

Painter shows no signs of slowing down

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Stanford Slutsky began his budding art career at a young age. He recalls finding some clay on the ground on his way to school at age 5 or 6.

"I started unearthing clay and making figures and sculptures on the ground," said Slutsky, 68, of Delray Beach. "I set them out in the sun. 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. 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."

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, "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 30.

"Students walk in here, and they're amazed," said 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, and it's opening up new worlds for them."

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 gazing at their central points. He employs dowels and magnets to lend a pseudo-3-D 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.



STANFORD SLUTSKY

"The only time I want the art to be interactive is when they purchase the piece," he said. "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. 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 constructs 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 pick-up sticks. Indeed, it was as a child that Slutsky discovered magic, which he tries to incorporate in each of his illusive paintings.

"At the end of a piece of artwork, it's like pulling a rabbit out of a hat," he said.

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, but he feels 35, he said.

The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale is at 1799 SE 17th St. Admission is free. For more information, call 954-463-3000.

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