LISSON

SEAN SCULLY

PRESS RELEASE

GALLERY PRESENTATION | LANDLINE
2/F, 27 HUQIU ROAD, SHANGHAI
9 NOVEMBER 2026 – 30 JANUARY 2027
TUESDAY – SATURDAY, 11AM – 6PM
OPENING: 3 – 6PM, 9 NOVEMBER 2026

SPECIAL DISPLAY | TOWER
CAPITOL THEATRE BUILDING
1/F, 142-146 HUQIU ROAD, SHANGHAI
10 – 14 NOVEMBER 2026, 12 – 8PM
15 NOVEMBER 2026, 12 – 6PM



Lisson is pleased to present acclaimed artist Sean Scully's first solo exhibition in Shanghai since his landmark survey in 2014, *Follow the Heart: The Art of Sean Scully 1964–2014*, at the Shanghai Himalayas Museum—which marked him as the first Western artist to receive a career-spanning retrospective in China. Scully returns with new works from his celebrated *Landline* series, where broad horizontal stripes evoke the natural horizon. This presentation follows recent institutional exhibitions in China, including *Away From The Sea* at He Art Museum, Shunde (2024), and *Sublime and Sunyata* at the Art Museum of Sichuan Conservatory of Music (2025).

Sean Scully's *Landline* works are largely inspired by his years in Ireland, particularly his time looking out to the sea. The architectural qualities of landscapes unfold to reveal the physical and emotional dimensions of experience and memory. With thick, gestural brushstrokes and loose bands of colour, the *Landline* paintings show Scully's transition away from his earlier hard-edged minimalism to a more expressive style that elicits the beauty and brilliance of the natural world, which at once bring to the colour fields of classic European paintings, and a more organic approach to the stripes. With gestures evoking the land, sea, and sky, as well as the indistinct lines between them, the works navigate the elemental relationships that compose our world, and in doing so reveal the sublime character of these interactions.

Scully's tendency to layer dark over light, light over dark is a constant across different mediums he employs. In *Landline Rouge* (2026), this layering produces an evocative sense of depth, anchoring the bold, abstracted stripes of colour to a specificity of place and time. The layering and merging of oil pigments in coloured bands—rich wine red, navy blue, bleached ochre, sliver grey and scarlet red—across the panel's aluminium surface, suggest points between nature and architecture in a quiet, understated hamlet of centuries-old wood-frame and stone houses. While in oil on copper *Landline See Moon* (2025), different shades of blue stripes combine to form a nocturnal palette, whose edges sway against one another and mingle softly, invoking the hazy moonlight refracted and reflected as it ascends over a darkening sea.

The translation of the Landlines motif from its typically large panel onto a more intimate scale can be seen in a group of watercolours on paper, including *Landline 6.21.26* and *Landline 6.20.26* (both 2026), which are marked by the vista with bands of greens, yellows and blues. Another work on paper *Union 6.16.26 (2026)* is a result of Scully's further experimentation with the stripe in the late 1980s, where he combined colour bands with compositional structures such as the checkerboard and the inset. The work configured three groups of stripes in different widths, orientations and colours, to create a sense of wholeness, as title suggests.

From 10 – 15 November, coinciding with the presentation at Lisson Shanghai, Scully presents a special display of three large-scale *Tower* paintings at the Capitol Theatre Building, Rockbund, an important site where Hollywood film companies established branch offices during their early entry into China. Marking the series' China debut, the *Tower* works radically reimagine Scully's practice through concatenated panels of wood, felt, and aluminum. These sculptural paintings fuse disparate styles—graffiti spray, grids, and road signs—with gaps and overlaps that evoke both Quattrocento perspective and modern ruptures like Analytic Cubism. This tension between cohesion and fracture creates a rhythmic harmony, channeling the tumult of urban high-rises while allegorically echoing ambitious structures like the World Trade Center and the Tower of Babel, bridging demise and reconstruction.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sean Scully's work has shifted the paradigm in American abstraction from Minimalism and its reduced vocabulary towards an emotional form of abstraction, returning to the metaphor and spirituality found inthe European painting tradition. While known primarily for his large- scale abstract paintings, comprised of vertical and horizontal bands, tessellating blocks and geometrical forms comprised of gradated and shifting colours, Scully also works in a variety of diverse media, including printmaking, sculpture, watercolour and pastel. Having developed a style over the past five decades that is uniquely his own, Scully has cemented his place in the history of painting. His work synthesises a thoroughly international collection of influences and personal perspectives – ranging from the legacy of American abstraction, with inspiration from the likes of Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock, and that of European tradition, with nods to Henri Matisse and Piet Mondrian, as well as references to classical Greek architecture. While monumental in scale and gesture,Scully's work retains an undeniable delicacy and sincerity of emotion.

