

Press Release:
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SEAN SCULLY: International artist creates monumental works for Thorvaldsens Museum in first Danish solo show

SEPTEMBER 2nd 2022 – MARCH 5th 2023

An exhibition of unparalleled dimensions will take place at Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen come fall, as world-renowned artist Sean Scully visits Denmark. Scully is creating large-scale, site-specific sculptures specifically for the museum in his first ever Danish solo-show: *SEAN SCULLY MATERIAL WORLD*.

The exhibition is curated by Per Haubro Jensen in collaboration with Thorvaldsens Museum. *SEAN SCULLY MATERIAL WORLD* takes over the entire museum, as the artist showcases works that interact with the architecture, colors and surroundings of Thorvaldsens Museum. Sean Scully has chosen the materials for his new works carefully and with reference to Bertel Thorvaldsen's life and art as well as the history of Denmark:

“Thorvaldsens Museum is dedicated to the superstar of sculpture in Denmark. When Thorvaldsen came back from Italy, from doing the Grand Tour, a whole flotilla of wooden ships came out to celebrate his return, because he was indeed a superstar. Which is why of course, he has a museum dedicated to him, right in the middle of town, in a beautiful location.

I thought a wonderful way to interact with the museum would be to make sculpture out of wood, various colored oaks, which makes an oblique reference to the great Naval history of Denmark. Other materials I've used include marble, which makes a direct reference to Thorvaldsen, as well as found materials - and of course enlivening the museum with paintings”,
says Sean Scully.

Three of the artworks have been made specifically for the museum and the audience is in for a grand experience: The large-scale works count a 29ft sculpture in the museum front hall, a 13ft sculpture in Italian black marble from Carrara and a 25ft piece for the square in front of the museum, made from local Danish oak. Furthermore, the exhibition includes several other sculptures and drawings from Scully's oeuvre as well as his iconic paintings.

New Public Sculpture for Copenhagen

The city space of Copenhagen will be granted a new public sculpture during the exhibition period. Scully's sculpture group 'Oak Stacks' has been created specifically for Bertel Thorvaldsen's Square in front of the museum. The artwork consists of three tall sculptures made from locally found Danish oak. With its central placement 'Oak Stacks' offers a special, sensuous experience in city's cultural quarter and a temporary gift for the public space. This can be experienced during the first months of 2023 – the year in which Copenhagen has officially been designated as the World Capital of Architecture.

”Sean Scully is an amazing artist, and I'm looking forward to experiencing his work at Thorvaldsens Museum alongside citizens and guests of Copenhagen. His piece 'Oak



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Stacks', which will be exhibited publicly at Bertel Thorvaldsen's Square, presents people with a unique art experience as they move through the center of Copenhagen. The artwork inspires interaction with and appreciation for art and culture and will be a valuable asset to our public space. I whole-heartedly support this – and it is just in the spirit of Thorvaldsen himself as well," says Mayor of Culture and Leisure in Copenhagen, Mia Nyegaard.

A Meeting of Stars

The exhibition *SEAN SCULLY MATERIAL WORLD* presents a meeting across time and space between two artistic superstars, Sean Scully and Bertel Thorvaldsen. Despite their different life-worlds and time periods, Scully and Thorvaldsen both strive to express primary human emotions, combining physical and metaphysical dimensions into a form of imagery that is universal. Both artists find inspiration in the art of Antiquity but interpret it within each of their own contemporary times.

"It has been a great honor and pleasure to work with Sean Scully on this important exhibition presenting a group of monumental new sculptures created specifically for Thorvaldsens Museum. The exhibition includes a group of paintings and works on paper spanning more than fifty years of Scully's distinguished oeuvre.

SEAN SCULLY MATERIAL WORLD invites the audience to explore the dialogue between two artists from different centuries - Scully and Thorvaldsen - that both share an interest in the profound understanding of human emotion, which is expressed and conceived in their work", says the curator of the exhibition, Per Haubro Jensen, and the director of Thorvaldsens Museum, Annette Johansen.

The meeting between Scully and Thorvaldsen will expand the framework for understanding each of the artists' work and offer audiences an outstanding experience.

About Sean Scully

Since his youth, Sean Scully (born in 1945, Ireland) has worked with painting and print-making, later moving into the mediums of photography and sculpture. Scully's paintings are known for their extraordinary coloristic intensity combined with simple, abstract shapes. His sculptures are built from horizontal and vertical structures in materials such as stone, wood, zinc and glass, and his work is characterized by an ever-present exchange between the intimate and the monumental. Scully made his international breakthrough in the 1980's with solo exhibitions in both USA and Europe. He's won numerous awards and his works are represented internationally in both private and public collections.

The exhibition SEAN SCULLY MATERIAL WORLD takes place at Thorvaldsens Museum from September 2nd 2022 until March 5th 2023. The exhibition is generously supported by Aage and Johanne Louis-Hansen's Fond.

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