

CONSCIOUSNESS DEFINED

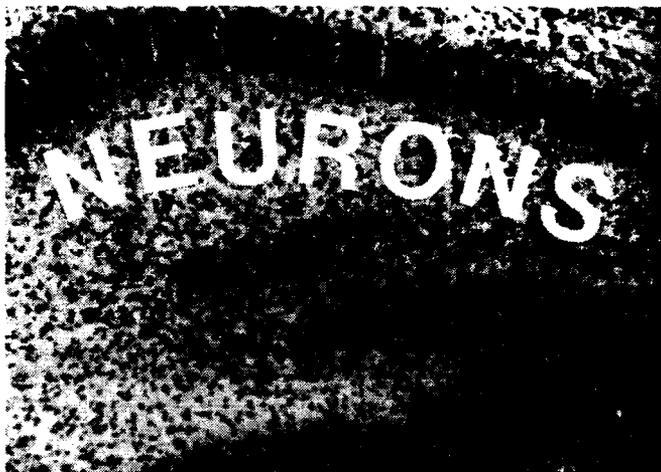
INSTALLATION BY
AUDRIUS V. PLIOPLYS (Chicago)

February 27 to April 12, 1998
Art Gallery of the Museum

Audrius Plioplys Artist's Statement

Consciousness emerges from the interaction of projected sensory stimuli with the neural network upon which this projection takes place. The unit of biologic stratum for consciousness is the cerebral cortical neuron with its extensive and elaborate lateral interconnections to other cortical and subcortical neurons. Consciousness is an emergent biologic property of cerebral cortical neuronal structure and function.

In humans, the most important sensory stimuli for the production of consciousness are visual and auditory. Of considerably less significance are olfactory, gustatory, kines-



thetic and other somatosensory sensations. These stimuli are projected onto a neural network which meshes the external input with internally generated memories, ideas, sensations, emotions and evaluations. Memory traces are self-generated, self-stimulatory and self-projected sensory inputs.

This installation is an attempt to simulate the processes which take place within cerebral cortical areas and layers from which consciousness emerges. The viewer is surrounded and engulfed by the visual and auditory projections, much like the way cortical neurons are engulfed by projected

Audrius V. Plioplys, M.D., FRCPC, FAAP, CMD (b. 1951, Toronto) had 10 one-man shows and participated in 54 group and juried exhibits throughout the United States and internationally. More recently, Audrius Plioplys concentrates on artistic representation of thought process by utilizing the means of conceptual art, photography, and installation.



sensory stimuli. The viewer walks through and interacts with the projected sensations which in turn interact with his/her own perceptions, recollections and reflections, with his/her own generated self-stimulatory memories.

There are fourteen slide projectors used in this installation. The images are photomicrographs of mouse cerebral cortical brain sections which I prepared twelve years ago in my neuroscience research laboratory and recently photographed. The images are appearing on the walls, floor, structural support columns, furniture and the viewer. They are projected onto multivariated strata similar to the multivariated cerebral cortical neuronal strata onto which sensory inputs are projected.

The sound projection is a five minute repeating audiotape in which a sentence has been reproduced by re-recording it sequentially between two different tape recorders. The audiotaped message reverberates within itself, back and forth, much as memory traces in the cerebral cortex do. Recollections involve the repetition and reprocessing of neural interactions. A memory trace from one cortical area is projected to another, and from there to another yet, recurrently, each time with a further addition and elaboration of sensory qualities and emotional affects. Eventually the reverberation of memory returns to where it started, it returns to consciousness.

