

## **On the Lines**

An art Project by Devaney Claro

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Text and images by Devaney Claro

## Lines

by Devaney Claro

Lines...

Lines...

Lines...

Extended to the wind, lines...

Which whispers of the breezes do you catch,  
As you are drawn by the artist?

Which feelings, dreams and desires do you gather,  
As the artist treats you with his colours?

What do your many shades reveal to the eye, lines?

Lines. Parallel.

Lines. Crossed.

Lines of lives

Lines. Intertwined.

Lines. Interspersed.

Coloured.

Lines...

Lines...

Lines.



(II. 1) Recently Coloured strings drying in the in the air in Munich, Germany, July 2014



(II. 2) Recently Coloured strings drying in the in the air in Munich, Germany, July 2014



(II.3) Recently Coloured strings drying in the in the air in Munich, Germany, July 2014



(II. 4) Coloured strings being cut after drying.

## 1. The underlying concept of the works.

The most basic thrust of an artwork is to want to exist, to come to the world as a form of expression. The dada- surrealist artist Max Ernst (1891-1976) said that he used to listen to the muses while he was working and said that inspiration was a gift from the muses to the artists.

Art and myth have always gone together because they are both part of human culture and therefore one cannot disassociate them from each other. The art is interwoven with myths and myths with mankind, and mankind with the world. Thus a large interrelationship network, called culture, is created.

The myth that provides conceptual foundation for the collection of works of the ***On the Lines*** series has its origins in ancient Greece where the life of man (and of gods) begins, takes place and ends on a thread, that is to say, it is started, it is measured and is cut like a string. This role is played by the Moirai (Fates), the three sisters who determine the fate of man and of gods. Clotho weaves the thread of life. Lachesis has the assignment of pulling, rolling and "working" the woven thread. And Atropos determines the end of life and severs it.

Every artist in his assignment repeats, perhaps unconsciously, the myth of the Moirai, as he himself determines, in the process of creation, the beginning and the end of a work of art.

And from the three sisters, the most relevant for the artist and the one who gives most conceptual support in the genesis of the work is Lachesis, who works on the thread of life.

The work, having been created by the artist, does not "die"; it is only partially finished. After its creation, it starts a new life path as it establishes new dialogues with the artist himself (within his own system) as well as with the beholder. For an artwork to exist and to "live on", an attentive beholder, with a new interpretation expressed or felt, suffices. And thus its existence on the two life lines of space and time is ensured.

The myth of the Moirai leads us to reflect on our own life and the human condition, in which, on the one hand, the basic human general questions remain without definitive answers: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going to? Can we determine our own destinies or it is already determined by extraneous interference? On the other hand, it also triggers some more personal questions such as:

What is the extent of my presence in the world? Is there a gap in the fabric of life where I can determine new fates or new interpretations? How can I determine my existence in the fabric of the world? In which network do I move? What kind of fabric do I form with my existence in the world? What dreams and desires show my lines on the surface of the world?

When we are born, we involuntarily enter into the relationship network of society and culture: a world, which is a fabric composed of several plots and network layers. In human relations, network fates can be maintained or changed through certain encounters and according to the

colour of each person's lifeline. We cannot forget that we come into this world through a string that gives us life: the umbilical cord.

The artwork is created and exists per se. For a person to be great, she or he has to go through their lines of life, which are coloured by their desires, dreams and feelings; for life can only be great if it is dreamed and fully lived.



(II. 5) Devaney Claro. Drei am Tisch: Die Moiren,  
Acryl auf Karton, 22 x 27 cm, 2007.

## 2. Genesis of the works.

The work is performed in two actions. The first one has a ritualistic nature, in which the threads of raw cotton are fixed at two points and then coloured and left to dry and finally cut (s. Illustrations 1, 2, 3 and 4). The second action consists of gathering the already coloured threads and fixing them on a flat surface (canvas or wooden boards), according to artistic ideas developed in the atelier.

In the first process, the threads of raw cotton (white as a blank canvas) are stretched between two points (columns) and then coloured by the artist reflecting the artistic concept being worked<sup>1</sup>. The process of colouring of the threads by the artist has a ritualistic character: Which feelings, emotions, desires and dreams do these colours capture in the breeze at that moment in that place? Here the reader may recall the " dream catcher " familiar in the context of indigenous American culture.

By extending the raw cotton threads in the air and fixing them for colouring, the artist also throws new destinies to be interwoven in space and time. In this creative process, the artist is seen as a shaman, a medium, an interlocutor who stands between the immaterial world, inhabited by his muses whispering their inspirations and aspirations in the artists ears, and his own artistic material world with its inherent elements: surface (canvas, cotton strings, wood, etc.) and colour (paints, pigments, resins, and so on). The artworks are a result of these intersecting of worlds.

