

# Neurologist's Art Exhibit On Move, Including A Pair Of His Own Paintings

By Howard Ludwig on October 17, 2014, 5:30am, DNAinfo

BRAIN-ART On The Move



Dr. Audrius V. Plioplys of Beverly stands beside one of his digital paintings. The retired neurologist sponsored the BRAIN-ART Initiative at the Beverly Arts Center. The exhibit will move to the University of Chicago on Nov. 1. Photo credit: DNAinfo/Howard A. Ludwig.

BEVERLY — Dr. Audrius V. Plioplys quit medicine to become an artist almost immediately after completing his training in neurology.

For three years, he lived on the \$10,000 he squirreled away as a medical intern. He moved to Washington D.C. and immersed himself in his art.

"But I started to feel guilty," Plioplys said.

Regret over not applying his extensive schooling led to an epiphany. From then on, Plioplys vowed to be both a doctor and an artist. This unique combination neuroscience and art is perhaps best captured by the BRAIN-ART Initiative at the Beverly Arts Center.

***Howard Ludwig says Plioplys felt more self-guilt than family pressure after changing career paths:***

Plioplys sponsored the exhibit that runs through Oct. 26 in the east gallery at 2407 W. 111th St. Artists were asked to draw inspiration from the BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative. The federal program has dedicated \$100 million for brain research nationwide.

"Money is now starting to flow to research laboratories throughout the country," said Plioplys, a Beverly resident for the past 25 years.

But Plioplys knows perhaps better than anyone that studies of the human brain ought to extend beyond hospitals and laboratories. Thus, he sponsored the local show, which features 33 artists — about half of whom are from the Chicago area.

Plioplys is among the artists included in the exhibition. Two of his pieces will be among the 30 selections that will move to the University of Chicago from Nov. 1 through Feb. 10. The pieces will line a hallway connecting two of the hospitals on the Hyde Park campus, Plioplys said.

"The thing about that area is there is a tremendous amount of foot traffic," he said, adding the large volume of passersby limits the traveling pieces to works that can be hung on a wall.



Dr. Audrius V. Plioplys and Carla Winterbottom stand beside the first-place award winner for the BRAIN-ART Initiative at the Beverly Arts Center. Winterbottom is the curator of the art center at 2407 W. 111th St. Plioplys sponsored and organized the art exhibit. A pair of his digital paintings are also included in the show. Photo credit: DNAinfo/Howard A. Ludwig.

Plioplys' artwork may be best described as self-portraiture. He commonly uses his own MRI brain scans and electroencephalograms or brain waves in his digital paintings. These neurological readouts are then combined with underlying photographs and overlying color.

"I manipulate the physical brain with my physiological brain," said Plioplys, who spent 30 years practicing neurology before retiring in 2008.

Carla Winterbottom said the BRAIN-ART show has been among the most impactful and popular exhibits she's seen in her 6 years as curator of the Beverly Arts Center.

"It's one of my favorites. It looks very elegant," Winterbottom said of the 39 pieces selected for the original installation.



Lia Cook's handwoven self-portrait took first place at the BRAIN-ART Initiative show at the Beverly Arts Center. Curator Carla Winterbottom and sponsor Dr. Audrius V. Plioplys said more than 80 artists submitted works online to be considered for the show. In the end, 39 pieces from 33 artists were selected. Photo credit: DNAinfo/Howard A. Ludwig.

While Plioplys is known for both his contributions to the fields of art and medicine, he also gained notoriety as organizer of the The Hope and Spirit series.

That exhibit at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in West Lawn ran from June 2011 to April 2012. It was dedicated to the victims of Soviet deportations in the 1940s, many of whom were sent to Gulags.

Eight of Plioplys' Lithuanian relatives were deported as part of this Stalin-led genocide — seven returned, he said.

A man of many passions, Plioplys is also occasionally seen driving his 1961 Rolls Royce and 1983 Porsche Carrera throughout his Southwest Side neighborhood and boasts what he calls one of the most extensive collections of coins and stamps in North America.

"No one else has the types of collectibles [coins] that I have, including the Smithsonian," he said.

Despite his many interests, Plioplys said art remains his calling. His piece titled "Theory/Information" is a snapshot of his own neurons. It will soon hang at the U. of C., where he graduated from medical school and first fell in love with art.

"Your soul is consumed by doing this sort of artistic profession," he said.