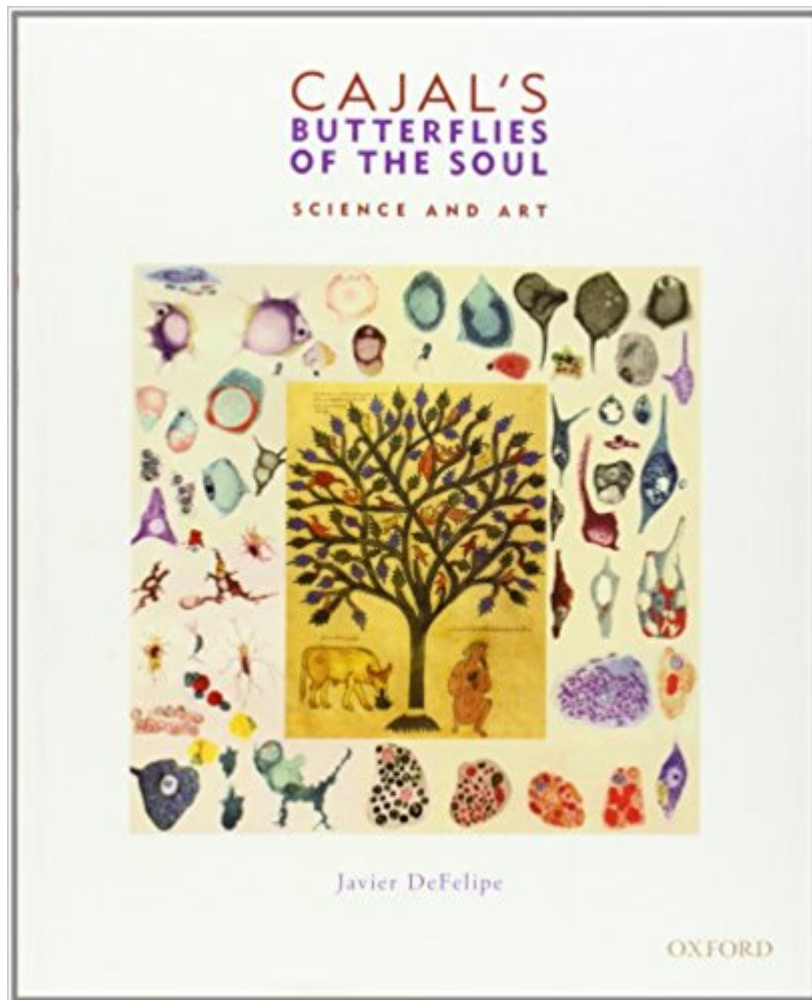




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Cajal's Butterflies Of The Soul: Science And Art



Synopsis

This book contains a large collection of beautiful figures produced throughout the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and that represent some characteristic examples of the early days of research in neuroscience. The main aim of this work is to demonstrate to the general public that the study of the nervous system is not only important for the many obvious reasons related to brain function in both health and disease, but also for the unexpected natural beauty that it beholds. This beauty has been discovered thanks to the techniques used to visualize the microscopic structure of the brain, a true forest of colorful and florid neural cells. As illustrated by his marvelous drawings, the studies of Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934) no doubt contributed more than those of any other researcher at the time to the growth of modern neuroscience. Thus, we have honored his name in the title of this book, even though the figures contained in the main body of the book are from 91 authors. Looking at the illustrations in this book the readers will not only marvel at Cajal's drawings but they will also find that many of the other early researchers that studied the nervous system were also true artists, of considerable talent and aesthetic sensibility. Thus, the present book contains numerous drawings of some of the most important pioneers in neuroscience, including Deiters, Kölliker, Meynert, Ranvier, Golgi, Retzius, Nissl, Dogiel, Alzheimer, del Río-Hortega and de Castro. The book has been divided into two Parts, Part I and II, the latter containing the main body of the work. Part I contains introductory information that will give readers unfamiliar with the nervous system a better understanding of the importance of the scientific illustrations produced in those days. The second part of the book, Part II, contains the collection of 282 figures with the intention of transforming the reader into an observer. These illustrations have been divided in three main categories: Section I, The Benedictine period: The early days; Section II, The black period: Neurons, glia and organization of the nervous system; Section III, The colorful period: internal structure and chemistry of the cells. This book will be of general interest, not only due to the captivating aesthetic appeal of the illustrations but also because they represent the bases of our current understanding of the nervous system. The reader will find that many of the illustrations can be considered to belong to different artistic movements, such as modernism, surrealism, cubism, abstract art or impressionism. Indeed, these illustrations may also provide artists with a source of inspiration since they reveal a fantastic and virtually unknown world of forms, a microuniverse with an aura of mystery.

