



MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

Artist Colin McMullan checks on a batch of boiling sap that will provide the steam for a portable steam room.

## Steam and syrup?

A pop-up tree spa will be outside Real Art Ways later this month

By SUSAN DUNNE

Become one with the trees in the Tree Spa for Urban Healing.

The tree spa, created by artist Colin McMullan, is a steam room hooked up to a maple syrup-processing shack. The steam in the room comes from the syrup-making process.

The spa will be set up and open to the public on March 16, 17, 21 and 23 at Real Art Ways in Hartford. On March 16, the spa

day will be accompanied by a pancake breakfast.

McMullan, a West Hartford resident who teaches art at Eastern Connecticut State University and UConn, has been making maple syrup for years and is involved with the Hartford Maple Syrup Club, which is co-presenting the spa days. McMullan thinks of the syrup and the steam as sculptural materials, and combines this interest with his interest in colonial New Eng-

land.

"Maple syrup making is an indigenous practice. I was thinking about environment and place," he says. "I am trying to build a community around reconnecting people with the history of a place and an understanding of the land, its specific qualities, the possibilities in that place."

Let's get the lowdown about the tree spa.

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Sean Scully's 2018 oil on aluminum artwork "Landline Far Blue Lake."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT BEAN

## LOOKING TO THE HORIZON

Sean Scully's abstract 'Landline' series on display at Wadsworth Atheneum

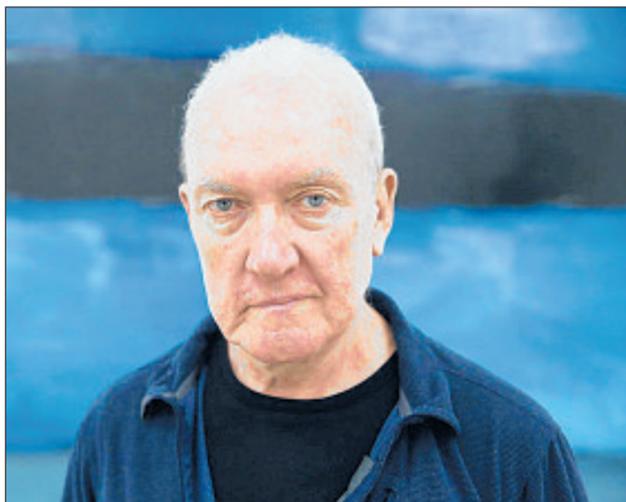
By SUSAN DUNNE

**S**ean Scully is fascinated by the horizon: "It's eternal. Look out at the sea. It's an endless movement back and forth and in and out, controlled in a way by the moon," Scully says.

An exhibit at Wadsworth Atheneum gives full play to Scully's horizontal preoccupation. "Sean Scully: Landline" fills three galleries on the third floor of the museum with large-scale oil-on-aluminum horizon paintings, smaller watercolors and two "stack" sculptures made of aluminum and automotive paint. A third Scully stack sculpture is installed on the lawn in front of the Hartford museum.

Scully came to his "Landline" series from a previous series, "Wall of Light," which featured horizontal and vertical

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Artist Sean Scully poses in front of his work "Landline Blue Blue."

LUKE MACGREGOR/REUTERS

## Sorting suitors from scammers

AARP survey for online daters focuses on staying vigilant about fraudsters

By DARCEL ROCKETT  
Chicago Tribune

\$200.  
\$2,900.  
\$270,000.

How much money are you willing to part with when it comes to looking for love? Reaching out to potential mates through online dating sites may be the norm, but when a possible love match asks for money, all bets are off.

"There are people who don't have money to lose, and they lose it nonetheless," said Kathy Stokes, AARP's director of fraud prevention programs. "A woman in her mid-60s called into our fraud helpline. She ended up getting in a relationship online with someone who tells her he has a medical emergency and needs \$2,900. Her income is \$778 a month, but she goes to the one credit card she has and sends him the money, and he disappears. She calls in and says she's going to go to her grave owing this money. I can't imagine this woman is going to spend the next 25 years of her life running from debt collectors."

