moved from Manhattan.

My interest was in seeing more of Julia Jensen's large-scale semi-abstract landscapes that I had seen a year ago. Her paintings have a way of staying with you, long after you leave the gallery, the same way my memory of that mountaintop house and the landscape surrounding it is with me still, years later.

Jensen knows northern light in all its variations - stark, searing, muted, gloomy, soft, sensual. Her large oils often devote a greater part of the panel to the foreground, as in two related works "Understanding of Where." and "Then I Walked Outside." The foreground expansive glistens with multiple layers of fluid light: The blues and yellows meld into each other, creating a depth that draws the eyes to the top of the panel where a cool blue gray tone contrasts with the light-infused copper and crimson that anchor the setting.

I asked Jensen about these two works because they indicate an expansion of the artist's vision, if not totally a departure from previous works. She said, "I am constantly working with landscape colors, blues and greens. I try to find a way to either push that palette to extremes or completely abandon it." Much of her earlier work was created on location but more recent works are done in studio where she draws on both visual memory and sense memory. "By not being confined to depicting a specific time or place, I am able to be much looser in my process. I can let the work evolve in its own.

It has been Scully's stated aim to give abstraction back to the people - and in recent years his paintings have been wildly popular, in some cases commanding $1 million apiece at auction.

Scully, who is also a poet and writer, has said the series initially served as a virtual helpline, helping him emerge from an addiction to OxyContin that followed treatment for a serious back injury. It was in recovery that he found painting horizontally offered him the chance to conjure sea, land and sky. This touring exhibition includes nearly 50 paintings, pastels, watercolors and photographs, and two layered aluminum stack sculptures as well. Ahead of this show, in 2018, a large multi-layered sculpture was installed on the museum's Main Street sculpture garden.

Because his art comes to us in the language of the contemporary world - from the patterns we absorb as we traverse city blocks, or the other visual rows and lines that define our homes and working spaces, Scully believes his art is easily accessed.

Between these lines, the artist's brushstrokes and brilliant rhythmic color packs a wallop, encapsulating the verdant layers of a Dickensian upswing, a deep awareness of European art history and references elements from masterpieces created by a number of post-Impressionists. He credits Gustave Courbet, Paolo Veronese and Titian for teaching him about color.
His aesthetic sensibility has also been further shaped by his distinct cultural and working-class heritage, working as a young man in a Notting Hill printmaking factory and later for a cardboard box company north of London — fertile places to acquire skills and knowledge about people. While the daily commute served up lessons in sociology and politics, one can also see how his nascent-aesthetic ideas were percolating.

Across media, including watercolor, oil painting and sculpture — Scully is able “to deepen, mystify and vary his relatively limited repertoire of motifs — largely comprised of vertical and horizontal stripes,” Patricia Hickson, the Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art, and the Wadsworth’s curator, said.

In the paintings in this exhibition, “you can see these works are clearly responses to landscape, and feel the emotion that is in them. On face value, the bands of the natural landscape — of land, sea and sky — are just bands of color. But from the photographs that inspired these works you see how he takes these elements and makes them sublime,” she added.

Scully was born in Dublin in 1945, moved to London as a child, studying art at the Central School of Art and Croydon College of Art before receiving his BA from Newcastle University in 1972. He has said that it was in relocating to the United States that the world opened to him, giving him opportunities to grow and develop that he would not otherwise have had. Scully’s first mid-career solo exhibition at the Hirshhorn in 1995 cemented his status as a leading 20th century artist.

Renowned today as a master of post-Minimalist abstraction, he has taught and lectured at major universities and museums worldwide, including Princeton, Parsons School...
of Design, Harvard and Oxford University. And he has received many awards, including the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation Prize, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Harkness Fellowship.

From 2002–2007, Scully was a professor of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Germany. He currently splits his year between New York and the Bavarian countryside.

"I try to paint this, this sense of the elemental coming together of land and sea, sky and land, of blocks coming together side by side, stacked in horizon lines endlessly beginning and ending the way the blocks of the world hug each other and brush up against each other, their weight, their air, their color and the soft uncertain space between them," he wrote.

The exhibition can be found in the Austin Gallery and two adjoining galleries, and includes paintings, pastels, inset paintings and sculpture. In these rooms, viewers can see photographic images of the cliffside view in Norfolk, England, that inspired the series. A catalogue, with essays by Hickson and her Hirshhorn counterpart, Stéphane Aquin, is available in the Wadsworth bookshop.

On Monday, March 11, Hickson and Scully will have a featured conversation at 6 p.m., preceded by a reception for the artist that begins at 5 p.m.

Kristin Nord

THE FUTURE OF ART + CULTURE

LESLEY ART + DESIGN

MFA PROGRAMS
+ Photography & Integrated Media (Full-Residency)
+ Visual Arts (Low-Residency)

EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES
+ lesley.edu/mfa-art