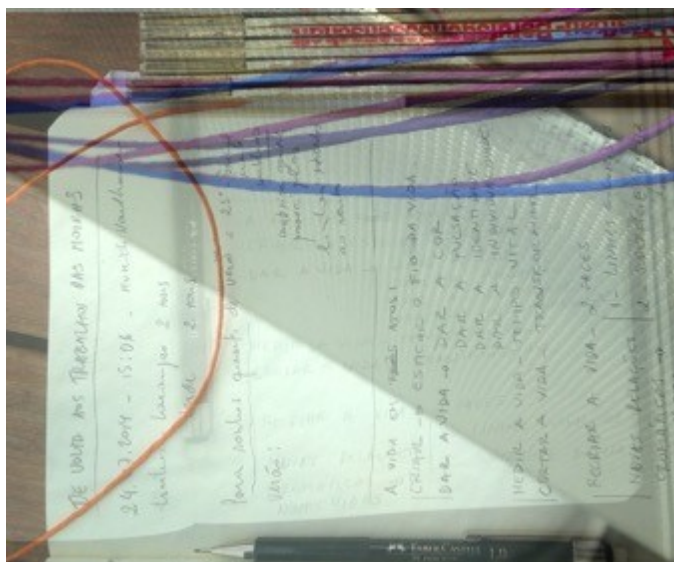
This concept of making art has been present in art history from ancient times. There are some examples in primitive art and in cave paintings, such as those in Lascaux in France, Altamira in Spain, in which it is believed that the painting of animals on cave walls was intended to evoke the presence of the animals. More recent examples are in the art of the German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) who directly approaches the theme of the artist as a shaman in his work, as well as in the art of the American Jackson Pollock, who supposedly painted his canvas on the floor, his Action Paintings, *en trance*.

The making of art is always a ritualistic process because the artist in his creative process always holds a constant dialogue between himself and the work, to the point where the work tells the artist what path to follow and what issues are still open through certain artistic procedures.

The artist seeks to write thoughts, ideas, reflections and words that come to mind during the process of work as a form of memorial retention of the work.

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<sup>1</sup> For the video on this process, please, go to <https://vimeo.com/113216091>



(II.6) Flow of thoughts caught during the work process.

In the second process in the studio, in the artistic material world, the artist still hears the Muses, but he focuses more on formal pictorial issues related to his own visual syntax, in which colours, shapes, layers and surfaces form a system of visual meaning. This is the time when the material cotton strings become lines, i.e. a basic pictorial element of the universe of the visual arts.

The work also records, as a visual diary, the artist's investigations and, primarily, it seeks to visualise a fundamental issue for man: the line of time does not stop. As the Spanish master Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) depicts in his famous work "Saturn Devouring his Son" (1819-1823, Museo del Prado), Cronus keeps devouring his children and forever he will. For the artist, the only material presence of the intersection of diachronic horizontal line, fully loaded of his own history, with the vertical synchronous line that holds the present at a place, is his artwork.

Everything flows, as stated by ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, in his concept of *panta rhei*. We all live in a span of space and time, which constantly moves forward and is in constant change. This is also true for the artwork, in which chromatic relations of different temperatures and hues of colours can be seen. The colours, as in Impressionism, are captured from nature, such as the colours in the sky at sunset or references to colours of plants and flowers in the garden according to the temperature and intensity of light. However, some chromatic relations will refer to more abstract emotional states of the artist, which also changes like the colours in nature.

The beholder also flows along the line from the present into the future. And the work, as the philosopher's river, changes according to the intensity, position and quality of light that can reveal different layers of the visual surface of the work and thus modifying the colour tones.



But being an *opera aperta*, the work only suggests paths of meaning, and only the beholder can engage with the work and capture meaning according to his own life experience, ability to understand and interpret the world around him and beyond him.

Each artwork reveals the artist's intention to capture the flow of time on the surface of his work. As the line of time continuously runs to the future, let part of it be rescued and captured in an artistic medium.



(Il. 7) Four works with colours captured from the garden in Munich, Germany, summer 2014.

### **3. The development of theme and the artistic research: the use of coloured cotton strings as a form of artistic expression.**

For Devaney Claro, it is essential to seek references for the development of his art in his own previous artistic sources, i.e. in the works themselves. This is because he believes that many issues are open during the work in process, when his own artistic experiments show new paths for the development of the artistic language.

