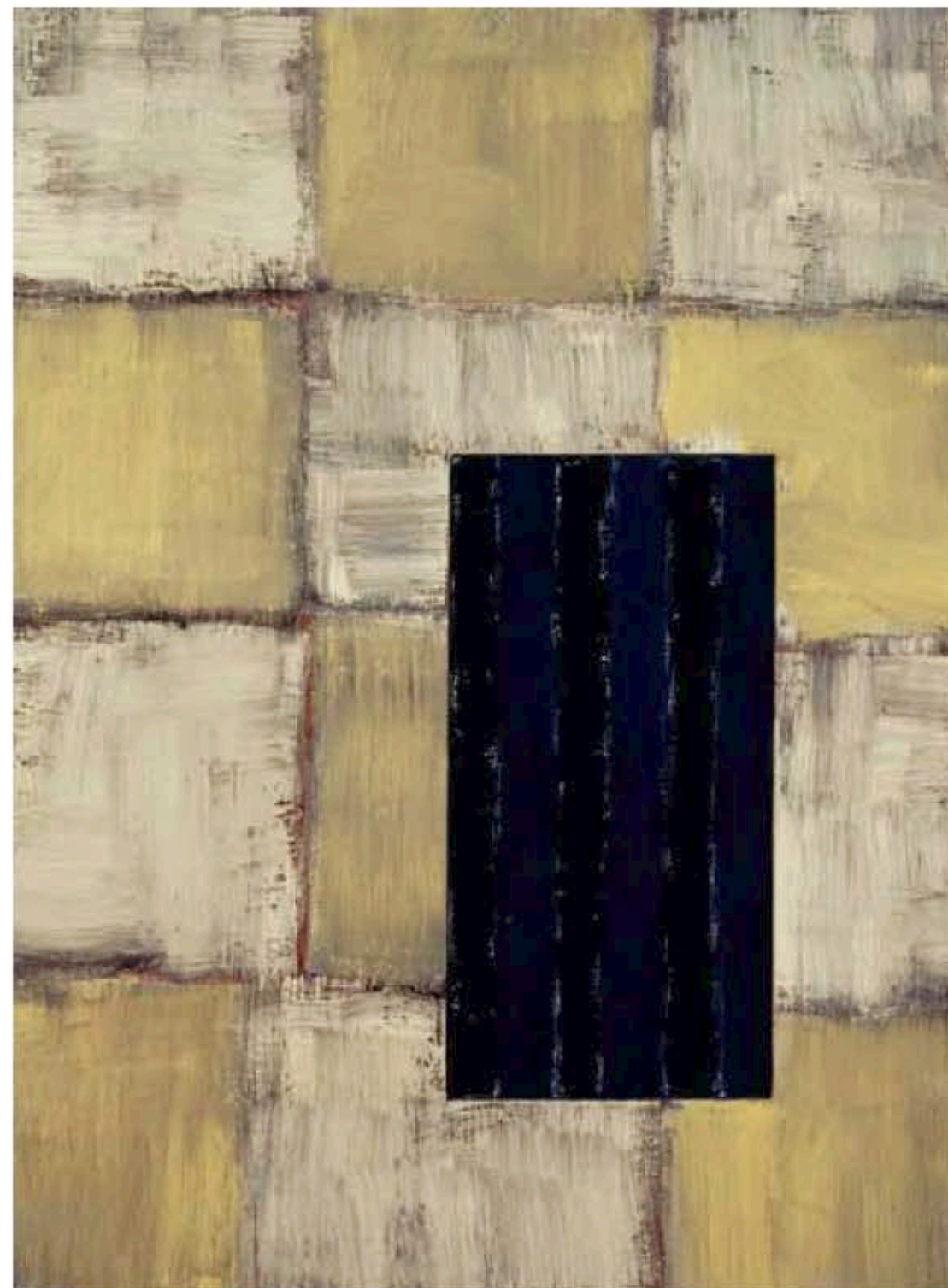
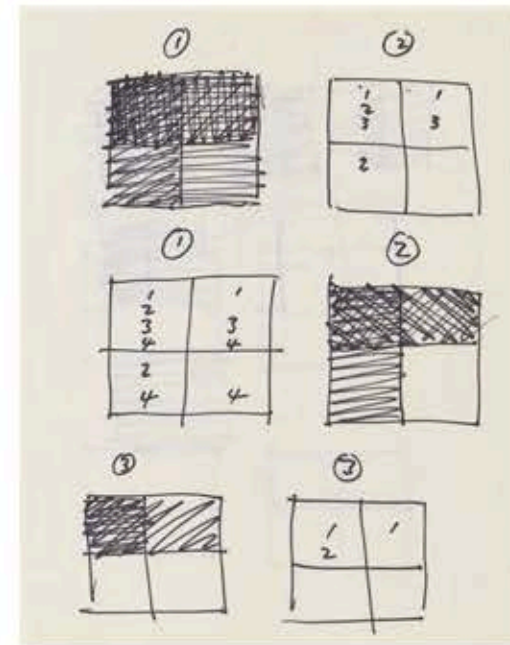
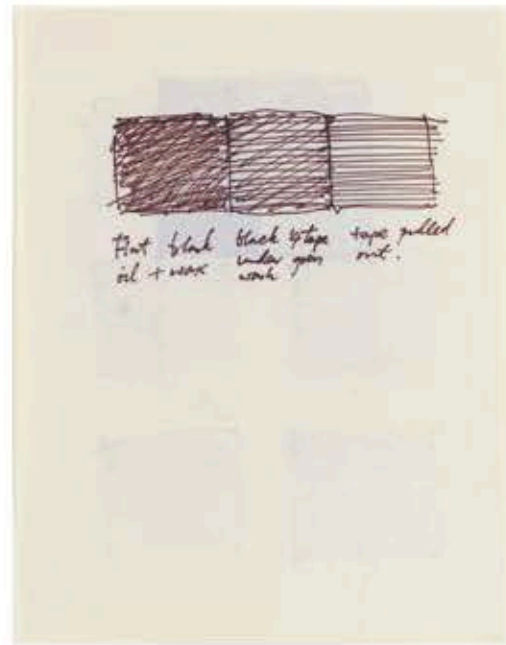
