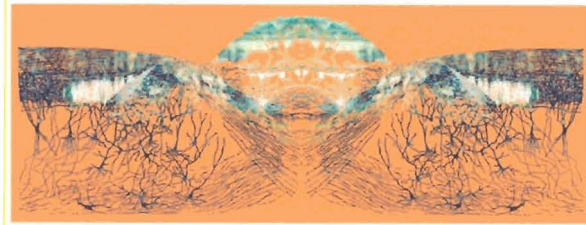


Between Choice and Calling

Audrone Simanonyte

Amerikos Lietuvis (American Lithuanian)

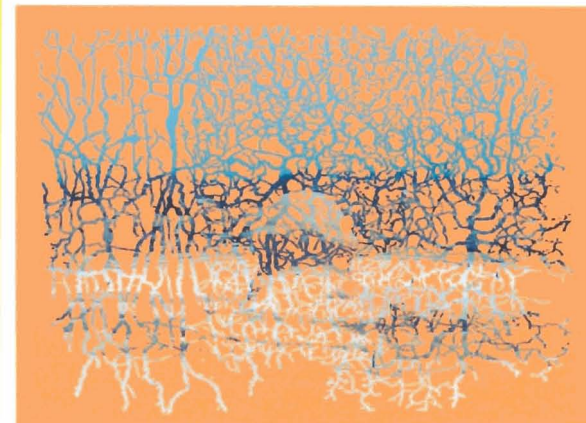
Chicago, IL, November 12, 2005



A. V. Plioplys. At the Center



At the outskirts of Vilnius, Lithuania, three boulders mark the geographic center of Europe. Vilnius. Lithuania. 1997



A. V. Plioplys. Thoughtful Sphinx



A view of what the Sphinx is continuously looking and contemplating. Cairo. Egypt. 1997

One of the 2004-2005 American Top Doctors is Lithuanian Audrius V. Plioplys, who is recognized by the general public not only for being a physician, but also for being an artist who creates exceptionally impressive conceptual works.

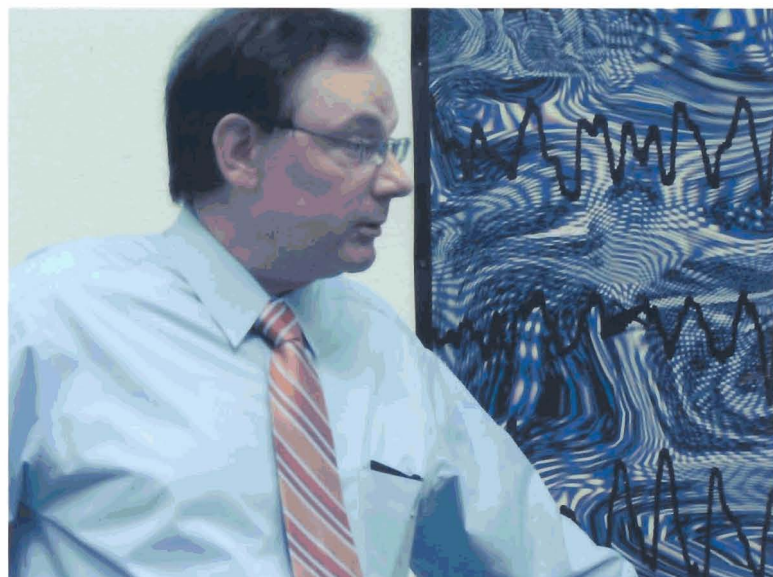
Audrius Plioplys's works have been exhibited throughout the world. He has been invited to participate in many different exhibitions and is represented by a most prestigious art gallery.

In the past five years the artist has created three serieses of work: Neurotheology, From Christ to Cajal (2000), Thoughts From Under a Rock (2003), and Symphonic Thoughts (2005).

It is unfortunate that due to specific details of the art works themselves (that is their large size, and at times extremely large size) it is not possible for the artist to exhibit these works in most of the Lithuanian community exhibit halls in Chicago.

So: a doctor or an artist?

“Art is a very important part of my life, but unfortunately, as we all know, it is very difficult to make



Audrius Plioplys, “Franz Kafka’s Law / Mass Execution” from the series “Symphonic Thoughts.”

a living from art. In 1975, after I finished my medical studies at the University of Chicago, and then an internal medicine internship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Hospitals, I seriously doubted my choice of the medical profession—the calling to do art was progressively getting stronger. I made a choice to entirely give up my medical career and devote myself, full-time, to the pursuit of art. I moved to Washington, D.C., and was completely immersed in art. I frequently visited New York City to see gallery and museum art exhibitions. I painted, created mixed media sculptures and installations.”

“For three years, I devoted myself completely to art. After this period of time, I started to feel guilty. I was an extremely well trained and capable neurologist, and I was doing nothing in this field. My subconscious mind started doing it’s dirty work, and progressively made me feel guilty: I had the training and the ability to provide the finest neurologic care, but I was not treating patients. I realized that, with effort, it should be possible to be a physician, to provide care for patients, and also to continue doing my art work. Indeed, it was difficult, but was possible, and indeed this was accomplished.”

