



SEAN SCULLY

(Dublin 1945–lives and works a.o. in Berlin)

9-11-96. 1996.

Pastel on firm paper.

Signed, titled and dated lower right: Sean Scully 9.11.96.

57.5 x 76 cm.

The work is recorded in the archive of the Sean Scully Studio. Provenance: - Galeria Carles Taché, Barcelona. - Acquired in 1996 from the above by the present owner, since then private collection Austria. "If you take Matisse, Mondrian and Rothko, then you have my work. True, there are other painters, but if you take just those three from this century, you can say quite a lot about my œuvre." Sean Scully As an art student, encountering the works of Mark Rothko opened Sean Scully's

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eyes to abstract art and rendered all attempts to find a figurative position irrelevant. When he moved to New York in 1975, the direct confrontation of his own art and the European art tradition, influenced by the Constructivism of artists such as Piet Mondrian and Bridget Riley, with Minimal Art and American Abstract Expressionism, led to the discovery or invention of his distinct pictorial language. At the same time, the Irishman Scully was very conscious of tradition, so that he was never interested in the disruption or renewal of art, but in deepening and intensifying it. His interest in the traditional is confirmed in the present work, for example, with his use of the pastel technique. This is a rather old-fashioned technique that had its heyday in the 18th and 19th centuries, but was somewhat forgotten amongst the avant-garde of the 20th century. Fascinated by the "powdery" yet closed surface, Scully uses his pastels, often in conjunction with paintings, to create intimate, mysterious works. Above all, the haptic surface of his pastels underlines the way in which his artworks differ from the hard-edge paintings of the time. Our pastel "9-11-96" is an outstanding example of this group of works. Like diary entries, they are titled only with a date, which also indicates that they were created spontaneously. In his works, Scully draws on a limited repertoire of both colour and form, which nevertheless inspires him to create imaginative combinations. Stripes in the most diverse variations determine the shapes, while muted, earthy tones define the colour palette. The present work is composed as a triptych, as is so often the case. In each field Scully plays with the strength of the strokes and the colour nuances of white and black. He plays with contrasts, which, however, fit together harmoniously in a balanced network of relationships.

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