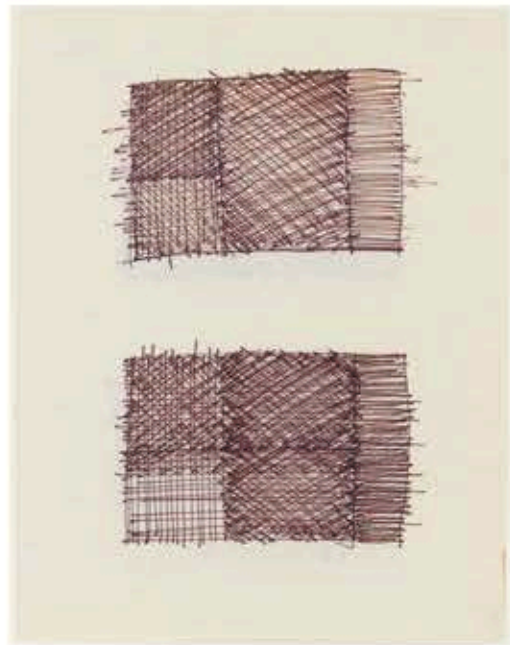
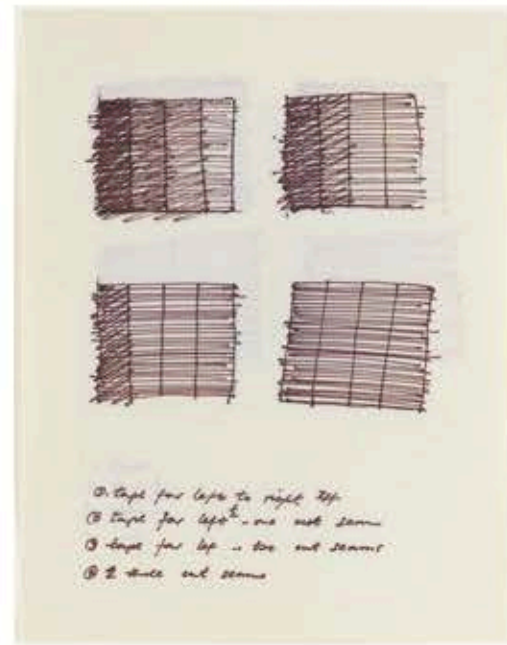
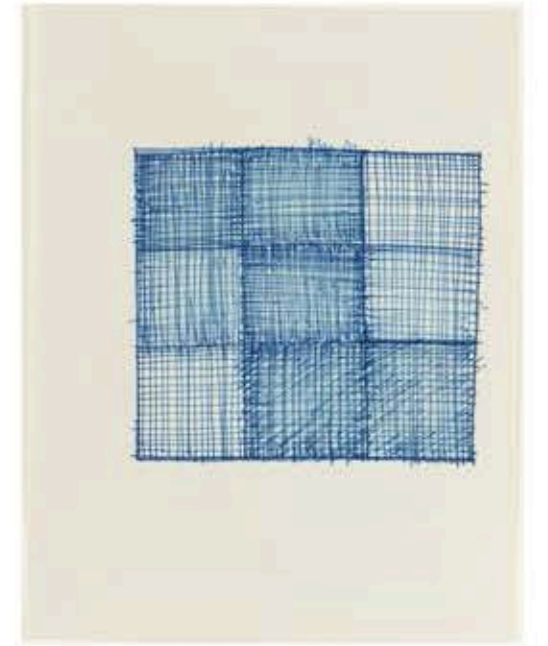
