

SGI 34 Hanover Square: sculpture 'Landline' by Sean Scully, 2023

City of Westminster, London, W1S

Grid reference: TQ 289 810; Lat Long: 51.513524, 0.14357731; What3Words:- brain.fork.means

Landline is a sculpture by Sean Scully RA (b.1945) which is located on the south side of Hanover Square in London's West End. Inspired by stratigraphy and nature, the square prism is constructed from five blocks of decorative stone of different thickness. The provenance of the stones used has not been published. However, the author has identified the following likely origins of the materials used here. From bottom to top, these are:

Nero Marquina – a black limestone quarried in Marquina (Markina), Vizcaya in the Pais Basco of northern Spain. The stone is of Aptian-Albian age (Mid Cretaceous) and is a bituminous limestone with scattered white fossils of polyconitid rudist bivalves, corals, gastropods and bivalves (*Chondrodonta* sp.). The stone is crossed by white calcite veins in conjugate sets.



'Landline' by Sean Scully RA, Hanover Square

Photo: Ruth Siddall

Verona Marble – also known as '*Rosso Ammonitico Veronese*' this is a late Bajocian – Tithonian (Upper Jurassic) condensed limestone from the Ammonitico Rosso, a nodular, red, iron oxide stained, pelagic, condensed limestone which is a prominent (but diachronous) marker horizon for Alpine geologists, stretching from Iberia to Turkey. It has been quarried

along the length of its outcrop, but the classic localities are the quarries at S. Ambrogio di Valpolicella, S. Anna di Alfaedo and Caprino Veronese near Verona in the Veneto Province of Italy, which is the likely source of the stone used here.

Verde Alpi – several varieties of serpentinite with the generic name ‘Verde Alpi’ are quarried in the Val D’Aosta area of the Italian and French Alps. These rocks represent ancient, Cretaceous seafloor that was obducted and emplaced as ophiolite complexes during the closure of the Tethys Ocean during the Alpine Orogeny and are to be found in the Sezia-Lanzo structural zone which represents the suture of the collision of the Italian microcontinent with stable Europe. These stones take a high polish and have been popular as decorative cladding and sculptural stone for the last century.

Limestone (provenance unknown) – unfortunately this stone is too high up for detailed examination of the fossils and sedimentary structures present. It appears to be a rudist-bearing, nodular, condensed limestone, with stylolites concentrating red-pink iron oxide minerals. It is likely to be derived from the Cretaceous limestones of either Iberia or the northern Mediterranean region.

Carrara Bardiglio Marble – this is probably a dove grey variety of Italian Carrara Marble (although grey marbles are also known from the northern Adriatic region, Greece and Turkey). Bardiglio grey marbles are quarried across the outcrop of the so-called Hettangian Marble of Carrara, Massa and Serravezza in the Alpi Apuane. The grey colour is imparted by very fine particles of pyrite which is disseminated through the rock.

The artist has said of this work that “[t]he marble is a natural material that is taken from the ground and has, as a consequence, a profound relationship with Nature. The colors that I’ve chosen serve to reflect the everchanging, quixotic nature of the London sky, which informs the daily ambiance of Hanover Square, where people live and work.” (Quoted by the Lisson Gallery, 2023)

References:

Lisson Gallery, 2023, Sean Scully unveils first permanent public sculpture in London at Hanover Square., <https://www.lissongallery.com/news/sean-scully-unveils-first-permanent-public-sculpture-in-london-at-hanover-square>