The theme *Moirai* is part of the repertoire the artist since 2003 when the first experimental works appear in the form of coloured strings made of raw cotton fixed on a wooden surface. In 2007 he goes back to the theme through the abstract figurative work *The Moirai: Three at the Table* (see illustration 5). A reference to the theme reappears in 2010, as for example in the works *Moorings 1 and 2* that discuss the theme of personal relations, in which each point of intersection of the strings on the surface of the work means an encounter of people in life, which is also primarily a network of relationships.

For the artist, who sees himself in his art as a colourist, chromatic relationships are important not only as a visual stimulator, but also for their semantic and emotional function. And they are also the guiding principle of the work. These chromatic relations can be of temperature

(warm vs. cool), light intensity (light vs. dark) and saturation, chromatic proximity, colour contrast, and so on.

The surface of the work (canvas, wooden board, cardboard, etc.) is not there in the work process to be cancelled (erased) by colours, but much more to participate in the visual context where it is embedded. It is no *tabula rasa*, for it dialogues with the work since the beginning. It influences the following chromatic layers (strings) as these will influence the background. Each part of the work involved influences of the adjacent parts, as in a small individual visual unit to make a complete cohesive pictorial text.

The difference of colour hues and shades and of form does not subtract from the whole, quite the contrary, every difference only adds up to the whole, since every part of the work gives visual support to each other.

At the core of its meanings, the work has a biographical slant, as it shows a lot about the artist. However, as already said above, it is the viewer who gives new life to the work through his interpretation and with his ability to visually read the work and discover the different layers of meanings. But above all, every single work, like a person, has its own soul, history and fate.

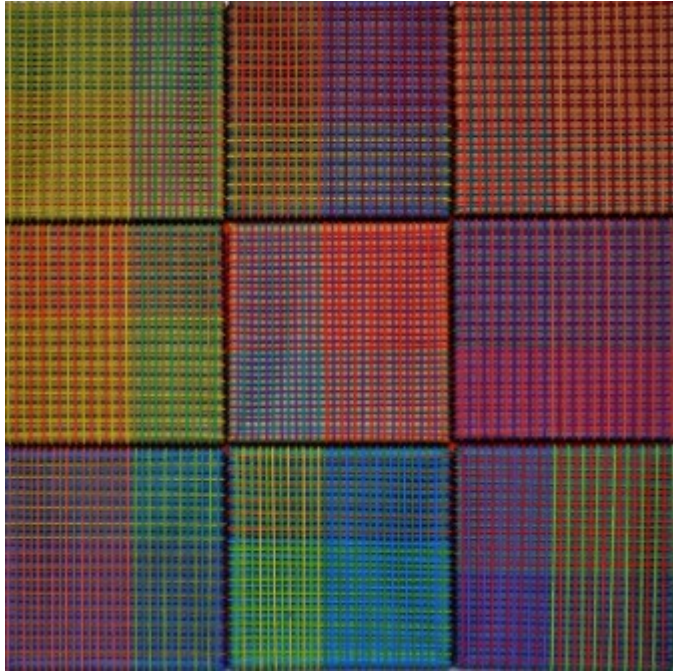
The works in this series dialogue with several moments in the history of art, from ancient times, where images are represented through mosaics, what appears in this series as a constant compositional element. Another important reference is the art of Portuguese tiles, and consequently the Brazilian one, for example, in the work of Robert Burle Marx (1909-1994).

Another important reference is in Impressionism and Pointlism that dealt with separate points or strokes of individual colours for the viewer to mix them in the retina by looking at the painting. A further relevant source are the works of the modern French painter Henri Matisse (1864-1954) who helped to free colour from shape, with his maxim that form is just a medium to use colours. So he subjects forms to colours.

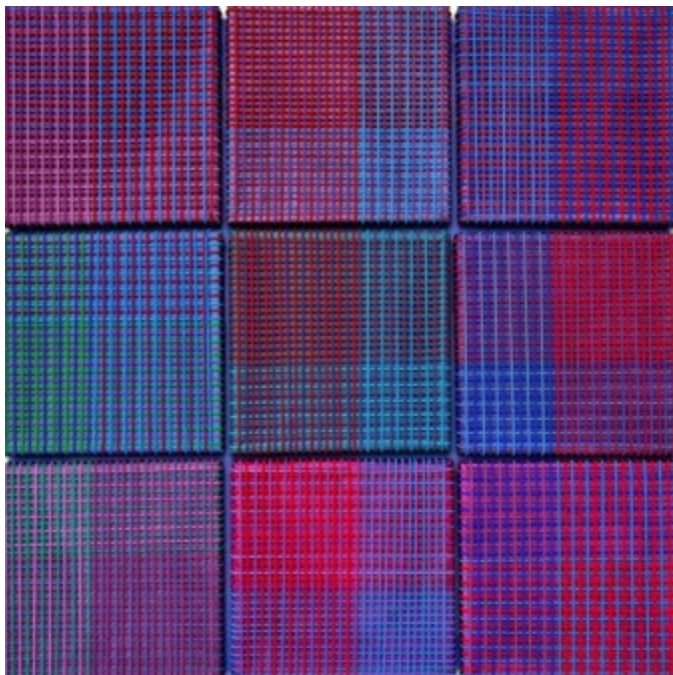
The formal character of the art of Piet Mondrian, especially from the 20s and 30s, as well as the Brazilian concrete and neo-concrete art are formally reflected in this series. From a more international and Brazilian contemporary art context Devaney Claro's works also intersperses with the art of Bridgit Riley, Sean Scully, Gonçalo Ivo and Sergio Sister, just to mention a few.

