

lours lends them subtlety, a quality that can feel overwhelmed by the grander aspirations of his more forceful works in other media. A recent watercolour, *Robe Diptych* (2020) is beautiful. Rectilinear in overall shape, the composition contains 24 squares of muted colour, snugly contained in a horizontal grid. I was reminded of a watercolour set, the cakes of colour side by side in functional, unwitting harmony. I've no idea if this allusion to its own making is intentional, but it makes looking at it particularly satisfying. Beside it, the larger watercolour, *Black Square 1. 26. 20* (2020) looks flat by comparison, its five differently coloured bands lacking sufficient tension to lock or be locked into place by the below centre, titular shape.

Several paintings are on aluminium panels. A little one, *Black Square Coloured Land* (2021) is perfectly proportioned – it's about the size of a large format book – with jellybean-coloured bands punctuated by a black insert. But somehow it feels slightly off, as though the metal support was uncomfortable in its jacket of paint. That might sound odd, but the variety and proximity of works in the gallery prompt you to notice such details. Impervious to atmospheric, an aluminium panel has the advantage of stability, but it's an autonomy unsympathetic to paint, the support seeming to tolerate more than welcome it.² The paintings on linen – the luminous, *Wall Pink Blue* (2020), for example – feel more at ease, the material and support more reciprocal.

In a large series of archival pigment prints made on the artist's iPhone, 'The 50' (2021), the screen may have been touched, but the drawings printed out from that surface encounter lack any real sense of feeling. Blown up in scale, they become smoothly homogenous, like ghost-works in search of a body.³ With feeling more intact, the most recent work here is also the roughest. *Wall Plena* (2021) holds butty oblongs of broadly brushed paint in a jostling configuration of jarring colours. The liquid paint drips and runs into neighbouring areas, a sense of contamination increased by constellations of small bumps and paint fragments, dispersed like floaters across your vision. However time flies, this painting – along with many other works here – maintains a sense of arrival, the often difficult experience of coming into the world.

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Notes:

¹ Quoted in Kelly Grovier, *On The Line: Conversations with Sean Scully* (Thames and Hudson, 2021).

² Blinky Palermo's paintings on aluminium fare better; perhaps because the panels themselves are more discreet.

³ Andrea Büttner's more successful iPhone prints avoid this problem by translating her initial – and incidental – touching of the screen into the more physical medium of etching.



Sean Scully, *Inset*, 2021, archival pigment print on paper, edition of 40, 71.1 x 55.9cm; photograph courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery.



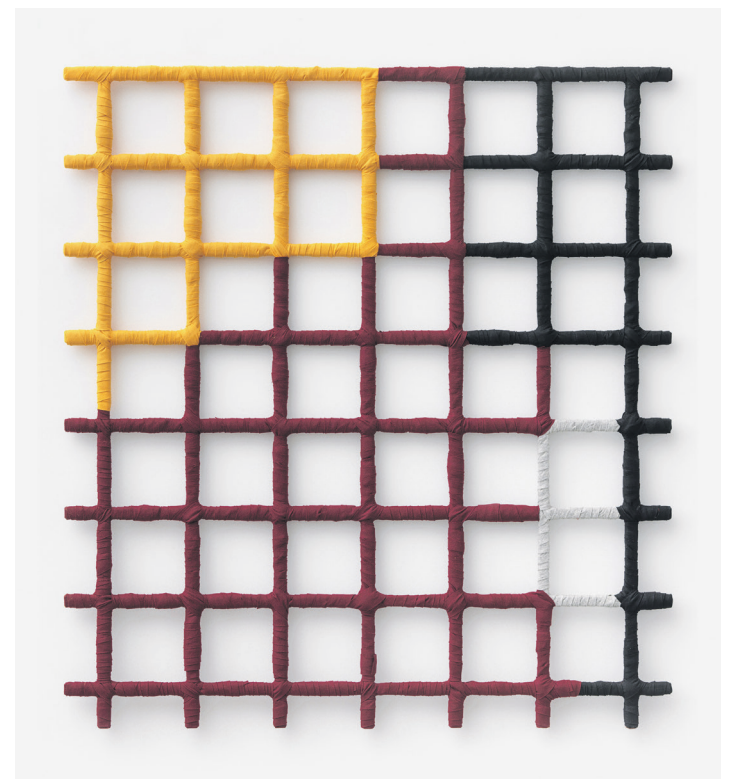
Sean Scully, 'SQUARE', installation view; photograph courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery.



Sean Scully, 'SQUARE', installation view; photograph courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery.



Sean Scully, 'SQUARE', installation view; photograph courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery.



Sean Scully, *Wrapped Grid Orange*, 2020, aluminium and felt, 190 x 175 cm; photograph courtesy the artist and Kerlin Gallery.