

TURNER CARROLL

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Turner Carroll Gallery Presents

## Matthew Shlian: New Work

*An exhibition of works by paper engineer Matthew Shlian, who combines intricate geometric forms with exact folds and creases in arrays to form bas-relief sculptures.*

March 1–25, 2019

Opening Reception March 1, 2019 from 5–7 pm

Work by Matthew Shlian may be viewed [here](#).

[SANTA FE, NM January 2, 2018] – **Public Opening, Friday, March 1, 2019, 5-7pm**

Artist and designer Matthew Shlian, who describes himself as a paper engineer, gives patterns of life and motion to an otherwise flat form: paper. A lifelong fascination with geometric forms lead Shlian to experiment with paper folding, which lead to a short career in pop-up greeting cards. Shlian soon realized his concepts were larger and more complex than the greeting card industry would bear, and turned his sights to larger projects, eventually catching the attention of scientists who saw great potential in collaborating with him. Shlian, who has worked with scientists on research projects ranging from Alzheimer's Disease to solar panels, says, "Researchers see paper engineering as a metaphor for scientific principles; I see their inquiry as a basis for artistic inspiration." Artists and scientists both create work and investigate ideas from a common place: curiosity. It is by the act of asking questions—not giving answers—that both scientists and artists explore ideas and creative expression.

Shlian creates intricate three-dimensional geometric forms with exact folds and creases to form bas-relief sculptures. His works are often based on classic Islamic tile design principles, born out of years of study using geometry as a basis for patterning. The unit is as important as a whole and symmetry, proportion, light, shadow and repetition are all considered. Shlian explains, "My process is extremely varied from piece to piece. Often I start without a clear goal in mind, working within a series of limitations. For example on one piece I'll only use curved folds, or make my lines this length or that angle, etc. Other times I begin with an idea for movement and try to achieve that shape or form somehow."

There is an illusion of movement as the viewer's eye quickly travels back and forth throughout the piece. In this tangible art form, Shlian creates various geometric forms in a very malleable and unpredictable process. His starting point is curiosity. "I begin with a system of folding and at a particular moment the material takes over. Guided by wonder, my work is made because I cannot visualize its final realization; in this way I come to understanding through curiosity."

Work in the exhibition may be viewed [here](#).

#### **ABOUT MATTHEW SHLIAN**

"As a paper engineer, my work is rooted in print media, book arts and commercial design. Beginning with an initial fold, a single action causes a transfer of energy to subsequent folds, which ultimately manifest in drawing and three dimensional forms. I use my engineering skills to create kinetic sculpture which have led to collaborations with scientists at University of Michigan. We work on the nanoscale, translating paper structures to micro folds.

Our investigations extend to visualizing cellular division and solar cell development. Researchers see paper engineering as a metaphor for scientific principles; I see their inquiry as a basis for artistic inspiration. In my studio I am a collaborator, explorer and inventor. I begin with a system of folding and at a particular moment the material takes over. Guided by wonder, my work is made because I cannot visualize its final realization; in this way I come to understanding through curiosity."

Matthew Shlian's work is derived from the intersectionality of art and science, where Shlian uses engineering skills and the aid of scientists at the University of Michigan to create intricate, geometric paper structures. While the process of executing each work is contingent upon precise measurements and a definitive degree of planning, Shlian describes that often, his final products are conceived from flaws that occur as the work is coming together. "Along the way something usually goes wrong and a mistake becomes more interesting than the original idea and I work with that instead. I'd say my starting point is curiosity; I have to make the work in order to understand it. If I can completely visualize my final result I have no reason to make it—I need to be surprised." Shlian engages with paper in a way that imbues movement into a material often associated with two dimensionality; the finished products are kinetic both for their visual

dynamics and in the way the folds physically project from the background. Shlian works in a variety of colors, but often defaults to white—where the added flatness of the color encourages viewers to examine the work more closely and establish their own readings of the work's depth.

#### **ABOUT TURNER CARROLL GALLERY**

Established in 1991 by Tonya Turner Carroll and Michael Carroll, Turner Carroll Gallery + Art Advisors represents important international contemporary art. The vision of the gallery since its inception is to source significant artwork of our era from diverse areas of the world. The gallery is constantly considering the new international art movements/developments which presuppose historical significance, and the gallery owners travel extensively to curate exhibitions for the gallery from other parts of the world.

Thus far, the gallery has featured important contemporary exhibitions from Romania, Ireland, France, Russia and Mexico. Both owners of the gallery have degrees and backgrounds in the history of art. The art historical significance of the artists the gallery represents is of extreme importance to the gallery. The gallery actively pursues museum acquisitions, exhibitions, publishing and other opportunities on an international level for our artists. Both Michael Carroll and Tonya Turner Carroll are actively involved in arts advocacy and arts fundraising.

Some of the museum collections which feature works by our artists include Russian Academy of Art Foundation, The Vatican Museum (contemporary collection), Irish Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum of Modern Art, The British Museum and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

We proudly represent the following Contemporary Artists: Jenny Honnert Abell, John Barker, Jamie Brunson, Squeak Carnwath, Fausto Fernandez, Traian A. Filip, Josh Garber, Raphaelle Goethals, Scott Greene, Orlando Leyba, David Linn, Hung Liu, Alan Magee, Georges Mazilu, Mavis McClure, Igor Melnikoy, Greg Murr, Deborah Oropallo, Rex Ray, Holly Roberts, Walter Robinson, Suzanne Sbarge, Rusty Scruby, Matthew Shlian, Shawn Smith, Drew Tal, Nina Tichava, Ann Weiner, Karen Yank, Brenda Zappitell, Eric Zener, Wanxin Zhang.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

and high-resolution images, please visit  
<https://www.turnercarrollgallery.com/press-area/>  
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