#### 4. The works of the series *On the Lines*.

Here will be showcased works done in Munich, Germany from April 2014 on.



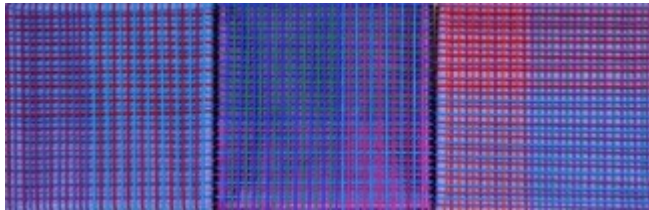
1: May Nr. 1, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 46 x 46 cm. Composition of 9 canvas on a wooden board, 2014.



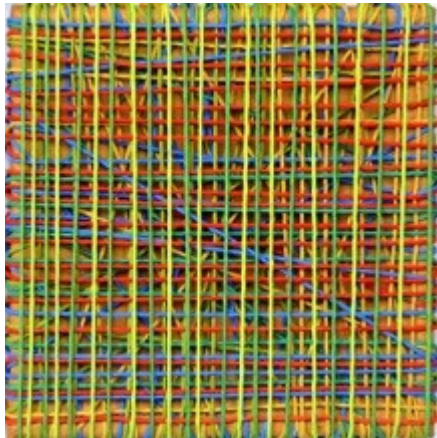
2: May Nr. 2, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 46 x 46 cm. Composition of 9 canvas on a wooden board, 2014.



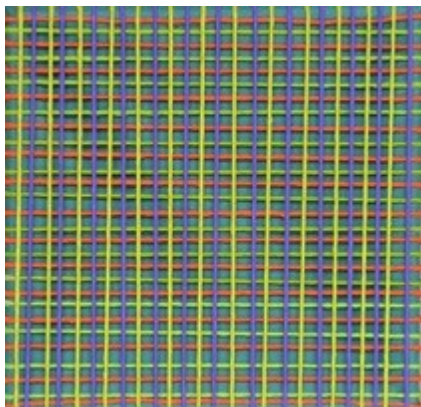
3: Mai nr. 3, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15 x 45 cm. Composition of 3 canvas on a wooden board, 2014.



4: Mai nr. 4, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15 x 45 cm. Composition of 3 canvas on a wooden board, 2014.

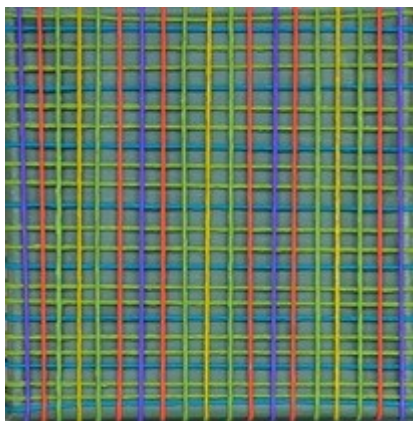


5: May Nr. 5, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



6: June nr.1, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.

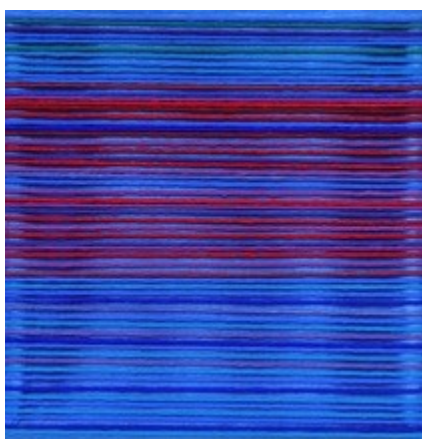




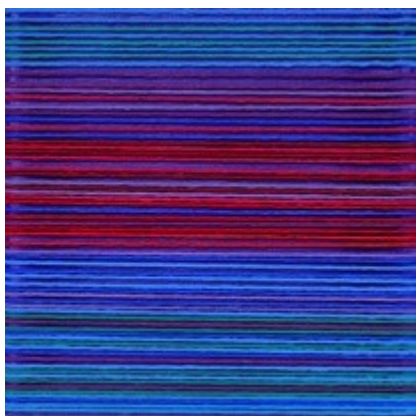
7: June nr. 2, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



