

Art Viewer

Sean Scully at Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain

26 November 2023

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November 26, 2023



Exhibition title: Géographies

Venue: Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France

Date: October 20, 2023 – January 13, 2024

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Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain is presenting the first solo exhibition by Sean Scully (1945, Ireland) in Brittany. A key abstractionist since the 1970s, he developed a style of painting that went against the grain of the minimal and conceptual art that was in vogue at the time. Freedom and emotion are his watchwords and infuse his entire art. Scully's great strength is to succeed in projecting viewers somewhere into a world of feelings. His work is a plunge, a striking experience, an alternative to reality; human beings, even if they are not represented, are at the heart of his paintings, emblematic constructions of grids and bands of colour.

Sean Scully is not one of those travelling artists who constantly flits from city to city, region to region, consuming environments. He's one of those who stays, who takes time, who lets landscapes and moods gradually blend into his painting. The exhibition "Géographies", presented at Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, takes a fresh look at Sean Scully's immense oeuvre. It looks at the places he has lived and the affections he has developed for particular places.

Great Britain, where he was raised and began working as a typographer from the age of 15 before studying art, was the scene of his first experiments with the grid motif, greatly inspired by a formative sojourn in Morocco. Ireland, his native land, is evoked through literature, while the United States, where he settled in the 1970s, is a place where Scully very recently tackled a social issue with the *Ghost* series of paintings. The artist denounces the proliferation of firearms and the constant recourse to violence. The light and Mayan cultural sites of Mexico, which he discovered in the 1980s, has had a lasting influence on his painting. So too has the philosophical rigor of Germany where he has teaching as a professor at the Academy in Munich 2002-2007, and the light and history of art in Spain where he also had a studio for many years. A more recent figurative body of work tells the story of his family, including that of his son, on the island of Eleuthera. Finally, France, a country that Scully cherishes and where he now lives for part of his life, is evoked in particular through its history of art and its landscapes.













