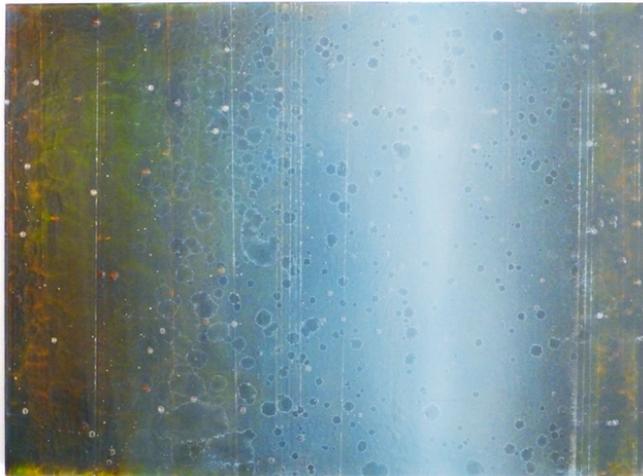


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the creatorsproject

Visualize the Beauty of Vibration with Massive Paintings

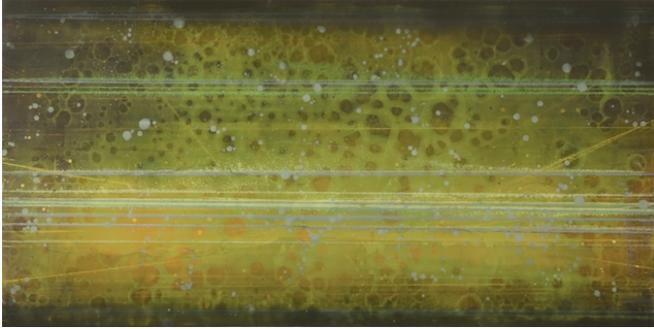
By DJ Pangburn
January 13, 2016



Cloud Prayer (2014). Courtesy the artist and Margaret Thatcher Projects

New York-based artist [David Mann](#) has been making art for decades, with his most recent work exploring abstract shapes configured in such a way that they appear both microscopic and galactic. For his latest exhibition, *Sympathetic Strings*, his first solo show, Mann explores the idea of sympathetic strings, or those found on instruments like a sitar, that lie just below the strings that are struck by the musician. These sympathetic strings are triggered only by the vibrations of the played strings.

Mann's visual take on sympathetic strings looks something like old film stock exposed to cuts and blemishes, which have then been blown up into large-scale prints. There is a depth to the paintings that almost looks three-dimensional, but they've been made with nothing more than oil paint and string on canvas.



Scanner (2015). Courtesy the artist and Margaret Thatcher Projects

Mann tells The Creators Project that these sympathetic strings appeal to them on many levels, but mostly because they are sensual and immediate. The sound of the strings and the notion of them work as a metaphor for the current artworks.

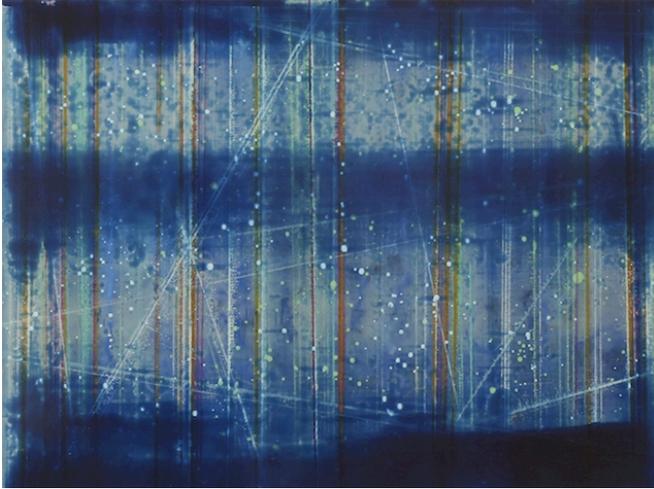
“The metaphoric part is how I think about painting—there is the initially intentional, primary part, and the ‘underneath’ of the work,” Mann explains. “With music when the player hits just the right tone, these strings are set off vibrating. In a painting, metaphorically, a similar thing happens. I struggle with the work trying to get the right color, the right space, and most important of all, the right luminosity. There’s an interplay between the initially intentional, primary part and then an activity in the painting that sets it off vibrating, resonating.”



Plural Eyes (2015). Courtesy the artist and Margaret Thatcher Projects

For Mann, his artistic process usually takes a lot of time, revisions, attempts, and failures, but eventually results in what he calls a sympathetic relationship. “The painting starts vibrating and there is a sympathetic relationship between the parts and the whole, color and line, light and space,” he says.

Sympathetic Strings also explores the interaction between the technological and phenomena found in nature. Mann saw an opportunity to create an interplay between the organic and synthetic. Within the paintings’ strings he also wanted to refer to diagrams, information systems, charts and graphs. To make the lines, he dips string into wet paint and pulls it taut over the painting, leaving a line on the painting where it snaps into place.



Laminate (2015). Courtesy the artist and Margaret Thatcher Projects

“Actually at first I saw them as being inspired by the vertical lines I would see at the beginning of old cinema (pre digital) in the movie theater,” Mann says. “The paintings are basically made of many—sometimes hundreds, sometimes just a few—layers of translucent color, glazes. Those layers are often violated by sprinkling mineral spirits on them as they dry horizontally on my studio floor. This gives the work a somewhat organic quality. I think of it as some kind of lifeform bubbling into being, or leaving as well.”

Sympathetic Strings run until February 6 at [Margaret Thatcher Projects](#) in New York City.