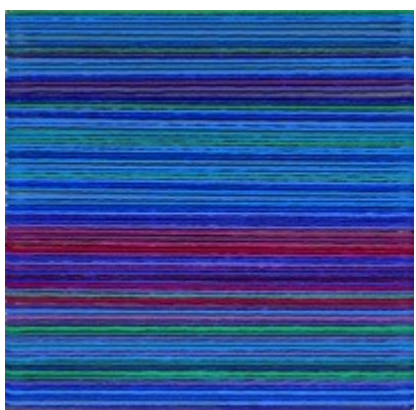
8: June nr. 3, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



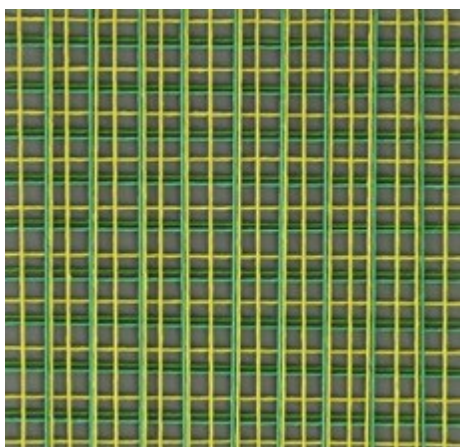
9: June nr. 4, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



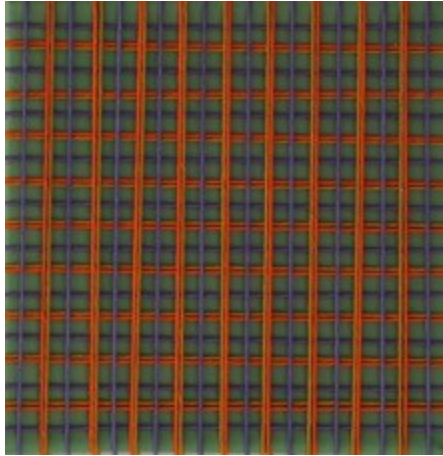
10: June nr. 5, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



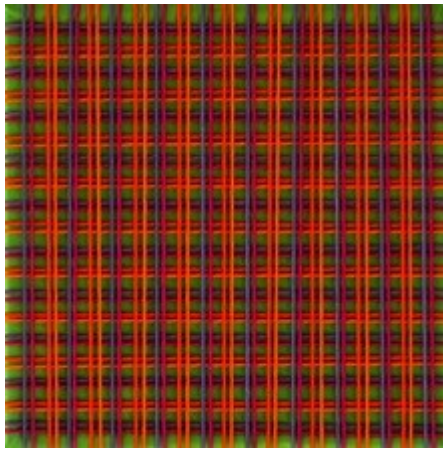
11: June nr. 5, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



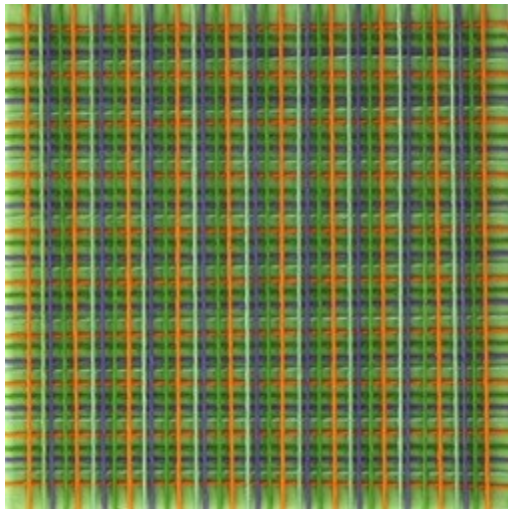
12: July nr. 1: Hydrangea Limelight, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.



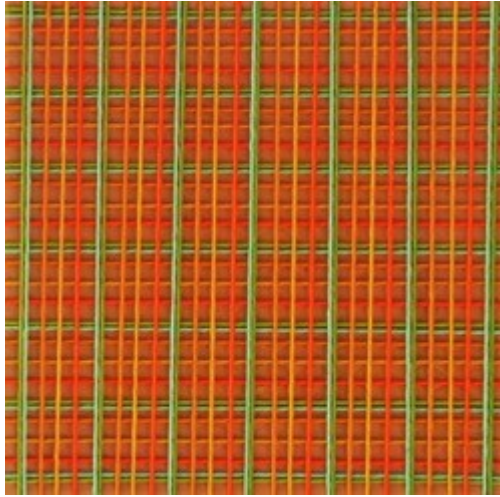
13: July nr.2: Tropaelum, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.