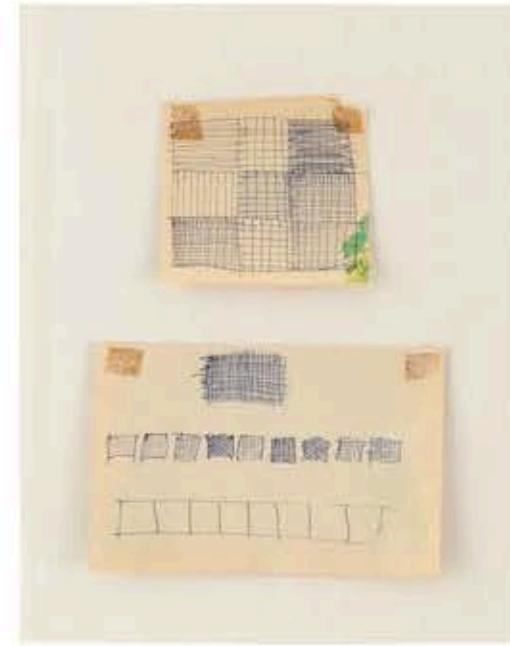
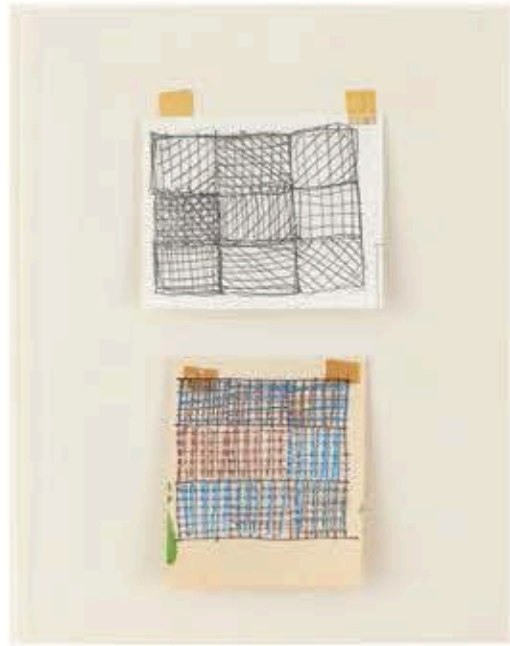
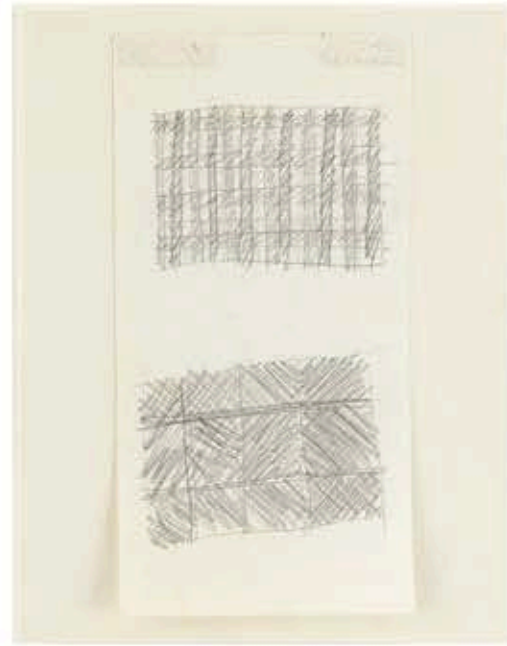




