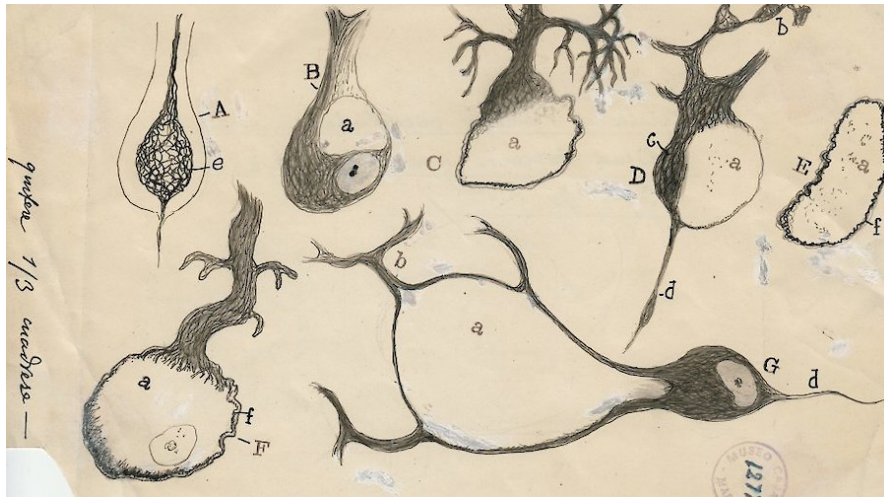




The Beautiful Brain: The Drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal



The exhibition presents the detailed drawings of Ramón y Cajal, the father of modern neuroscience.

Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852–1934), a Spanish pathologist, histologist, neuroscientist, and Nobel laureate, was also an exceptional artist. He drew the brain in a way that provided a clarity exceeding that achieved by photographs. Combining scientific and artistic skills to produce drawings with extraordinary scientific and aesthetic qualities, his theory that the brain is composed of individual cells rather than a tangled single web is the basis of neuroscience today.

Cajal's astonishing depictions of the brain—which combine cutting-edge scientific knowledge with consummate draftsmanship—offer much greater clarity than photographs, so much so that they are still in wide use today.

Featuring approximately 80 of Cajal's drawings, the show situates them within the history of scientific illustration from the 16th to 19th centuries, and juxtaposes them with contemporary visualizations of the brain.

Related programs

CONVERSATION WITH ERIC A. NEWMAN

- On January 9, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.
- Eric A. Newman is a Distinguished McKnight Professor, Department of Neuroscience, University of Minnesota, and co-curator of The Beautiful

VISUAL ARTS
NEW YORK

Tue, January 09–
Sat, March 31, 2018

Venue

Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Square
E, New York, NY 10003

[View map](#)

Phone: 212-998-6780

Admission

Free

More information

[Grey Art Gallery](#)

Credits

Organized by the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, in collaboration with the Cajal Institute. Image: *Injured Purkinje neurons of the cerebellum*, Santiago Ramón y Cajal, 1914, ink and pencil on paper, Cajal Institute (CSIC), Madrid



Brain.

ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATION

- **On February 5, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.**
- *At the Intersection of Art, Neuroscience, and Perception*, moderated by Lynn Gumpert, Director, Grey Art Gallery, and Eric Klann, Professor and Chair of Neural Science, both NYU
- With speakers Teresita Fernández, artist; Eric Kandel, University Professor and Fred Kavli Professor, Department of Neuroscience, Columbia University; and Robert Whitman, artist. They will discuss the relationships between mind, brain, perception, and art.

BROWN BAG LUNCH – NEUROIMAGING IN CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH TODAY

- **On February 9, from 12:30 pm to 2 pm.**
- Students and faculty in NYU's Center for Neural Science discuss how they make and use brain images in their current research. Moderated by NYU's Chiye Aoki, Professor of Neural Science and Biology; and Virginia García Marín, Assistant Research Scientist of Neural Science, both NYU.

CONVERSATION – DECISION TREES AND BRANCHING DENDRITES

- **On February 12, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.**
- With Lawrence Weschler, writer; Carl Schoonover, Postdoctoral Fellow; Axel Lab, Columbia University; and Beth Campbell, artist. They ponder the way branching patterns keep appearing at different scales and in different guises, from the dendrites of Cajal's neurons to the decision trees in Campbell's work.