14: July nr.3: Tropaelum, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.



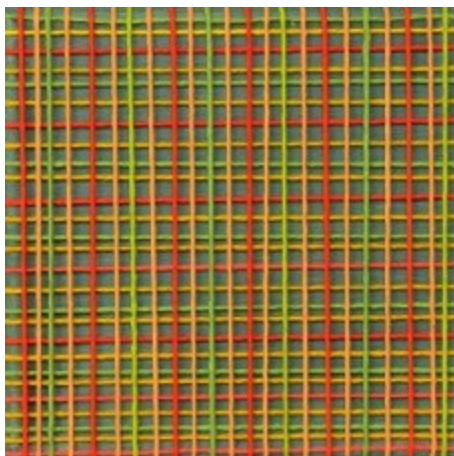
15: July nr.4: Limelight +Tropaelum, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.



16: July nr 5: Midday, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.

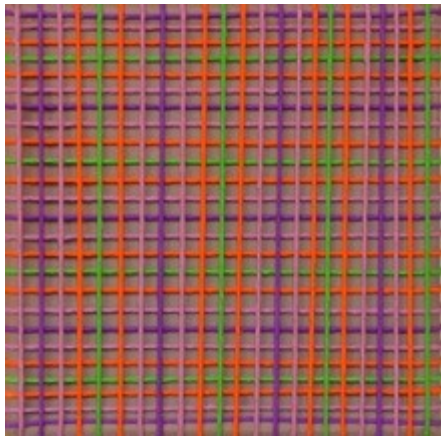


17: July nr. 6: Bougainvillea, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 20 x 20 cm, 2014.



18: July nr. 8, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.





19: July nr. 9 (25July2014): Summertime: Good Vibes, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



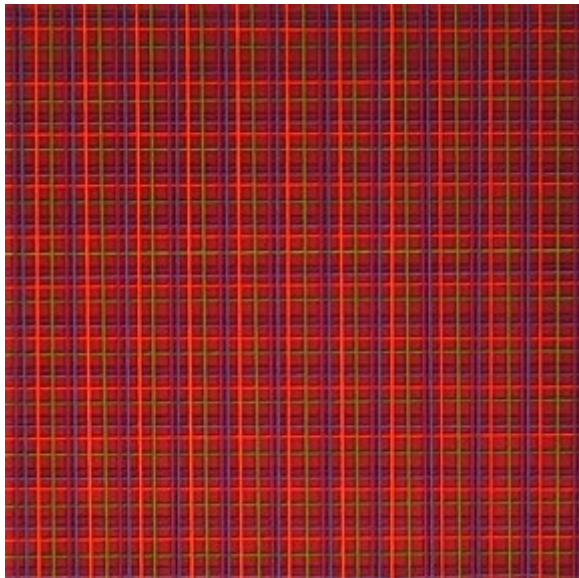
20: July nr. 10: (26 July: Warm Feelings), acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



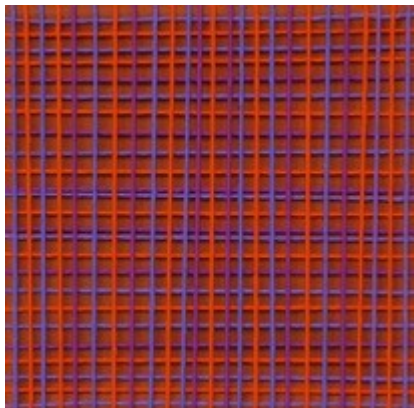
21: July nr. 11 (27July), acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



22: July nr. 12 (28 July 2014), Happy Haaa, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



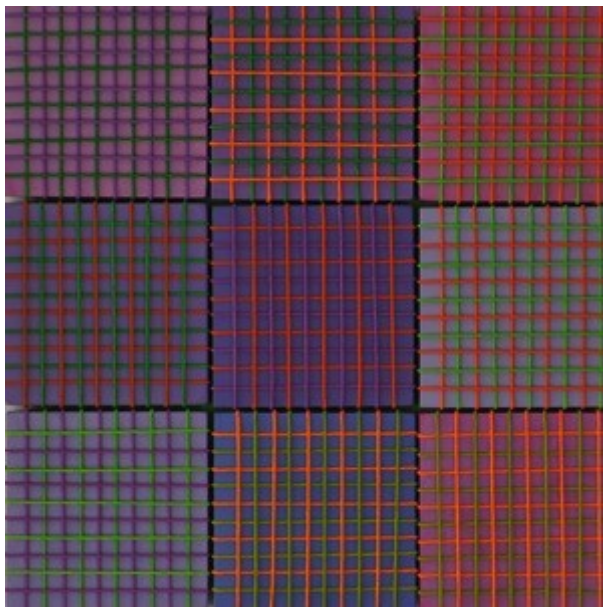
23: August nr. 1, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 35 x 35 cm, 2014.