It is a very interesting fact, that being both a physician and an artist in one person, surrounded by and immersed in the mixture of two different worlds, Audrius Plioplys has created a totally unique form of artistic expression.

“As a practicing neurologist and neurobiological researcher, I try to understand how the human brain works, how it is formed, and how clinical disorders of brain function arise.”

“In my earlier series, Thoughts From Under a Rock, I used computer technology to produce extremely large archival-quality works on canvas. The underlying photographs were artistically transformed, and on them neuronal images (drawings of the cells from which our brains are actually composed) were superimposed and then subtracted.”

“It is a very time consuming and complicated procedure to print the images on the canvas.”

“When I began to work with the first series, Neurotheology, basically I had to devise everything that I needed to produce the large scale prints on canvas. No one prior to me had done what I was planning to do. It was only much later did Epson and HP developed the necessary technology which I then immediately began to use.”

The barbed wire had to be photographed in Toronto.

Plioplys’s latest series, Symphonic Thoughts, was displayed in May of 2005 at M.K. Ciurlionis Art Museum in Kaunas. (The artist subsequently donated the displayed pieces to a number of art museums in Lithuania.)

This series of art works was the most difficult to produce.

As the basis of each work, the artist used his own widely displayed photographs of importance to him, such as nature scenes, his ancestors' church, etc. Using computer technology, the artist transformed the original photograph using his own methods, in keeping with how the central nervous system transforms and stores visual memories in a neuronal network.

"In 1980, I recorded 20 of my own electroencephalograms (EEG's). These were not ordinary EEG's. They were all created while I was intensively thinking about different artistic topics, for example, about art works of Vermeer or those of Ciurlionis, about the meaning of contemporary art, and even as I was thinking creative thoughts."

"I used the EEG's for the series, Symphonic Thoughts, placing them on top of the transformed photographic images. One difference is that the EEG's had 12 lines and in my pieces, I used only 5 lines – this corresponds to sheet music which has only five lines. This was a further tie-in of my art work with musical compositions."

But that is not all.

"From a neurologist's perspective, the greatest part of one's personality and the way one thinks, are formed through childhood experiences."

"Because I wanted to include my childhood experiences in this series of works, in 2004 I flew to Toronto and visited the places where I grew up. I had spent a lot of my childhood in High Park, and at the zoo in this park. I took a large number of photographs of the actual barbs, on the barbed wire at the zoo."

"The placement of the barbs on the EEG tracings was in keeping with the distribution of musical notes from selected compositions on sheet music. In this way I further incorporated music into these pieces."

"Thus, the title of one of the works from Symphonic Thoughts is: Significance of Contemporary Art / Ancestral Worship. In 1989, I visited the Plioplys homestead in Pilviskiai, where my father and his ancestors grew up. During mass in the Pilviskiu church, I photographed the altar and the parishioners. I used this photograph for the background of this piece. The EEG was recorded while I thought about the significance of contemporary art. The musical score applied to the EEG was from Bella Bartok's Change of Time (in Mikrokosmos)."

The designer store Mark Shale, at 900 N. Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago, asked Audrius Plioplys to display his works for one month. Now, two years later, the work is still being displayed there, and is open to the public. The unbelievably large and impressive works are displayed in half of the two story store. The store

itself has two floors (floors three and four of the building), and Audrius Plioplys's work is displayed on the entire third floor walls.

"Of course, they could buy the works, but the pieces are not inexpensive. That's why they are holding onto the works until I ask for them back," the artist joked. "However, it is comforting to know that because my work is displayed in such a prominent public space, more people will have seen my art work, than if my work had been on display in an art museum."

It is difficult to exhibit these works without nails. When asked if Chicago's Lithuanian community will have the opportunity to view the unique work, the artist expressed a bit of doubt:

"Honestly, my work is hard to display. If one makes a frame for the work, then transportation of the work is the biggest problem, because many of the pieces are 13 feet long. If the work is without a frame it is easy to transport. However, the Chicago Lithuanian galleries can't display my art because in order to secure the pieces, they would have to be nailed to the wall using very many nails. Places like The Lithuanian World Center and Jaunimo Centras, don't allow that."

Thus, in wishing the best future for this artist, we do come to the conclusion that unless we find a more modern way to hang art works, other than using nails, we, Lithuanians, will have to content ourselves with viewing in our art galleries more of traditional paintings (which is not bad at all), and more importantly (!) more traditional formats of art (which also is not bad).

For all of those who are interested in this truly unusual phenomenon of contemporary (and even more so—Lithuanian) art, I strongly encourage you to view his works. For further information:

Audrius Vaclovas Plioplys
www.plioplys.com
Represented by: FLATFILE Galleries
217 N. Carpenter, Chicago, IL
Tel: 312-491-1190
www.flatfilegalleries.com

The majority of his work are available at Flatfile gallery. Also, as previously mentioned, a large number of large scale pieces are currently displayed at the Mark Shale store (third level), located at 900 N. Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

Also, one jury-selected art work by this artist, is being displayed in the exhibit Freedom: Response, Gage Gallery, Roosevelt University, 18 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, from November 10th until December 9th, 2005.

Everyone is welcome to attend! (Translated from the original Lithuanian)