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Customer Reviews

"The book considers the most beautiful images from three eras: the "Benedictine" period of indistinct forms; the classical period when a special nerve cell stain, the "black reaction" of Camillo Golgi, ignited a passion in Ramon y Cajal and other histologists of the late nineteenth century for the fantastic shapes of nerve cells; and the modern period in which the black reaction was expanded by new stains to produce magical cell forms in every color of the painter's palette. Here are images of nerve cells to match van Gogh's sunflowers, Monet's water lilies, or el Greco's View of Toledo. The book is an education in the fundamental concepts behind today's brain research as well as an inspired vision of science as an artistic and aesthetic enterprise."--Gordon M. Shepherd, MD, DPhil, Department of Neurobiology, Yale Medical School, New Haven, CT "Santiago RamÃf n y Cajal has found a modern embodiment in the author whose eye for the beauty revealed by the microscope and gift for romantic language provide a vision of the nervous system that matches that of the master himself. Cajal and many of his contemporaries portrayed their findings in lithographs that have a character all their own, a character that has disappeared from modern representations of nerve cells and their connections. There has probably never been a collection of the most striking of these illustrations from a bygone era to match that assembled by Javier De Felipe. What is particularly pleasing is that the majority undoubtedly came from publications that Cajal himself had held in his hands. The result is not only a work of high art but also one that reveals the progressive development of knowledge about the finer structure of the nervous system in the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries."-Edward G. Jones, MD, PhD, Director, Center for Neuroscience, UC-Davis "This beautiful volume presents a pictorial history of how the nervous system was

illustrated in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This was the era of artistic creativity in the study of the brain because, until microphotography became well developed, scientists of the nervous system had to be artists to communicate their observations. For Cajal, the "butterflies of the soul" from the book's title were the elegant principal cells of the cerebral cortex (the pyramidal cells), whose study promised some day to reveal "the secret of mental life". This lovingly prepared book, by a leading Cajal scholar and neuroscientist, will fascinate artists and scientists alike with its marvelous microworld of unusual forms that describe the architecture of the nervous system."--Larry R. Squire, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry, Neurosciences, and Psychology, UCSD School of Medicine, Research Career Scientist, VA Medical Center, San Diego, CA "This book does not only present the artistic products of early human and comparative neuroanatomy and neuropathology, but also provides an insight into the artistic skills of early neuroscientists in illustrating the fine structure of the nervous system in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, it informs about the fundamental concepts of early brain research and gives an inspired vision of science as an artistic and aesthetic enterprise."--European Journal of Neurology"...it [the book] is a stunningly gorgeous work with two-hundred-and-eighty-eight incredible images. Anyone who is in need of content for their coffee table, this is it. The illustrations are just breathtaking, purely and simply, and, of course, naturally. It is...invaluable. I highly recommend it; there is brilliant text as well."--As reviewed on the blog Just One of the Guys...In Search of Cosmic Wisdom., by Benjamin Erlich "This beautiful book, edited by Javier deFelipe from the Instituto Cajal in Madrid, Spain, presents a collection of beautiful color drawings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrating the nervous system and its components, thus representing some characteristic examples of the early days of neuroscience research...This book does not only present the artistic products of early human and comparative neuroanatomy and neuropathology, but also provides an insight into the artistic skills of early neuroscientists in illustrating the fine structure of the nervous system...Thus, it informs about the fundamental concepts of early brain research and gives an inspired vision of science as an artistic and esthetic enterprise."--As reviewed by K. A. Jellinger in European Journal of Neurology "The book...contains two-hundred and eighty-two one-of-a-kind images, truly exquisite neuroscientific data. But this is not merely a picture book; there is an abundance of valuable text. The first part contains a detailed, well-told background and history of neuroscience and technology....I cannot imagine that a traditional textbook could do a better job of presenting this information...After their introduction, the images become more than aesthetic stimulation; they acquire special meaning because they represent the seeds of early anatomical discovery that grew into the field of modern neuroscience...I would rather not attempt to translate the unique images into