According to a recent AARP survey that looked at how often U.S. adults ages 18 and over were targeted or victimized in online relationship scams:

- 27 percent indicate they or someone they know has encountered an online relationship scam.
- 57 percent of those scammed lost money or suffered other financial losses.
- 53 percent say they experienced emotional distress and/or health problems as a result of the scam.

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, which looks at suspected internet-facilitated criminal activity, puts Illinois in the top 10 states when it comes to the number of victims and the amount of money victims of all types of online scams have lost.

"You and I probably both have friends that met someone and married (someone) from an online relationship," Stokes said. "But in any case, be vigilant and make sure you're looking for those signs, and there are clearly signs if a person isn't who they say they are."

If a photo looks less like a regular photo and more like a model, if a potential mate wants to leave the dating website and talk through email or texts and then inundates you with said texts, calls and emails, or if a person never shows up to meet you in person despite promises that it will happen, all are scam signs, per AARP.

Eric Resnick, an online dating profile writer and owner of ProfileHelper.com — based in Orlando, Fla. — said protecting oneself from scammers starts with the profile, photos and online dating strategy. He offered the following tips:

**Profile:** Avoid talking about things like financial security, loneliness, or a former spouse (ex or deceased). "Talking about how financially secure you are tells

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# Abstract

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rectangular bars bunched into grids. Then he became intrigued with the horizons.

"Maybe it's an immigrant vision because an immigrant is always looking at the horizon line. Because you're looking at something you can't see but can only imagine. And for us humans, it also represents eternity," he says.

So Scully started taking the vertical elements out of his artworks.

"That changes everything in the painting," he says. "They're a fusion of serial art repetition and making an obvious reference to the landscape."

"Landline" is a collection of horizontally striped paintings, created with heavy brushstrokes. Some works have a color "theme," all blue or all green. Others are more varied, with the commonality among the paintings that no two colors are exactly alike, as they are created with layers and layers of colors.

"They're pure, confused colors. All the colors are made on the painting," Scully says. "All the colors are affected by how they got onto the painting. They're wedded to their journey onto the canvas."

This quality gives them a connection to the sea: "The movement of the sea is never the same. It can never be the same. And that is the beautiful thing about painting, that it can never be the same."

Although most of the horizon paintings are large in scale, an intriguing element is a row of nine small-scale pink-toned horizon paintings, of oil on copper. Scully was inspired by Miles Davis, who took just two days to record the most acclaimed jazz album of all time "Kind of Blue."

"That shows greatness cannot be shackled to effort or time invested. In a way it's divine in some way, inspirational, God-given. At the end of days of painting [other paintings], when my labors came to an end, I was in a neutral zone and I made these paintings. Not a lot of effort went into them. ... They're a meditation on the end of the day, when the light goes down in the countryside, before the nighttime comes."

An exception to the horizon works is Scully's "Human Too" series, which comprises four paintings that he considers a single work of art. Each is painted in a different pattern, with a square embedded in the center from one of the other paintings.

"I call it 'Human' because it's reflective of the way we've always been. The panels are taken out of context and moved around. They're in the wrong place and they have to get on with it. It's about immigration."

Scully's ceiling-high stack sculptures are a "strong antidote" to his paintings in that they are conceptual; he designs



PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT BEAN

Sean Scully's 2017 oil on aluminum artwork "Landline Bend Triptych."



SEAN SCULLY

Sean Scully's stack sculpture "30," installed outside the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford.

them and chooses the colors but he does not make them.

"They're hollow on the inside, almost like empty picture frames. They're holding space you can't see. They have air in them."

Looking out the door of one of the galleries, the Sol LeWitt mural in the lobby can be seen. That's a coincidence. Scully says LeWitt is the artist he is exhibited alongside most frequently, and his repetitious, line-based imagery is often compared to LeWitt's.

Scully disagrees that their works are similar.

"We are the opposite. He's all machine, all concept. He took the body out of painting. I'm putting it back in," he says. But that doesn't mean he disdains the Hartford-born conceptual artist.

