Today we’d like to introduce you to Audrius Plioplys.

**Audrius, we’d love to hear your story and how you got to where you are today both personally and as an artist.**

I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada. My best friend, Algis Cesekas, was a serious trouble maker. One example: at the age of 13 he bought a motorcycle (then and now, you had to be at least 18) and hid it in a neighbor’s garage. By the way, biking with him was great fun.

One summer, to keep him off the streets of Toronto, his parents enrolled him in an art program. When I visited I saw him start with a blank canvas, gradually add lines, then colors, step-by-step. The result was a beautiful work of art. Beauty from nothing! I was stunned! Algis planted an artistic seed into my soul. When I was in medical school at the University of Chicago, this seed started to grow. I spent more and more time painting and visiting art galleries and museums. I became convinced that I had made a mistake by going into
medicine—I should have gone into art. My friends talked me into finishing my internship at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals in Madison, which I did. I then entirely left medicine and started my art career. I moved to Washington DC, where I established a studio. Exhibits, art reviews and sales took place. A commendable start. After three years of full-time art activities, I started to feel guilty. I had a tremendous amount of knowledge in neurology and was not helping anyone. The sense of guilt just kept growing. In one of his parables Jesus said that you do not put a lit candle under a bushel basket. That was exactly what I was doing.

I realized that I had made a fundamental error. I thought that the realms of medicine and art are incompatible—choose one or the other. That was incorrect. I’m bright and intelligent. I should be able to blend these two areas together—art with neurology/neuroscience. I have been working at this blending for over 40 years.

In many ways this blending process has been successful with over 50 individual art exhibits and over 100 group shows. My works are in many museum collections internationally including Chicago’s Art Institute and Museum of Contemporary Art.

I retired from neurology/neuroscience nine years ago, and am, again, engaged in art full-time.

**We’d love to hear more about your art. What do you do you do and why and what do you hope others will take away from your work?**

Why do I create art? I have no choice—I simply have to. Not to create art would be sinful.

What is it that my art deals with?

I have been artistically exploring the origins of thinking, thought and consciousness.

Where does awareness come from?

How is it that we are cognizant of ourselves and of those near us?

What is it that makes us human?
My art is a metaphorical investigation of thinking and consciousness. I have transformed the artist’s studio into a neurobiology research lab, merging neuroscience with art.

I put my own concepts, ideas and spirit into my work. These pieces must have many layers of visual and thematic complexity. Also, the works must be visually appealing. But that is not enough.

Successful art is two-way communication. Half is the art, the other—the response of the viewer. Art must be visually engaging and must resonate. Viewers pick up on many of the concepts that I have incorporated into the works. But, most importantly, viewers see themes from their own personal experiences and perspectives that I never intended. That is a successful work of art—one that can evoke new insights and understandings.

Over the years my artistic approaches have included drawings, photographs, large scale paintings, prints on paper, site-specific installations, and light sculptures with LED light systems.

From neuronal complexity words, thoughts, and consciousness emerge. The underlying images include my own previous art works. I transform them into exotic forms, just as our memories transform visual impulses into vast neuronal web-works. Multiple layers are assembled, modified and blended. Cerebral cortical neuronal drawings, superimposed and subtracted from the surrounding color, reveal deeper layers of thoughts and memories. My own MRI brain scans and electroencephalograms (brain waves) are interwoven. The many layers of visual and thematic elements incorporated in these pieces mirrors our own neuronal complexity.

**Artists face many challenges, but what do you feel is the most pressing among them?**

Unless you are going to become a financially successful artist, something which is extremely unlikely to happen, it is imperative to separate money-making activities from art. Most artists fall into the trap of using their creative talents commercially, fulfilling other people’s visions and desires. In doing so, their creative potential not only gets sapped, but also gets perverted. They become incapable of creating their own art.

I have been very fortunate to have had a well-paying day job that gave me the freedom to pursue my artistic visions. This did not happen by accident. One must plan and work to keep financial activities separate from creative ones.
Do you have any events or exhibitions coming up? Where would one go to see more of your work? How can people support you and your artwork?

In September I will be participating in the Beverly Art Walk and it's associated Studio Tour. In October, I will display Cosmic Consciousness at the Turkish Consulate in downtown Chicago. In November, I will have an individual exhibit at the sla307 art gallery in the Chelsea district of New York City. Also, discussions are under way for another exhibit at the University of Chicago.

My pieces are on permanent display in many locations in Chicago including the University of Chicago, Blue Man Group, Illinois Institute of Technology, Blackstone Hotel, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, Beverly Arts Center, Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, and the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center. In all cases, one would need guidance to locate the works. Of course, studio visits can be arranged. An excellent overview can be found on my website.

In terms of support, besides purchasing pieces, I would very much appreciate assistance in organizing exhibits of my work.

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