

THE LIGHT SCULPTURES OF AUDRIUS PLIOPLYS

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Artist and physicist A. V. Plioplys (left) with his wife Sigita and the president of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, S. Balzekas.

On March 27th an exhibition of art works by Dr. Audrius V. Plioplys opened in the vestibule of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture. The exhibition is entitled „Siberian Souls“. The exhibition consists of works called light sculptures, which the artist presents to viewers for their judgment and consideration. These are not simply lanterns, as might appear at first glance. We will speak about these amazing works a bit later.

Not his first exhibition at the museum

Stanley Balzekas Jr., the president of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, opened the exhibition. He greeted all who were in

attendance and expressed his satisfaction that artist Audrius Plioplys has put together another exhibition for the museum.

Rita Janz, the director of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, briefly familiarized those in attendance with Audrius Plioplys, medical doctor and artist. She said that Audrius has had several art exhibitions at the museum, and they have been very successful. They have received considerable attention not only from the Lithuanian press but also from the American press. Director Janz said that one of the most successful and significant projects in which A. Plioplys participated was the exhibit entitled „Hope and Spirit“, which took place in 2011 – 2012. This exhibit was dedicated to the memory of those who were exiled to Siberia. It came into being at the suggestion of Audrius Plioplys. He insisted that not many Americans are aware of that dark side of Stalin’s repressions.

Part of this project is now part of the permanent exhibition at the museum. Anyone who visits the museum can see it together with authentic photographs by J. Kazlauskas, which show the return of the remains of Siberian exiles to Lithuania. Audrius Plioplys donated these photographs to the museum.

You have to know history – in order not to make the same mistakes

Audrius Plioplys first expressed his joy at seeing two of his friends from his school days at the opening of the exhibition. He said he was truly surprised to see them. He then briefly recalled the „Hope and Spirit“ exhibit at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture three years ago. It was a commemoration of the 70 year anniversary of the beginning of Stalin’s repressions in Lithuania. Audrius Plioplys said that Americans do not know much about the crimes of Stalin. They have heard about Hitler and his crimes, but very few people know about the repressions carried out by Stalin. That is why the artist decided to tell Americans about these bloody crimes, which were committed in what was then the Soviet Union, and also in Lithuania, after the defeat of Hitler’s Germany in the Second World War. The artist noted that if people are ignorant of history, they may make the same mistakes, and so history can repeat itself over and over. The most

recent events in the Ukraine show very well that history is repeating itself. A huge threat to the independence of the Baltic countries has now arisen again.

Audrius Plioplys related that Father Prunskis had collected a lot of documentary material – photographs and letters which people wrote from Siberian exile. Those documents are evidence to the world of Stalin's crimes. Much of that material was used in the „Hope and Spirit“ exhibit. This exhibit can be viewed in virtual space at the internet site www.plioplys.com.

Eternal life in people's memory

The artist said that the exhibition „Siberian souls“ is likewise dedicated to the memory of Siberian exiles. It is an extension of the other exhibit, but this time through personal art. The light sculptures in the exhibition contain not only photographs of the personal neurological brain impulses of the artist himself, but also photographs and letters of individuals who were exiled to Siberia by Stalin.

The idea behind the exhibit is eternal life. If people are able to remember something, then human beings live forever in the thoughts of others. Our memory is in the nets of neurons in our brains. That is why Audrius Plioplys used photographs of his own brain impulses and harmonized them with photographs of individuals who were exiled to Siberia. The light sculpture make use of letters, which exiles wrote to their relatives and friends in Lithuania and America. In his art works Audrius Plioplys uses copies of authentic letters and photographs. One can not only see real people, but also read the letters they wrote.

Audrius Plioplys explained that his works can be divided into two groups – in one group are colored works which change color with the passage of time, and in the other group are similar works, but illuminated with white light. He explained that these groups represent the two sides of the human brain. The left side of the human brain is used more for analytic thinking (mathematics, language, logic), while the right side is more colorful, more artistic. He wanted to show this difference in his works.

At the opening of the exhibition Rūta Akelaitytė played a few melodies on the Lithuanian zither – kanklės. Director R. Janz invited all the guests to go up to the third floor of the museum after the opening to view the exhibit „No Home to Go To: the Story of Baltic Displaced Persons, 1944 – 1952“. She also reminded those attending that on April 11th the museum hosts an introduction to a new book by Tony Mankus and on April 12th the museum hosts an evening devoted to Lithuanian poetry. R. Janz invited everyone to attend events taking place at the museum.

Briefly about the artist

Audrius Plioplys was born and grew up in Toronto, Canada. Later he moved to the United States. He is a neurologist. He works not only in the medical field, but he also creates unusual works of art, which he makes by using photographs of neurological brain impulses. The art works of Doctor Plioplys reflect his neurological research.

Audrius was always drawn to art and painting. After he graduated from the University of Chicago Medical School he at first did not practice medicine, but instead he pursued the artistic work he liked so much. After three years he realized that he was not using his abilities in neurology to help others. To continue purely in art would have been a loss of his education and training. He realized tht he must find a way to combine neuroscience with art. Dr. Plioplys has been doing this for more than 30 years.

Audrius Plioplys has had art exhibitions of his work not only in Chicago, but in Lithuania and in many states of the United States as well. They have been held in art galleries, universities and museums. The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture is undoubtedly one of his favorite venues for art exhibitions. He has had several art exhibitions there. In 2011 Dr. Audrius Plioplys was named Man of the Year by the Balzekas Museum in recognition of his significant work in preparing the exhibit about the victims of Stalin's repressions.

Photographs by Dalia Kavaliauskienė



Opening of the exhibit.



A few songs were played on a zither by R. Akelaitytė