Sean Scully was born in Dublin in 1945 and raised in South London. Wanting to be an artist from an early age, Scully attended evening classes at the Central School of Art in London from 1962 to 1965, and enrolled full time at Croydon College of Art, London from 1965 until 1968. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Newcastle University in 1972. He was awarded the Frank Knox Fellowship to Harvard University in 1972, where he visited the United States for the first time. In 1975, he moved to New York full-time. Today, he lives and works between New York and Bavaria. With a career that spans more than five decades, he has received numerous accolades and has been the subject of multiple touring exhibitions. In 2014, he became the first Western artist to have a career- length retrospective in China. 'Follow the Heart: The Art of Sean Scully 1964 – 2014' included over 100 paintings and travelled from Shanghai to Beijing. Scully was named a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2013 and has received honorary degrees from institutions such as the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston; the National University of Ireland, Dublin; Universitas Miguel Hernandez, Valencia; Burren College of Art, National University of Ireland; Newcastle University, UK, among others. A series of essays and conversations between Scully and the esteemed art critic Arthur Danto was published by Hatje Cantz in 2014, and a collection of Scully's own writing, selected speeches and interviews, *Inner*, was released in 2016.

Significant solo exhibitions of his work were recently on view at Bucerius Kunstforum, Hamburg, Germany (27 June – 2 November 2025); Art Museum of Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chengdu, China (12 June – 12 October 2025); Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY, USA (11 May – 21 September 2025); Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, South Korea (18 March – 17 August 2025); La Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera, Barcelona, Spain (14 March – 6 July 2025); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (14 October 2024—24 February 2025); He Art Museum (HEM), Shunde, China (2 August – 27 October 2024); Broadway, New York, USA (12 July 2024 – March 2025); Château d'Oiron, Plaine-et-Vallées, France (23 May – 6 October 2024); Église Saint-Nicolas, Caen, France, as part of the Festival Normandie Impressionniste (21 June – 22 September2024); Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris Marais, France (24 May – 27 July 2024); Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, Hungary (16 May – 1 September 2024); Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany (28 April – 16 June 2024); Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris Pantin, France (3 June – 30 September 2023); Collection Lambert, Avignon, France (1 July – 15 October 2023); Passerelle Centre d'art contemporain, Brest, France (20 October 2023 – 13 January 2024); and Houghton Hall, Norfolk, UK (23 April – 29 October 2023); Thorvaldens Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark (2 September - 5 March, 2023), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA (11 April - 31 July, 2022), Museum of Fine Arts – Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, Hungary, (October 13 – January 15, 2021), Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden, Wuppertal, Germany (June 11, 2020 - January 3, 2021), Albertina, Vienna, Austria (7 June – 8 September 2019); Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico (23 May – 29 September 2019); San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice, Italy (11 May – 13October 2019); LWL-Museum for Art and Culture, Münster, Germany (5 May – 8 September 2019); Villa Panza, Fondo Ambiente Italiano, Varese, Italy (18 April 2019 – 6 January 2020); National Gallery of Art, London, UK (13 April – 11 August 2019); The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, USA (23 February – 19 May 2019) and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., USA (13 September 2018 – 3 February 2019); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (29 September 2018 – 6 January 2019); De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, The Netherlands (21 April – 26 August 2018); Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, Germany (24 March – 5 August 2018); Cuadra San Cristóal, Mexico City, Mexico (7 February – 24 March 2018); State Russian Museum – Marble Palace, St. Petersburg, Russia (3 March – 9 May 2018); Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow, Russia (3 November – 10 December 2017); Museum of the Nanjing University of the Arts, China (8 April – 8 May 2016); Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (6 September – 9 October 2016); Hubei Art Museum, Wuhan, China (10 January – 12 March 2017); Shanghai Himalayas Art Museum, China (23 November 2014 – 25 January 2015); and Central Academy of Fine Art (CAFA), Beijing, China (12 March – 23 April 2015). In 2015, Scully oversaw a complete renovation at the Romanesque chapel Santa Cecilia de Montserrat, near Barcelona, featuring his work in dialogue with the historic architecture and restoring the church to working condition.

Sean Scully's work is in the permanent collections of numerous important institutions including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, NewYork; Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada; Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Fort Worth Museum of Art, Fort Worth; Albertina, Vienna; and Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China, among many others.

ABOUT LISSON

Lisson is a global gallery dedicated to shaping the art of today. Creating meaningful dialogues and robust markets between artists and audiences across six venues in the US, UK and China, Lisson exhibits the most engaging and challenging work, adding value and narrative through decades of experience and innovation.

Building significance and reputation with our artists, Lisson nurtures and amplifies their vision at every turn, supporting opportunities to show beyond the gallery's walls in museums, the public realm and through international partnerships. The gallery's heritage and its foundational role in contemporary art since 1967, allows for a deeper perspective and more thoughtful relationships when furthering the career and voice of an artist.

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