Audrius Plioplys was born in Canada of Lithuanian parents. In 1962 the family moved to Chicago. He studied physics and chemistry at the University of Chicago. Later he attended the University of Chicago Medical School, graduating in 1975. In 1976 he completed medical internship at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals, Madison, Wisconsin. He has had no formal training in art.

After the completion of his formal medical studies, Plioplys started courting a new profession — that of an artist. Having completed his internship in 1976, Plioplys declined offers of residency at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and at the Mayo Clinic, moved to Washington, D.C., and devoted three years to art and history of art investigations. During this period Plioplys began to make a name for himself in juried and group exhibitions. But when it became apparent that it was difficult to make art a full-time pursuit, he decided to return to medicine. In 1979 he began his residency training in neurology and in pediatrics at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, at the same time continuing with his art. In 1978 he had a one-person show in Washington, D.C. (Washington Project for the Arts).
From 1982 to 1984 he continued his residency in pediatrics and pediatric neurology at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario. From 1984 to 1986 he did neuroimmunology research at Laval University, Quebec City. From 1986 to 1989 he was an assistant professor at the Division of Neurology in the Hospital for Sick Children at the University of Toronto and Surrey Place Centre, Canada. He then returned to Chicago to be the director of child neurology at Michael Reese Hospital. He is continuing his work in child and adult neurology at a number of locations in the Chicago area.

Plioplys has exhibited his works at the Dolly Fiterman Gallery in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1980, 1982), Galerija in Chicago (1980), Galerija in Stickney, Illinois (1987), and elsewhere.

Plioplys’ earliest works were oil paintings, done in a surrealistic style. Then he moved on to explore more analytical and conceptual pursuits.

Among his early three-dimensional sculptures there is a group called Objects of Transition, featuring the semblances of doors and windows. Painted black, equipped with mirrors and fluorescent lighting seeping through the pitch-black venetian blinds, these Doorways and Windows are a foreboding sight. While inviting transition, they are also barriers. Some of them have no doorknobs or handles, others — no thresholds. Entrance is nearly impossible. They signify an awkward transition from here to there. They could also mean an outright entrapment and death. Plioplys is facing here a Kafkaesque philosophy of disillusionment and ambiguity, which asks tough questions about the meaning of existence and finds no ready-made answers.

Similar to these are his works with mirrors. These take the shape of a box, a book, or just a folder with cracked mirrors installed. Several of his pieces consist of thin strips of glass joined together side by side, emitting a multitude of reflected identical images. The viewer gets a creepy feeling seeing a shattered self in the piece. Using this technique
Plioplys can make the onlooker face an introspective investigation into his own psyche, probing his hidden motives, identities, dissatisfactions, etc.

Plioplys' *Temporal and Geographic Displacements* explore the human predicament a step further. In 1980 he travelled to the Canadian Arctic Islands carrying rocks for geographic "displacement." Rocks were taken from one island, transported to another, and thrown into the water. The author recorded the ripples of each stone's displacement on film. The idea was somewhat autobiographical. His family once lived in a displaced persons camp. But the deeper intended significance is metaphysical — that of someone having and not having a place of his own in the order of Being.

If Plioplys professes no formal affiliation to the officially established religious bodies of today, he nevertheless searches for grounds of religious expression, which he finds in the perennially fresh rites of the worshippers of the sun. When he was in the Canadian High Arctic, during the summer solstice, he followed the path of the sun at midnight, beating a circle in the rocky soil as he walked around a marked spot. He also created a line of rocks near the North Pole, placing each stone at the tip of the shadow of the preceding one, making sure that the ensuing lineup of earthen bodies pointed directly to the heavenly source of light. This kind of artistic expression is not necessarily an opus fitting nicely in the category of "Earth Art," or an exercise in landscaping. It gives a glimpse of the author's thirst for transcendence.

One of his latest developments is his research into the process of human thought. Over the years he has created a series of images illustrating his scientific

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*Stone Line on Ellesmere Island:* each of seven stones was placed at the end of the shadow cast by the previous stone; Midnight, June 18, 1980

*Minnesota Lament:* on May 9, 1982, this mirrored door (measuring 30" x 46") was installed on a bank of the Mississippi River, within the city limits of Minneapolis
findings about the thinking processes. While working at the Mayo Clinic Plioplys was wired up for an electroencephalogram test and then deliberately thought about different subjects, producing brain waves of his thoughts about Michelangelo, the meaning of art, the state of having no thoughts at all, etc. In his own pictures of thoughts he inscribed the word “Thought” on a colored background, titling each as *Red Thought, Blue Thought*, etc. In another attempt he drew a series of typeset words, each in a different color. He kept asking himself the question: Do the thoughts and the words have colors? The artwork does not provide the answer. After having finished typing several papers concerning art, art history, and poetry, the artist took the typewriter ribbon out of the typewriter and placed it outside on the ground. The wind blew the ribbon into some trees. Plioplys took a picture of the tree with the ribbon in its branches and said: “There are my thoughts.” One of his books consists of white sheets of paper that previously carried legible type, but after multiple duplication of the text, the type faded completely, leaving the pages blank. There is no way of knowing what single conclusion one should draw from these disparate experiments about thought and thought processes. But they do betray a probing mind, forcing both the artist and his viewer to delve into his own fragmented knowledge about human cognitive mysteries.

His show about thoughts (Galerija, Stickney, Illinois, 1987) was a result of a creative symbiosis of his two professions, that of a neurologist and of an artist, a rare combination indeed.

Plioplys' art belongs to the Conceptualist tradition, which allows the artist to keep the visual elements of a work of art to a minimum to let the philosophical and metaphysical ideas of the artist come to the fore. This trend of artistic expression has been pursued in the United States for at least thirty years, but when placed in a narrower context, Plioplys, as a physician and a conceptual artist, has been called a pioneer in the history of Lithuanian art (Ingrida Korsakaitė, *Kultūros Barai*, March 1992).

*Terra Cognita, 1982,* pen, acrylic, and pencil on paper, 24”x36”

*Green Thought, 1987,* pen and acrylic on paper, 12”x16”