descriptive approximations. I prefer instead to use my words to urge the reader to see for his or herself....It all amounts to an affirmation of the fundamental beauty of this holy human organ, something to never forget."--As reviewed by Ben Ehrlich in The Beautiful Brain: An Online Magazine"Javier DeFelipe should be congratulated on assembling such a beautiful book about the earliest microscopic investigations of the nervous system conducted at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century...This book is a wonderful addition to the library of any neuroscientist or neurologist. It is worthy of attention of artists who enjoy the beauty of the natural world."--The Lancet Neurology"...a rich treasury...I recommend this book unreservedly; and I thank Javier DeFelipe and Oxford University Press for giving us so much beauty."--Mitchell Glickstein, Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, University College London, reviewed in Brain"...exquisitely illustrated...This book represents the best collection of illustrations and succinct text about the history of discovery of microscopic neuroanatomy I have ever read. The book is attractively priced and should delight anyone with an interest in the nervous system. Encased within a striking dust jacket, sturdy spine, and boards, this book would make a perfect gift to graduating house staff."--Reviewed by Edward J. Fine, MD, FAAN in Neurology"Dr. DeFelipe's book is not just a coffee-table book for viewing century-old stunning pictorial images, it is a highly relevant text for today. Should you spend \$75 on this book? If you do, I can guarantee that you will have hours of wonder, gazing at the illustrations and not believing what you see - that is until you next look down your microscope." -- Roy O. Weller, Emeritus Professor of Neuropathology, University of Southampton School of Medicine

The book is an education in the fundamental concepts behind today's brain research as well as an inspired vision of science as an artistic and aesthetic enterprise. - Gordon M. Shepherd, MD, DPhil, Department of Neurobiology, Yale Medical School, New Haven, CT

"But, in writing in the early 1970's, Clarke and Dewhurst could not benefit from the visual revelations of tissue and brain imaging available to contemporary neuroscientists; as seen for example in ... Javier de Felipe's Cajal's Butterflies of the Soul (2010) in which images from the 'Benedictine, Black, and Colourful periods' frame a rich annotated display of exquisite microscopical depictions of the cellular architecture of the brain drawn by Golgi and Cajal who described nerve cells as having 'delicate and elegant forms, the butterflies of the soul'." --Brain: The Journal of Neurology

Javier DeFelipe, PhD is a Research Professor at the Instituto Cajal (CSIC) located in his hometown, Madrid, Spain. The particular expertise of Javier DeFelipe lies in the microanatomy of the cerebral cortex. Since 1991, the main focus of his team has been directed at understanding the neurochemical and microanatomical characteristics of the neocortex and of the hippocampal

formation. The information that has been obtained regarding the normal organization of these cortical regions has been used to investigate the possible alterations that might occur in these structures in epilepsy and Alzheimer disease. Another of his principal interests is in the study of the history of our current understanding of important aspects of cortical organization and function. In particular, he is interested in the origins and the roots of cortical histology and circuitry.

This book is a collector's item for those interested in cell structure and/or those who love beautiful line drawings and delicate paintings with exquisite detail. Plus, there is plenty of text to give the reader plenty of context for the plates. A unique book.

This book is incredible, a must for anyone who loves science and art. The pictures are gorgeous, and there's just the right amount of text to provide background without detracting from the art. I am thrilled to have found a great deal on it, as it is usually priced high, but it is worth it for a beautiful coffee table book, or just for reference and enjoyment.

The reproductions of neurological drawings in this book are stunning, and hard to find collected in one source like this. The text is fascinating, giving a brief overview of Cajal and other neurological pioneers, as well as a brief overview of the structures depicted. The quality is very high, the book is densely illustrated, and I feel it's worth the price to have this treasure of a book.

This book is a landmark for those studying the development of neurology; the beautiful original art provides so much insight to the complexity of the interconnections of the brain. This book definitely met my expectations.

Great for neuroscience nerds who also love art. I bought this for my wife as a gift after hearing of the artist on the Big Bang Theory.

Very pretty book

Perfect book with detailed illustrations of Cajal's work.

most suited gift from an art historian to a neurologist. requires a reader who can appreciate the medical illustration as an aesthetic object.

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