

Endangered Sky

Sean Scully & Kelly Grovier

It is estimated that, as a result of climate change, illegal trade, and habitat loss from the encroachments of technology and industrialization, as many as one in eight species of birds is heading towards extinction. Created in close collaboration between Sean Scully and Kelly Grovier, each pairing of poem and drawing is devoted to the beauty and mystery of an individual species of bird. Scully's visual language, at once measured and impassioned, geometric and free-flowing, captures the essence of creatures that are, themselves, on the brink of becoming mere abstractions. Though his first series of iPhone drawings are consistent with his signature style, they reveal a fresh intimacy, playfulness, and exhilaration of gesture, color, and form that is in accord with the wonder of feathered flight. Created on a digital device, the drawings are, as Scully remarked, the ironic embodiment of "technology which is ruining nature turned inside out to protest its demise." Yet taken together, these duets aim to offer something uplifting in the face of an accelerating tragedy. "Hope" is, after all as Emily Dickinson famously wrote, "the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul."

Having developed a style over the past five decades that is uniquely his own, SEAN SCULLY (*1945, Dublin) is one of the world's most acclaimed contemporary artists. He is known for his large-scale abstract sculptures, installations and paintings, comprised of vertical and horizontal color bands, blocks and geometrical forms as well as his intellectually engaging writings and lectures.

KELLY GROVIER is a poet and cultural critic. Educated at the University of California, Los Angeles and at the University of Oxford, he is a feature writer for BBC Culture and co-founder of the international scholarly journal *European Romantic Review*.

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