24: September nr. 1, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on canvas, 15x 15 cm, 2014.



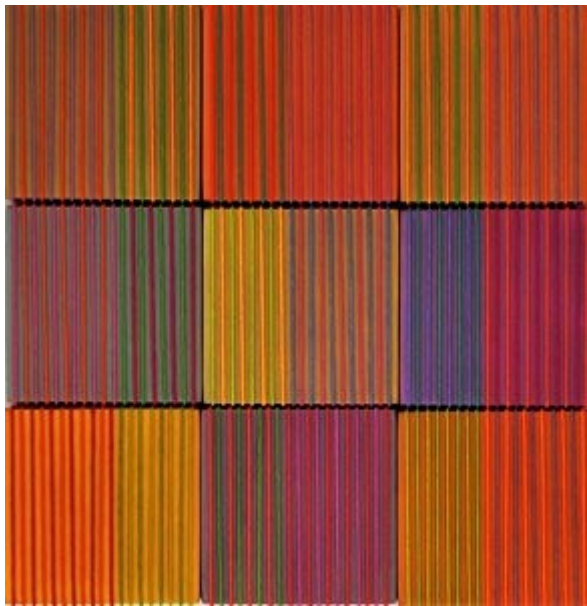
25: September nr.2, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014. Composition of 9 squares (11,5 x11,5cm each) tied on a mdf board.



26: September nr. 3: acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014. Composition of 9 squares (11,5 x11,5cm each) tied on a mdf board.



27: October Nr. 1: acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014.  
Composition of 20 units (7,0 x 8,5 cm) on a mdf board.

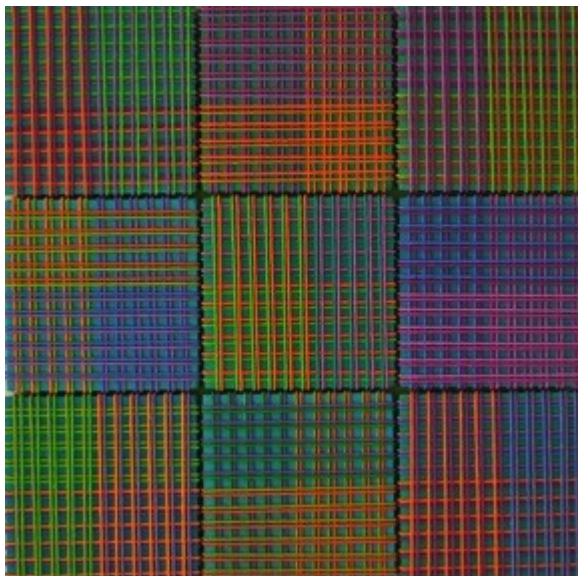


28: October Nr. 2, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014. Composition of 9 units (11,5 x 11,5 cm each) tied on mdf board.

