

Artist uses his brain

by Elizabeth Daley, Qboro Editor, Queens Chronicle, New York, July 22, 2010

Many artists claim inspiration comes from their own minds, but few make the statement as literally as retired neurologist and artist Dr. Audrius Plioplys, whose brain scans serve as his inspiration and primary artistic focus.

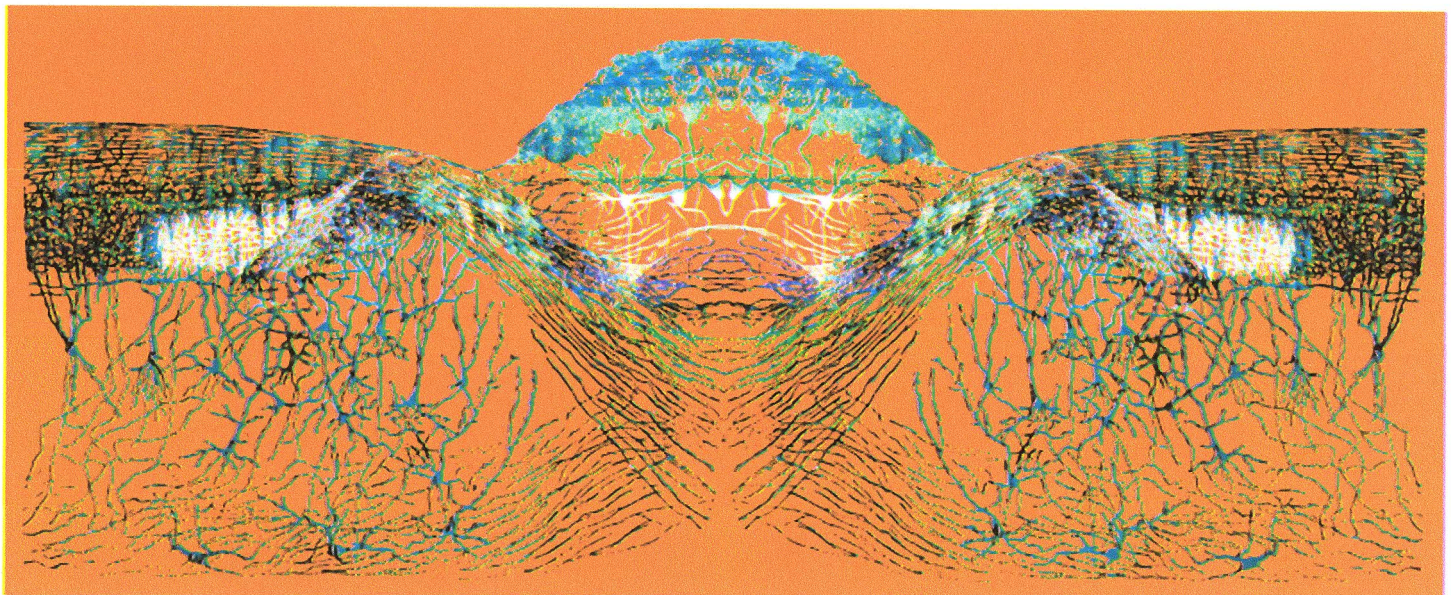
The Chicago-based artist uses his own MRI and electroencephalogram or EEG scans to create large colorful Photo-shopped images. However, he said mixing art with medical science was not always his goal. Though his passion for art became strong in medical school, "At that time, I looked at art as being completely unrelated to medicine so the oil paintings that I did then were very realistic," he said.

Plioplys took three years away from the medical profession to pursue art after finishing his internship. However, he started feeling guilty that he was not doing anything with his neurology training. "My abilities were going to waste," he said. "So I sent a letter to my friends at the Mayo Clinic and they said, 'great, when can you start?' When I hit the Mayo Clinic, that's when I realized keeping art and medicine separate is a mistake," Plioplys said. "I am in a unique situation of understanding the way the brain works ... and the art doesn't have to compete, it can compliment it."

Plioplys' work is currently on display in the atrium of LaGuardia Community College. After understanding the process Plioplys uses to create such images, they become far more notable. Step one, buy a nice bottle of wine. Step two, get a friend at the Mayo Clinic to scan your brain while you think about different subjects.

The technique is novel. Among the subjects Plioplys thought about were his own biggest influences: Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Samuel Beckett, Robert Morris and Johannes Vermeer. For good measure, he also thought about the significance of contemporary art. Still, on paper, the results he said, were "boring."

To jazz them up, he put photographic images behind the MRI scans and used Photoshop to allow the images to leak through. Though unidentifiable as photographs, Plioplys uses the leaked images to add meaning by deriving the titles of his work from them.



"Culture / Center" by Audrius Plioplys, on view at LGCC.