

PRESS RELEASE

Sean Scully – painting as an imaginative world appropriation

With a major Sean Scully show, the Museum Liaunig is not only opening its 2015 exhibition season, but also the recently completed, new space for special presentations. This has been added to the museum in Neuhaus/Suha in Southern Carinthia, which was opened in 2008, in the course of a large-scale enlargement concept from the Viennese architectural team *querkraft*.

Sean Scully, who was born in Dublin in 1945, currently numbers among the leading exponents of absolute, non-figurative painting that is influenced decisively by the use of colour. The paintings, which are composed of simple, geometric, fundamental elements consisting of rectangles, squares and bar-like stripes, are based on a strongly emotional, impasto painting method that is both intensive and differentiated. The painting process, which is carried out openly by the artist and accompanied by tension and inquisitiveness, resembles an unending, gradual appropriation of the world that occupies a place within each of his works. These consist of large formats with the impetus derived from differentially charged, dense brushwork, directed as an exciting block-like drama, or small, sensitive and lyrical watercolours as a subtle and charming “Kammerspiel”.

Scully’s painting is in no way divorced from reality. He taps into its potential, symbols, structures and the many concrete events in nature, which can be understood as inspiration, but never actually portrays them. The painting process itself, which is specifically limited and can in principle never be explored to its absolute limits, develops in both its arranged geometrical detail and pictorial entirety as a manifesto of a distinctive and unique artistic attitude and conviction.

Scully’s colours, his works on huge, small and medium-sized canvases with innumerable, impenetrable, partially only perceptible thick layers and coalescing applications of oil paint unite to form pictures *sui generis*. With their captivating ability to communicate timeless certainty and tranquillity, they mediate between the present and the vast expanses of art history within which Velasquez, Henri Matisse and Mark Rothko number among the favourites of the painter of world-standing, who works in New York, Barcelona and Bavaria.

Seventeen paintings and four watercolours form the contingent of the exhibition of the artist at the Museum Liaunig, which will last from April 26th to October 31st. The exhibition is to be accompanied by a large-format catalogue and will constitute Sean Scully’s fifth show in Austria, the Neue Galerie der Stadt Linz having taken an initial large retrospective in 1996 from the Jeu de Paume in Paris, which was followed by a second comprehensive, solo exhibition at the Lentos in 2012 organised in conjunction with the Berne Museum of Art.

In 1998, paintings by Sean Scully were displayed in the Bawag Foundation in Vienna and a smaller exhibition was held at Galerie Margund Lössl in Gmunden.

Almost 200 one-man shows in Europe, the USA and Asia, the global presence of important works in a similar number of museums and public collections, as well as a bibliography that corresponds with this reputation, serve to underline the status of this exceptional artist.

Peter Baum
(Exhibition curator)

Exhibition "Sean Scully – painting as an imaginative world appropriation"
April 26th to October 31st 2015, Museum Liaunig, 9155 Neuhaus/Suha 41, Austria
www.museumliaunig.at, office@museumliaunig.at, 0043/4356/211 15
Wednesday to Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm, guided tours at 11 am and 2 pm