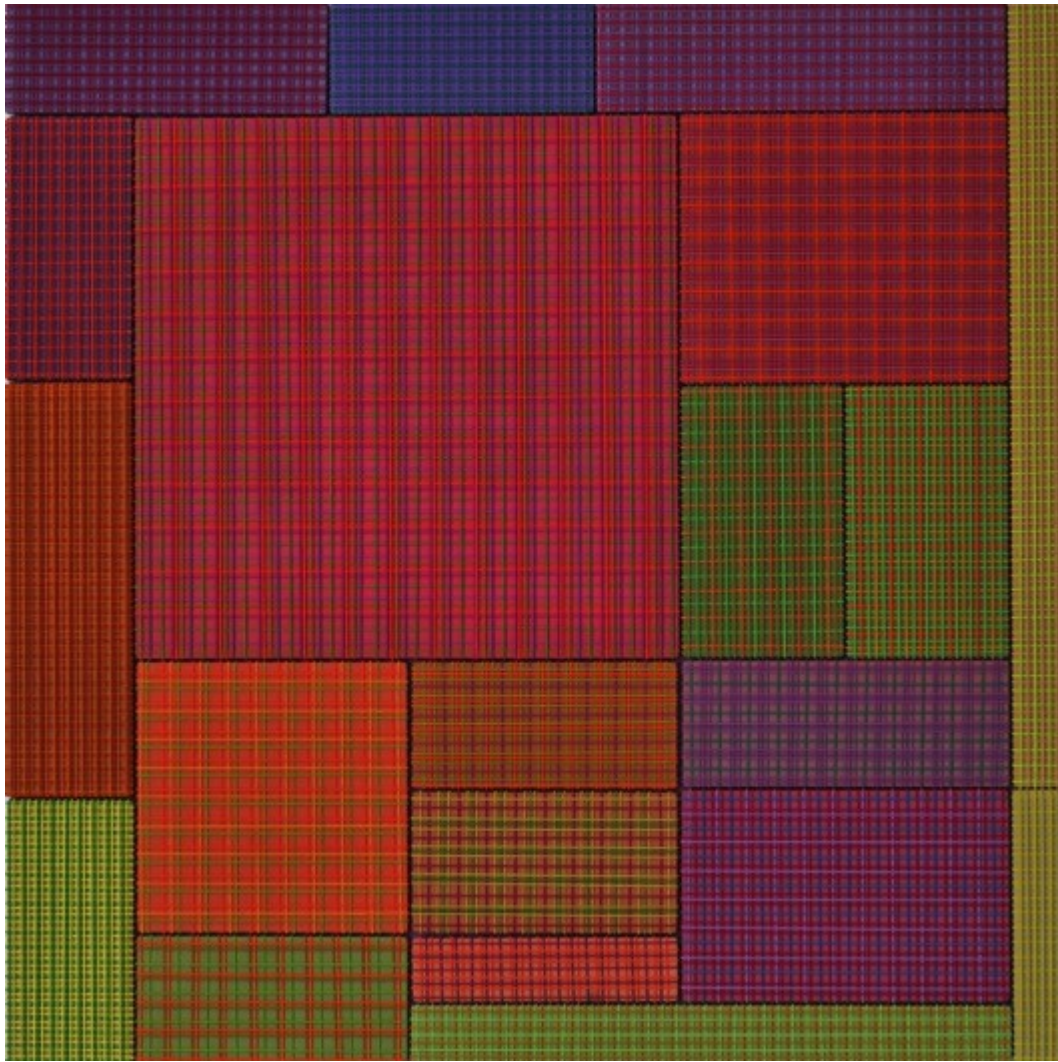




29: October Nr. 3, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014. Composition of 9 units (11,5 x 11,5 cm each) tied on mdf board.



30: October Nr. 4, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 35 x 35 cm, 2014. Composition of 9 units (11,5 x 11,5 cm each) tied on mdf board.



31: November nr. 1: Hallo Mondrian, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 101 x 101 cm, 2014.  
Composition of 20 units mounted on a wooden board based on a "Composition with Red, Yellow and Black, 1921 by Piet Mondrian.



32: November nr. 2: Parallel 1, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, 11 x 38 cm, 2014.



33: December nr. 1: Colours From Inside, acrylics on cotton strings and tied on wood, composition of 16 pieces (11,5 x 11,5 each, inside 47 x 47 cm), mounted on a wooden board, 65 x 65 cm, 2014.

## About Devaney Claro:

Art has always played a very important role for Devaney Claro. Along the years he has been experimenting with several forms of visual expressions, which go from three-dimensional works to photography and paintings.

He has a formal education in fine arts as well as in modern languages. While living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he was also born and raised, he attended fine art classes at Liceu de Artes e Ofícios, Escola de Belas Artes at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro. In Munich, Germany, he finished his post graduation in Fine Arts in 2011 at the Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität. He has been living and working as an artist in Munich as well as in Rio de Janeiro.

His artistic impulse and motivation come from several subjects, such as philosophy, mythology, poetry and the visual art itself; but the artistic input can also be a moment, a feeling, a sight, a flow of thoughts, an answer or a question, or even an obsession which will be captured on the surface of the work.

His works are deeply anchored in the roots of international and Brazilian Modern and Post Modern Arts. He admires the works of the old European Masters as well as the works of Van Gogh, Matisse, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian, Mark Rothko, Bridget Riley, Sean Scully, Alfredo Volpi, Gonçalo Ivo, just to name a few. For him, those artists were the real colorists who freed colours from form to give art a new dimension of meaning. He also traces back his own artistic production for new pictorial output.

Devaney Claro believes that an artist is always in a process of transformation and he can never be finished with this process, because every time an artist is working on a project, questions rise for a next project. Therefore, art is an eternal search, a quest on a way paved with uncertainties. And the result of this quest is the artist's production.

For more works and info about Devaney Claro, please visit his website:

[www.devaneyclaro.com](http://www.devaneyclaro.com)

<https://vimeo.com/113216091>