

which I call the impermanence stitch. However, I've left it loose so that, theoretically, it could be restitched to achieve perfection."

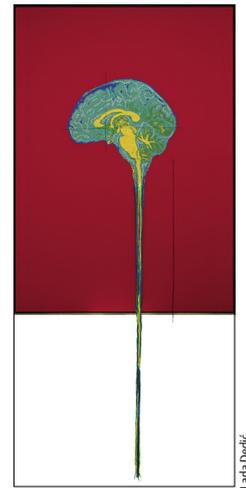
These concepts of progress and mastery that Dedić explores are reflected in *Self Portrait: Artist's Brain*, which she playfully describes as her magnum opus. The exhibition took place almost 20 years after her first MRI scan, and the sophisticated detail and colour in her work mirrors the evolution of neuroimaging technology. The embroideries that depict early scans are subtle and monochrome, emitting greys and muted whites that echo the palettes of last century's technology. Her later works, by contrast, strike the eye in bold, primary-coloured flashes that bring to life the dynamic mechanisms of human intelligence.

In *Self Portrait: Artist's Brain VII*, a tangle of scarlet-coloured threads depicting the brain stem erupts from the canvas and hangs a metre below the frame. *Self Portrait: Artist's Brain X* interprets a cross-sectional brain slice, with the cortical neurons travelling down the blood-red canvas in a suspended mass of multi-coloured fibres. The guidelines

stitched in a naive and loose fashion across *Self Portrait: Artist's Brain IV* are reminiscent of the stratification used in neuroimaging and suggest the perhaps elusive aim of modern science to control, contain, and compartmentalise the unknowable elements of the mind.

In her work, Dedić's so-called impermanence stitch—a solitary strand of cotton that is drawn through a single millimetre of linen and dangles free—entices her audience to engage with the seemingly disparate disciplines of art and science. The tantalising and evanescent nature of this stitch asks viewers to take opportunities, test hypotheses, and, in line with Buddhist tradition, question everything. When Dedić recalls her time spent with the Dalai Lama, her abiding memory is of a man whose enthusiasm for life revolves specifically around these empirical inquiries. "The one thing that really gets him excited is meeting scientists", she says. "His philosophy is that, if science ever disproves something from Buddhism, then we must let it go."

Clare Caldwell



Self Portrait: Artist's Brain X
Stranded cotton on aida cloth,
2015

Lifeline

Farrah Mateen is a neurologist with a PhD in international health and fellowships in neuroimmunology and medical ethics. She is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and directs the global neurology research group at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA. She studies low-cost interventions for high-prevalence neurological conditions in resource-limited settings, including Bhutan, Guinea, and Tanzania. In Boston, she clinically cares for and performs research with patients living with multiple sclerosis and neuromyelitis optica.

What has been the greatest achievement of your career?
Growing the field of global health and neurology to become more mainstream and recognised.

What inspires you?

I am inspired by African neurologists in training. In several locations where I work, there is no running water, electricity, or library. You are left with ambition.

What do you think is the most neglected field of science or medicine at the moment?

Research ethics.

If you had not entered your current profession, what would you have liked to do?

Law. I always like a careful, well-reasoned argument.

Who was your most influential teacher, and why?

In medicine, the anonymous collective of manuscript and grant reviewers. Sometimes, people really take the time to help you and you will never know who or where they are. In life, my mother because she comes to reasonable conclusions on complicated matters.

What is the most memorable comment from a referee?

"The authors failed to account for the impact of self-driving cars."

If you wrote an autobiography, what would be the title?

Sasquatch, because I am from Saskatchewan, Canada.

What was your first experiment as a child?

Interventions to delay my bedtime: an adaptive trial design.

What is your greatest fear?

Flying in aeroplanes.

What one discovery or invention would most improve your life?

Safe supersonic air travel.

If you were Bill Gates, how would you spend your fortune?

I would endow academic faculty to do global health work throughout their careers, developing a permanent network of experts across disciplines and geographies. I do like his recent work on reinventing the toilet and bringing attention to water and sanitation.

What is the best piece of advice you have received?

"Money cannot be eaten", which is often ascribed to the Cree people and is both a statement on the uselessness of money itself and a vision for a collectively better future.

What is your greatest regret?

Taking criticism too personally. Since I take my work personally, I take criticism of it personally. If I could tell my younger self to take criticism less personally, I would.

