals with negative and positive space, he is also interested in colors and architecture. For example, the *Wall of Light* in the case of a series when it was inspired by the buildings of the Mexican Incas.

REALITY AND ILLUSION IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS OUTLOOK, ARTISTS, PARALLELS.

"When I'm inside the painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. After a certain period of time, I "get to know" for the first time what I'm actually doing. I'm not afraid of changing something in the picture, I'm not afraid of ruining it that. After all, the picture has a life of its own. I'll help show that." (Jackson Pollock) Is this an action without awareness, after a point still controlling chance? *"Sometimes what I paint is very figurative," he says. If a person is in a state of unconsciousness while painting, figures appear willy-nilly. I think we are all influenced by Freud."* (Jackson Pollock)

With the fact that staying and working in the studio is an isolated form of activity and although loneliness is not a positive state for everyone, this isolation is loved by all creative people from a certain point of view. Here is a quote that describes Sean Scully's photos and that perfectly complements the above thoughts. *"In Sean Scully's photographs, it is obvious at first glance that visualization is also interpretation. In the pictures of Nene Santo Domingo (2000), the visual diversity of the brightly painted, poorly assembled wooden huts of an unknown South American village and the melancholy of its decayed materials appear before us. The image cut-out, adapted to the pictorial unity of disintegration and disintegration, which has nothing to do with the dimensions and boundaries of reality, turns natural reality and human structures into geometry and abstraction without an optical refinery. The beauty of material poverty interprets reality as a visual system: the compositional order of aging colors, shapes, and materials. The aestheticization of reality also has a hidden social message: if wealth makes you young, then the opposite of the blasphemous statement is also true, poverty and wear and tear make you old.*

Kalogathia !, the unity of the ancient Greek truth (rit) and the beautiful continues to flourish today in the stripped-down test, in destruction, on the periphery of our civilization." (Károly Szűcs: Human stories, In: Balkon 2006)

Scully covers her 'squares' wet with the next coat of paint. It does not wait for the previously applied surface to dry. He uses extremely large brushes, the separated bristles of which leave a characteristic mark. His pictures, constructed according to strict rules, are characterized by restrained colors. Playfulness and an experimental spirit can also be discovered in his works. His paintings standing against the wall built of wooden plates form a transition between sculpture and tableau. The picture within the picture, the use of multiple planes, the thickly applied layer of paint shows the possibilities in some of Scully's works. In other cases, he fills the hole and empty space in the larger canvas with a smaller stretched canvas. He named them " inset ".

"I am always be surrounded by music while painting ." says Sean Scully. "After all, painting is a very lonely activity and when there is complete silence around me it is very sad. Raffaello, for example, always invited a lady to his studio to entertain him."(Scully)

SUMMARY OF THESE, CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation, I have discussed various aspects of Sean Scully's art, including influences, styles, and specific works. I began by discussing Scully's figurative painting and then his geometric abstract expressionism. I also analyzed how he developed over the years, from his early works, from the Supergrid paintings to his latest spatial works.

I wrote about Scully's 1981 painting Backs and Fronts and how it was inspired by Picasso's Three Musicians, but Scully's own interpretation of it became a work of 11 assembled panels. I touched on his paintings Wall of Light and Landline and the use of glass in his works, especially in his 2019 exhibition *Human in Venice at the Abbazia di San Giorgio Maggiore* in Venice church. It was made between 2015 and 2017 I also wrote about the interesting reunification of Eleuthera's painting, photo and drawing series and his early 1960s figurative works.

I also presented his sculptures, for example, I talked about his work entitled *Air* and his architectural installations in various churches, including Santa Cecilia in Montserrat , Spain and San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, Italy.

So in my research, I touched on different themes and ideas related to Scully's art, such as the interaction between architecture and art, the concept of space, and the use of color and texture.

In addition, Scully's teaching career was discussed, highlighting the years spent in Newcastle , London and Munich. The paper thus provides a broad overview of Scully's art and legacy.

What conclusions can we draw from the theses raised in this essay and what have we learned about Sean Scully ? The essay examined various aspects of Sean Scully's artistic practice, including influences, techniques and themes.

One of my key takeaways was that Scully's work bridges the gap between abstraction and representation, as she uses elements of both to create a new visual language.

The essay also touched on Scully's interest in architecture and how it influenced her sculptures, installations and paintings. The thesis also covered Scully's role as a teacher, art critic, and theorist, noting that he wrote a lot about art and its relationship to society.

The essay provided an insight into the diversity of Sean Scully's practice, highlighting his versatility and influence in the art world.

During the research, I came to the conclusion that Scully's work is both deeply personal and deeply concerned with the wider world, which makes him a significant figure in contemporary art.

Judging by the testimonies, it can be said that the relationship between the artist and the teacher can be valuable, as it provides both guidance and inspiration for the pursuit of artistic excellence. In the case of Sean Scully, his career as an artist and teacher both contributed to the formation of contemporary painting, and his influence can be seen in the work of countless artists who followed in his footsteps.

From the theses raised, we can finally learn that Sean Scully's work is deeply influenced by his personal experiences and his fascination with the relationship between art and architecture. He creates works characterized by geometric abstraction, but with emotional intensity and personal expression. So what we can learn from Sean Scully's work is that art can be both intellectually rigorous and emotionally powerful, and that it can reflect the artist's personal experience and worldview. Scully's approach to abstraction and his focus on the relationship between art and architecture have made him an important figure in contemporary art, and his views on art have influenced many artists and critics. Throughout his career, Scully has been active as a teacher, art critic and theorist, and his views on art have had, and still have, a great influence on the contemporary art world. It emphasizes the importance of the spiritual and emotional dimensions of art and the need for a personal and authentic approach to artistic expression.

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