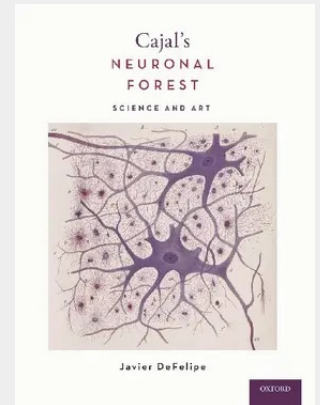


Cajal's Neuronal Forest

Science and Art

Cajal's Neuronal Forest: Science and Art continues the tradition set forth by its sister volume Cajal's Butterflies of the Soul (OUP, 2009). This new collection contains hundreds of beautiful rarely-seen-before figures produced throughout the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century by famed father-of-modern-neuroscience Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934) and his contemporaries. Cajal was captivated by the beautiful shapes of the cells of the nervous system. He and his fellow scientists saw neurons as trees and glial cells as bushes. Given their high density and arrangement, neurons and glial resembled a thick forest, a seemingly impenetrable terrain of interacting cells mediating cognition and behavior. In unraveling the mysteries of the brain, these researchers encountered an almost infinite number of cellular forms with an extraordinary beauty, which they could not help but put pen to paper, allowing them to discover a new artistic world- the neuronal forest- that gave free rein not only to their imagination, but to a new way of viewing the brain as well. This book has been divided into two parts. The first focuses on the scientific atmosphere in Cajal's times, on the history of the neuron, and the anatomical challenge posed in studying neuronal connections. It also delves into the artistic skills of Cajal and other important pioneers in neuroscience and how the neuronal forests have served as an unlimited source of artistic inspiration. The second consists of 275 original drawings by Cajal. All were published over the course of his scientific career and cover virtually all of his research fields of interest, including the spinal cord, the optic lobe and retina, cerebral cortex, and many other regions of the brain. Cajal's Neuronal Forest: Science and Art is a testament to the natural beauty found in science. Despite the common misconception that the drawings of Cajal and other scientists of the time are pieces of art, these drawings are in fact copies of histological preparations and contributed greatly to the discoveries made in the field of neuroscience. This book is a gem in any library, whether serving as a medical history or a gallery of stunning sketches.

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