CONVERSATION – THREE POINT STANCE: EMBODYING THE POLITICS AND PLEASURES OF FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL

- **On February 13, from 7 pm to 9 pm.**
- Featuring NYU's Noel Anderson, Clinical Assistant Professor of Art & Art Professions (Steinhardt); Pato Hebert, Associate Arts Professor, Art & Public Policy (TSOA); and Daniel P. Perl, Professor of Neuropathology, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. This conversation examines the materiality and aesthetic forms of football and basketball to address the paradoxical mixture of elegance, ferocity, normative masculinity, highly ritualized style, racial identity, and trauma that characterize both games.

DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENING – CAJAL AND CONTEMPORARY NEUROSCIENCE

- **On February 15, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.**
- This screening features two documentary films: *Santiago Ramón y*



Cajal—Las mariposas del alma (Butterflies of the Soul), directed by Ana Martínez for Televisión Española, 2006, 59 minutes (with English subtitles); and *Bluebrain Year 7*, brief excerpts from an ongoing project directed by Noah Hutton, which follows neuroscience research around the world, including Henry Markram’s ambitious Blue Brain Project in Switzerland; with commentary by Noah Hutton and Benjamin Ehrlich, author of a forthcoming biography of Cajal.

PANEL DISCUSSION – BEAUTY IS TRUTH, TRUTH BEAUTY: PRACTICAL AESTHETICS IN DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING

- **On February 22, from 7 pm to 9 pm.**
- Speakers focus on the cross-fertilization of science and art in the form of CAT scans, MRIs and 3-D imaging, and in their re-purposing by artists. Moderated by Tom Drysdale, Associate Professor, with speakers Caitlin Berrigan, Associate Arts Professor, both of Photography & Imaging (TSOA); John G. Golfinos, Neurosurgeon and Researcher, and Chair of Neurosurgery; and Timothy Shepherd, Diagnostic Radiologist, both of NYU Langone Medical Center.

DRAWING WORKSHOP – PICTURING THE BRAIN

- **On March 7, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.**
- In this hands-on workshop, participants follow in Cajal’s footsteps, viewing brain-tissue samples through microscopes and rendering what they see. Led by Heather McKellar, Senior Manager of Education and Outreach Program, Neuroscience Institute at NYU Langone Health.

LECTURE – WHAT ART CAN TELL US ABOUT THE BRAIN

- **On March 20, from 5:30 pm to 7 pm.**
- This Irving H. Jurow Lecture at NYU’s College of Arts & Science with Margaret S. Livingstone, Takeda Professor of Neurobiology, Harvard Medical School, examines how major works of art provide insight into how we see, how artists have figured out how our brains extract relevant information about faces and objects, and why learning disabilities may be associated with artistic talent.

LECTURE – SANTIAGO RAMÓN Y CAJAL: THE ARTIST AS SCIENTIST

- **On March 22, from 7 pm to 8:30 pm.**
- Eric Himmel, Editor-in-Chief of Abrams Books and Beautiful Brain catalogue essayist, traces Cajal’s path from a failed provincial artist through his midlife encounter with neuroscience –which inspired his revolutionary drawings based in new forms and new concepts.

CONVERSATION – THE BRAIN IS A WORLD: RAMÓN Y



CAJAL AS EXPLORER

- **On March 23, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.**
- NYU's Marisa Carrasco, Collegiate Professor and Professor of Psychology & Neural Science, and James D. Fernández, Collegiate Professor and Professor of Spanish & Portuguese, discusses and illustrates Cajal's pioneering cartography of the brain in the context of his fascinating biographical trajectory.

READINGS – CAJAL AS WRITER

- **On March 27, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.**
- Led by Morgan Cuning, graduate student in Dramatic Writing (TSOA), NYU student writers and actors read passages from Cajal's remarkable books *Recollections of My Life* and *Advice for a Young Neuroscientist*, both still in print.

GALLERY CONVERSATION WITH MADELINE MURPHY TURNER

- **On March 28, from 6:30 pm to 8 pm.**
- Madeline Murphy Turner is a Graduate Curatorial Assistant, Grey Art Gallery, and PhD candidate, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU.

Opening reception on January 8, from 6 pm to 8 pm.