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Looking at art

By Fran Addington

Andy Plioplys is an unusual man. First, he's both a pediatric neurologist and a fine artist. Next, he cre-

ates with his photographs a strange sense that we humans are only temporary inhabitants of this planet.

"Temporal and Geographic Displacements" is the theme of the documentary photography in his show at the Dolly Fiterman Gallery, and "entrapment" is the theme for his sculptural work, also shown there.

His installation "Doorways" is made of four doors placed together to form a small enclosed space. A grid at eye level enables you to peer inside where there is a small mirror, shattered in starbursts to form a violent pattern. The enclosure is like a confessional, an actual manifestation of

the word "entrapment."

Plioplys also thinks about the fact that cultures are displaced geographically and in time, picked up and moved from their original integrated setting and set down somewhere else. He documents and illustrates that with his stones placed in configurations that remind him of Lithuanian burial sites.

There are also piles of stones, picked up near Hudson's Bay and transported to Rochester, Minn. Most interesting were the photographs of columns, gargoyles, heads from the Custom House in Toronto, once recycled in the facade of the Bay Theater, but

now placed in the Toronto's High Park as meaningful artifacts. This "displacement" shows how time destroys and limits, but also how some of the meaning from past times can be preserved.

The photos convey the thrill of adventure and nostalgia. A tremendous mystique is generated, for instance, by boulders placed in a line following the progress of the midnight sun at the Arctic Circle in Canada's Northwest Territories.

Surprising, offbeat and mystical other works at the Fiterman Gallery are Plioplys's "books," which are folders containing arrangements of slices of

mirror. They're called such names as "Book of Sympathy" and "Book of Logarithmic Progressions." There are also small conceptual essays, self-published bookettes, documenting "A Walk, May 5, 1978," and other walks.

It's hard to classify the experience of looking at this show, but one thing is certain: Plioplys has the power.

The show runs through April 10. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, noon to 4 p.m.

Fran Addington is a visual artist and a free-lance writer.