

Mar. 31 to May 4, 1978

—By LEE FLEMING

Calendar Art

The Washington Star

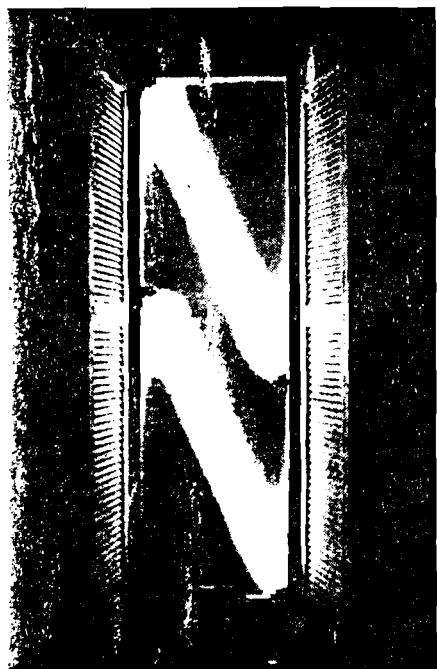
Sunday, April 9, 1978

What's UP IN ART

April 1978

Tobie Lanou

By Benjamin Forgey



Audrius Plioplys, "Doorway (With Doors Open)," at WPA

Audrius Plioplys (Washington Project for the Arts, April 1 to 29) Plioplys makes a nice debut with this show, roughly divided into three parts yet bound by the artist's preoccupation with "meaning" in his work. The word itself blinks at passers-by from the WPA window, and appears in various guises and attitudes throughout the exhibition. Plioplys uses fluorescent and incandescent light, mirrors, and doors to construct his studies in ambiguity; the viewer finds himself drawn to the mysteries concealed in the constructions, only to find that what seemed unapproachable was easy, until the approaches cease to exist on a physical plane, becoming questions of perception, reality and relationships. Tues. to Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 1227 G St. N.W. 347-8304.

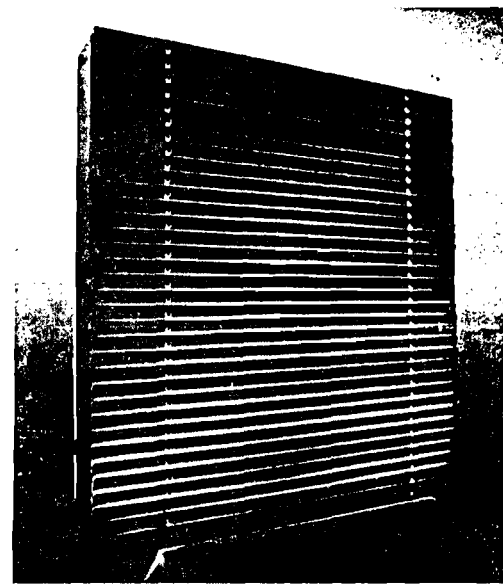
ANDY PLIOPLYS. an artist who shares the WPA space this month with the books, leads with his chin when he writes, "The antecedents of my art are primarily literary and philosophic considerations." These days such statements are most likely to introduce an art whose main point is the utter removal of expressive, visual content.

Plioplys is nothing if not consistent. Like Sol LeWitt, he is entirely willing to follow an idea through to its logical consequences and, as is the case with LeWitt, this can lead to results that are not terribly interesting, visually. It can also lead to things that are quite compelling, visually and intellectually.

The basic elements of Plioplys' vocabulary are few: blacks, silvers and whites as colors; darkness and light as primary contrasts; forms that are plainly, factually minimal. One difference is that his forms, in addition to being rectangles or cubes, also are comparable to windows or books or shadow boxes. They refer, that is, to conventional things and ideas, to the real world.

Thus for Plioplys, who chose art only after completing medical school and one year of internship at a hospital two years ago, conceptualism and minimalism seem to serve the end of refining and clarifying his ideas and feelings. As a consequence, his art is not really esoteric, nor dull.

An understated or even repressed romanticism informs even his more gimmicky constructions (such as a light box made of steel-black window blinds and fluorescent light tubes). Frequently enough, as in his "entrapment boxes" (tiny black enclosures that play through various possible combinations of mirror fragments), the results are disturbing and effective on many levels. All in all, an impressive debut. Through April 29.



Audrius Plioplys. *Boxed Window*. 1977. Venetian blinds wood, fluorescent bulbs. 7 x 36 x 44". \$500 at WPA.

AUDRIUS PLIOPLYS: NEW WORKS. What the photo above shows is a black venetian blind mounted against another just like it, and illuminated from within. The effect is not banal, but mysterious and somehow prescient, as though Plioplys had turned nostalgia around and made it into an emotion regarding the future, not the past. Sound obscure? There's no convenient way to describe these experimental, strange black works which use mirrors and lights to create moods ranging from melancholic to frantic. They call forth loneliness, pain, confusion, isolation, and occasionally, an eerie serenity. Ruggedly conceptual, this art is often elegant, too, with its carefully prepared surfaces. It is strange, but it's all part of quite an artistic vocabulary. Plioplys, an M.D., has a metaphysical mind. Range: \$100-500. (Washington Project for the Arts, G Street, through April 29.)