

TAKE 2

JOHN THOMASON JTHOMASON@TRIBUNE.COM

Geometric painter brings magic to art

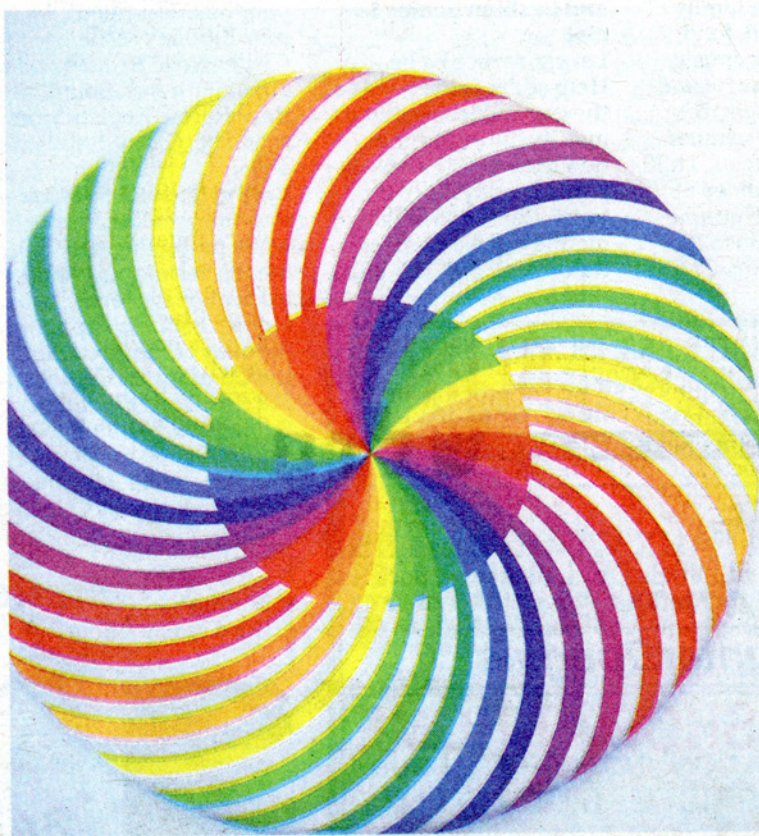
Stanford Slutsky began his budding art career at a very young age. He recalls a story when, at 5 or 6 years old, he found some clay on the ground on his way to school.

"I started unearthing clay and making figures and sculptures on the ground," says Slutsky, 68, of Delray Beach. "I set them out in the sun to dry. When I got to school, my teacher told me to go home. She said, 'You're filthy and dirty.' I forgot I had clay all over my face."

The story is representative of Slutsky's complete immersion into his art, which carries over into the present day. He's never quite conscious of the time it takes to complete a piece (though he estimates around 300 hours), preferring to say, "I never look at my watch when I'm having sex ... meaning that art is my passion. I love doing it."

He's created more than 300 pieces, and he claims he's only left three works unfinished. His resume includes a selection in the 54th All Florida Competition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art and a best in show award from the Coral Springs Art Guild. His latest solo exhibition, titled "The Shape of Things," opened recently at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, where Slutsky appeared on opening night to guide students through a tour. The exhibition runs through July 29.

"Students walk in here and they're amazed," says Arlene Wites, director of communications at the Art Institute. "From industrial design, to illustration, to graphic design, even fashion — his work crosses over all of our areas of study. Students are learning different applications,



MAGIC EYE The abstract paintings of Stanford Slutsky are inspired by magic and childhood. TOP AND FAR RIGHT PHOTO/JOHN THOMASON, NEAR RIGHT PHOTO SUBMITTED

and it's opening up new worlds for them."

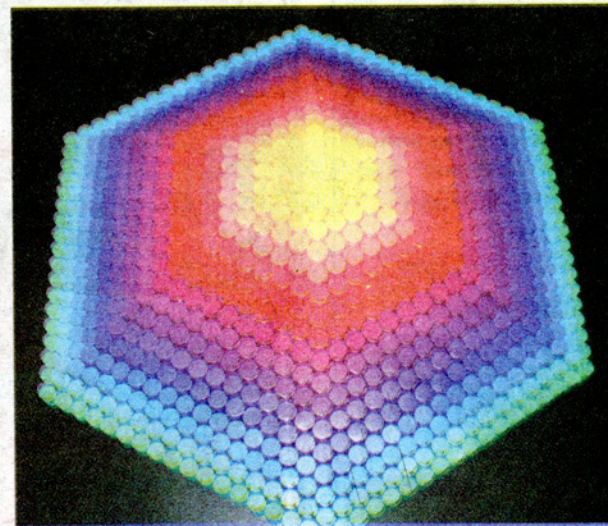
Inspired largely by the work of Hungarian optical artist Victor Vasarely and Israeli sculptor Yaacov Agam, Slutsky sees each painting as an experiment. From a distance, his geometric abstractions, such as vertiginous spirals, colorful honeycombs and vivid cubes, resemble symmetrical color field work from the '50s. But they take on the feel of magic eye illusions when you gaze at their central points. He employs dowels and magnets to lend a pseudo-three-dimensional



quality to the work that makes each piece full of surprises and layers.

The omnipresence of removable magnets in Slutsky's key pieces also creates a sense of shifting impermanence; theoretically, anyone could move his material around to their liking, which Slutsky discourages.

"The only time I want the art to be interactive is



when they purchase the piece," he says. "Then they can have fun with it for the rest of their lives."

Still, you get the feeling his work is tailor-made for educational venues like the Museum of Discovery and Science or the South Flori-

da Science Museum. His piece "Music," for instance, is a series of painted wood tiles on canvas that, when brushed or "played" with the hand, elicit different musical tones.

In fact, many of Slutsky's mixed-media con-

structs exude a childlike sense of innocence that makes them all the more endearing. "Fort Styxx," for instance, is a collection of multicolored dowel rods arranged to resemble a child's pick-up sticks. Indeed, it was as a child that Slutsky discovered magic, which he tries to incorporate in each of his illusive paintings.

With a show scheduled to run at the Delray Beach Public Library in spring 2011, Slutsky shows no signs of slowing down. He'll be 69 in October, he told me, but he feels 35.

Stanford Slutsky's "The Shape of Things" is at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale, 1799 SE 17th St., through July 31. Admission is free. For information, call 954-463-3000.