

HEATHERGAUDIOFINEART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 30, 2021

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HEATHER GAUDIO FINE ART is pleased to present “Matthew Shlian: Light Years”, his first solo exhibition at the gallery. The show opens on June 26th and will run through August 7th.



Shlian’s work straddles the world of paper engineering and the fine arts, a place where two-dimensional paper becomes intricately sculpted into precise and stunning three-dimensional forms. His work is rooted in printed media, book arts and commercial design, where paper gets folded, tessellated, compressed and arranged in unexpected ways. Modular aggregation and the way in which shapes repeat, morph and reconnect with each other have been the artist’s preoccupation for the past several years. Adopting an intuitive approach, Shlian begins with hand-drawn patterns in a notebook and then uses digital mapping on an industrial plotter to work out his ideas. His curiosity with the process continues when he returns to working with paper using his hands, constructing forms out of the everyday material. Color, light, patterns and planar shifts come together in geometric assemblages that reveal themselves as he works. An important part of the artist’s process is the element of surprise: if he can completely visualize a final result, he doesn’t have a reason to create it. Shlian has to start his work and make changes along the way in order to fully understand it. In the same way, the titles of his works, intriguing and serendipitous to be sure, are related to phrases, conversations or musings he has had with his daughters and others.

This exhibition will feature new work from three series Shlian has been developing over the past five years. *Some Caterpillars Stay Caterpillars* began when he and his daughter were hatching caterpillars a couple of summers ago. One of the caterpillars morphed into a butterfly while the other never emerged from its cocoon. When searching for the right words to explain to his young apprentice what had happened to the caterpillar, she told him “Dad, it’s OK—some caterpillars stay caterpillars.” The notion that caterpillars can be miracles even when they don’t transform into butterflies resonated with Shlian. For him, “sometimes there is no magic or the magic is in the ordinary.” The works in this series possess certain optical illusions in the way in which they are perceived. The patterns can be interpreted as 3-D forms, or light and color can

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create their visual transformations. For Shlian, the changes come not so much from the works themselves, but from the viewer's impressions of them.

The constructions in the *Omoplata* series are related to curve folding, created when the artist was thinking about a set of curves interlocking on another set of curves. Having different axis points prevent the shapes from turning. These low-relief forms reference typography, quilting and architecture, the monochromatic patterns revealing themselves through repetition. The term *Omoplata* references highly effective interlocking sweeps and twisting locking motions used in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu the artist witnessed while working on this series.

The *Unholy* series grew from a set of conversations Shlian had with Dr. Henry Paulson, a leading researcher into Alzheimer's disease and memory loss at the University of Michigan. Paulson explained how certain protein strands misfold and cause other strands to follow suit and create an aggregation of mass, dubbing it "this unholy hell of design." The described modular aggregate systems that become undulating forms were coincidentally similar to the ideas and constructions Shlian had been exploring at the time. Paulson confirmed the similarities in design when he later visited the artist's studio to view his works. For Shlian, the works in this series are about movements in space and dividing and extracting forms from those movements.

Originally from Norwalk, Connecticut, Shlian earned an MFA from Cranbrook Academy and currently lives and works in Ann Arbor. He has collaborated with scientists at the University of Michigan, contributing to the visualization of various projects, his sculptural forms presenting answers to questions that had not yet been formulated by his colleagues. Shlian has held several teaching positions, has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions and his work is in many notable private and corporate collections.

Heather Gaudio Fine Art specializes in emerging and established artists, offering painting, works on paper, photography and sculpture. The gallery provides a full range of art advisory services, from forming and maintaining a collection, to securing secondary market material, to assisting with framing and installation. The focus is on each individual client, selecting art that best serves his or her vision, space, and resources. The six exhibitions offered every year are designed to present important talent and provide artwork appealing to a broad range of interests. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday; 10:30am to 5:30pm; and by appointment.

For more information and/or high-res images, please contact Rachael Palacios, rachael@heathergaudiofineart.com.

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Matt Shlian, *Ara 314, Such a Thirst I Had*, 2017, 60 x 60 x 5 inches