

# Marrying Art and Science

## Reception in Honor of **Audrius Plioplys**



Artist Audrius Plioplys discusses his installation “Cycles of Memory” at the Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge at the University of Chicago.

Chicago-based contemporary artist Audrius Plioplys has been a professional neurologist and self-taught artist for more than 40 years. His work combines visual art and neurology as a way to explore the human psyche. Plioplys’ large-scale installation pieces have been displayed in museums and universities and are included in major art collections around the world.

Plioplys’ newest installation, “Cycles of Memory” is now on display at the Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge (SIFK) at the University of Chicago. In this series, Plioplys explores the constantly changing nature of human memory in three parts.

The first, “Pillars of Thought” are nine free-standing LED sculptures representing human existence. The images consist of three layers of neuronal profiles intertwined by Plioplys’ own MRI brain scans, overlapping and corresponding to three levels of human awareness: consciousness, subconsciousness and unconsciousness. Lit from the inside, the structures offer striking views from the atrium’s façade, especially after dark.

The second section of the exhibit is called “Whirling Memory.” Three 8 x 4-foot structures of semitransparent media are suspended above the atrium floor and rotate at three revolutions per minute. They are inscribed with passages from Kafka and Beckett and Sybils: Libyan and Persian as well as Erythraean and Delphic. The work ex-

plores the literary and philosophical ideals that shape social consciousness. The final section of the installation is “Midwest Souls,” which is visible from the atrium’s second-floor window. It is comprised of three light sculptures depicting cabinet photographs from the late 1800s, collected from flea markets. They feature individuals from all walks of life. LED lights illuminate the works and capture the subjects, forgotten by time, to cycle them back into memory.

SIFK director Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer commented on the artist’s work, “While scientific, Plioplys’ images are not antiseptic. The formation of personhood and the absorption of information become striking images that merge the scientific, the personal and the cultural.” She continued, “This is another reason we at the Institute fell in love with his art. We too know that information is anything but antiseptic and emerges at the intersection of science, culture and the person – a multiplicity of interactive layers that make up the human and what he or she knows.”

“‘Cycles of Memory’ is a culmination of my life’s work,” admitted Plioplys. “The space seems to have been designed to showcase the pieces perfectly.”

The University has agreed to name the SIFK building’s three-story-tall entrance foyer the “Sigita and Audrius Plioplys Atrium.”

Audrius Plioplys is well known in the Lithuanian community for inaugurating the “Hope and Spirit” exhibit at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuan-

ian Culture in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the deportations of Lithuanians by the Soviet Union to forced labor camps and prisons in Siberia.

The public is invited to attend the dedication of the “Cycles of Memory” permanent exhibit and meet the artist on Monday, May 20, 5 to 7 p.m. at the Ste-

vanovich Institute on the Formation of Thought located on the University of Chicago campus at 5737 S. University Ave. in Chicago. The exhibit will continue through June 21.

Information about this installation can be found at <https://sifk.uchicago.edu/events/884/presenting-audrius-plioplys/>

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