"I like LeWitt but somebody had to do something about all those minimalists, without painting people flying through the air with seven eyeballs. I decided it had to be me. Mine is a very aggressive repudiation of all that refinement!"

Scully, 73, was born in Dublin and raised in London. Growing up "in reduced circumstances," with his father in prison for a time for deserting the British Army, Scully started working at age 15 as a typesetter. "The letters were like little sculptures made of metal," he says.

He studied art at Croydon College of Art and Newcastle University. After getting a graduate degree at Harvard, he emigrated to New York.

Scully now divides his time between Tappan, N.Y., and a summer studio in Bavaria. Scully's work is entirely abstract except when he paints pictures of his 9-year-old son, Oisín.

"I made an exception because of love," he says.

Scully feels more productive in the country than in the city, and he feels more comfortable creating his abstract work in the United States and Germany than in England.

"I think that to bring an abstract painting into the world of your own personal reality, it takes a different kind of imagination than to appreciate other kinds of visual art. In England, I don't believe they can do that," he said. "[The English] are a rational people. Americans are not rational people. America is a very emotional and religious place. In America and Germany, abstraction gets a free pass."

"I associate abstract art with the freedom of America. In America, a lot of different people have to come together. Abstract art creates a neutral platform for people to agree. A Jew, a Catholic, an atheist and a Muslim can all stand in front of the painting without it pressing any emergency buttons."

When Scully's exhibit leaves in May, one painting will be left behind. He is giving it to the museum.

**SEAN SCULLY: LANDLINE** is at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main St. in Hartford, until May 19. A talk with Scully and contemporary art curator Patricia Hickson will be March 11 at 6 p.m., preceded by a reception at 5 p.m. [thewadsworth.org](http://thewadsworth.org).

Susan Dunne can be reached at [sdunne@courant.com](mailto:sdunne@courant.com).

## RELIGION NOTES

### Wednesday-Friday Services

**Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford:** 12 p.m. Wednesday Holy Eucharist in English; 5:15 p.m. wellness Wednesday, which includes zumba, contemporary worship and dinner.

**Church of the Holy Trinity, Middletown:** 12:15 p.m. midweek Eucharist Thursday.

**Islamic Association of Greater Hartford, Berlin:** 1 p.m. Friday (Jumah) prayers.

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church, New Hartford:** 7 p.m. Wednesday evening worship.

**Temple Sinai, Newington:** 6 p.m. Family Shabbat service.

**Trinity Episcopal Church, Hartford:** 12 noon. Thursday Eucharist.

**Trinity Episcopal Church, Wethersfield:** 8 a.m. Wednesday morning prayer.

**Unity of Greater Hartford:** 7 p.m. Wednesday night meditation service.

### Ash Wednesday Events/Services

**Faith Lutheran, Middletown:** 6-8 a.m. "Drive thru ashes"; 12 and 7 p.m. worship services.

**St. Peter's Episcopal Church, East Windsor:** 6:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes on March 6 at 6:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

**Grace Episcopal Church, Hartford:** 7:15 a.m. Low Mass with Imposition of Ashes, Rite 2 (followed by breakfast at Effie's), and 7 p.m.: Solemn High Mass with choir, and Imposition of Ashes, Rite 1.

**Deep River Congregational Church:** 7:30 a.m. Communion service.

**Church of the Holy Trinity, Middletown:** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. "Ashes to Go" outside the front of the church. Service at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.

**First Congregational Church, Southington:** 12 and 7 p.m. Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 and Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21 Sermon: The Hard Things About Being a Christian: Repentance.

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Avon:** 12 and 7 p.m. Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes.

**South Congregational Church, East Hartford:** 5 p.m. Contemplative Ash Wednesday worship service including the imposition of ashes.

**United Church in Chester:** 6 p.m. Joint Potluck Dinner/Ash Wednesday Service.

Send emails to Jaime at [calevents515@gmail.com](mailto:calevents515@gmail.com) Mondays by 4 p.m. Listings are free and run as space permits.

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