Backs and Fronts, 1981
Oil on linen and canvas
Twelve attached canvases
96 x 240 in. (243.8 x 609.6 cm)
Private collection





Mark Rothko (American, 1903–1970).
Untitled, 1949.
 Oil on canvas.
 81½ × 66½ in. (206.7 × 168.6 cm).
 National Gallery of Art, Washington.
 Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation,
 Inc., 1986.43.138



“Working a lot,” he said. His listener offered some words of excited admiration. But Scully was quick to specify, with a laugh, “that doesn’t necessarily mean productively!” As if to say, hold on, let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

Toward the end of the year, however, the barn-turned-gallery on Scully’s property in Sharon, Connecticut, housed a stately installation of two new paintings and ten related drawings; off being printed at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) were two engravings. The ensemble forms a tightly coherent group of objects, despite the wide range of techniques, mediums, and scale. Each of the paintings and engravings, as well as the largest drawing, are titled *Regrets*, a provocative though ultimately mysterious designation.

This intensive campaign of painting, drawing, and printmaking offers a concentrated portrait of Scully’s lifelong working process. Here, as often, it began with the trigger of a visual motif, one which affords the artist a point of departure and is not to be confused with the notion of a painting’s subject—for Scully, the painting’s subject is the painting. That subject may be explored in a whole family of works, which together enable the unpredictable metamorphosis of the catalytic motif and, closely intertwined with that, host a wealth

of technical experiment. As Scully’s cautionary remark to his listener suggests, it is an uncertain journey of stops and starts, queries and hypotheses, roads taken and not.

This new chapter began during the early summer of 2012. An image in an auction catalogue that had come in the mail caught Scully’s attention—a black-and-white photograph of the artist Lucian Freud, taken fifty years ago by the British photographer John Deakin. Freud, about forty-two years old, sits on a narrow bed, holding his right hand to his forehead in a gesture of evident weariness or despair. Christie’s reproduced the photo in a catalogue for a June 27, 2012, sale in London. The publication, as is often done these days, was devoted solely to a single exceptional work in the sale, Bacon’s *Study for Self Portrait*, and filled with contextualizing essays and images. The photograph that attracted Scully’s notice was one of several reproduced, all from a shoot that Bacon had commissioned Deakin to do in Freud’s studio. While the others show the artist in a variety of cheerful poses, the seemingly weary one is either artifice or the chance product of the camera’s timing.

Bacon, who painted from photographs rather than from the live model, had ordered the photos of Freud for potential use in his own work. He often asked Deakin to photograph such friends as George Dyer, Isabel Rawsthorne, and the other principal subjects of his paintings. This session with Freud would provide the source for several portraits of him over the years. And, in the case of the painting being sold at Christie’s in 2012, Bacon appropriated his friend’s body to use as his own. In a decidedly strange conjunction, Bacon painted his own head atop a seated figure derived by combining two different photos from Deakin’s shoot.

meaning of a feeling of sadness or disappointment. Paired with the artist’s name—serving here as a readymade signature—the text suggests a mood of melancholy or ruefulness, the basis for which the viewer is given no clue.

At this stage, the artist was ready to set to work on a painting. He selected a stretched canvas that was on hand in the studio, measuring 67 by 96 inches, nearly fifty times the area of the double image in *Study for Regrets*. While still horizontal in format, the proportions of the canvas are slightly more vertical than those of the study. A photograph taken in Scully’s studio in December 2012 provides a look at the painting when it existed as, essentially, a drawing in paint (fig. 9). It adheres to the format of *Study for Regrets*: the original image is on the right and its flipped version on the left. But the composition is no longer exactly bilateral: the center point of the side-by-side images is shifted to the left, so that the inverted version is cropped prior to reaching the edge of the bed. This adjustment corresponds to the slightly more vertical proportions of the canvas. Scully has also laid the groundwork for the mirroring left and right sides to differ, with renderings of the source image that deviate slightly in detail. Most importantly, he now has omitted the vertical line that would demarcate the edges of the two images as they meet at the center. The twinned representation of the absent lower-left section of the source photograph, seen as a red/green pair in *Study for Regrets*, here its definitive transition to a unitary form, which will become the dominant foreground image in the painting.

Another photograph, taken on January 4, 2013, (fig. 10) presents the filling-in of the outlined composition with various tones of gray paint. This follows the approach of Scularias. Here graphite is replaced by a variety of thinly applied gray paints articulating the

