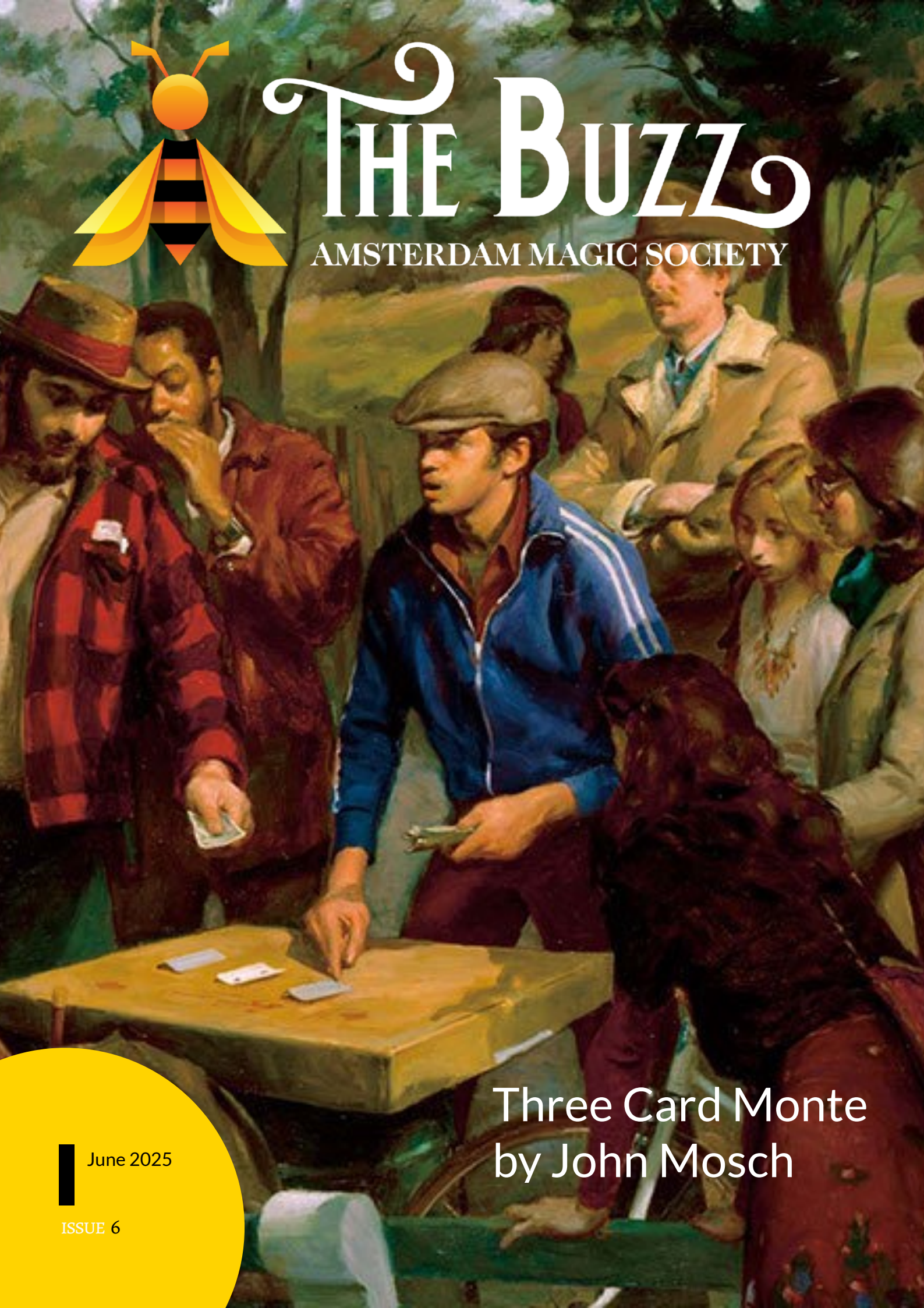




THE BUZZ

AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY



Three Card Monte
by John Mosch

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ISSUE 6

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In this issue, we dive deep into some fascinating topics, from exploring the psychology of guilt in magic to uncovering the connection between magic and the brain.

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JOHN MOSCH

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Magicians have been testing and exploiting the limits of cognition and attention for hundreds of years. Neuroscientists are just beginning to catch up.

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ASTI MANUSCRIPT

12 p.

PECOLLI (EMHC)

We confirm another conference that, personally, we consider unique in its kind and value, dedicated to an incredible book: the Asti Manuscript.



This magazine is a production of the Amsterdam Magic Society. If you like to contribute, send this to our editor & designer, Frans de Groot: amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com

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DEAR READER

Dear reader,

In this issue, we dive deep into some fascinating topics, from exploring the psychology of guilt in magic to uncovering the connection between magic and the brain. There's plenty to spark your curiosity! We kick things off with a look at three card monte—a classic con that has traveled under various names like Pimpernel, Bonneteau, and El Tribe across the globe. Our very own John Mosch gave an insightful talk on this legendary trick, and if you're a member, you can catch up with it in the exclusive Vimeo section. Speaking of con games, you might remember Jack Wilder's iconic street performance of three card monte in *Now You See Me 2*. If you haven't seen it, now's the perfect time to check it out. Watch it [here](#). For fans of the *Now You See Me* franchise, excitement is building for the third installment,

set to hit theaters this November. Be sure to check out the trailer [here](#).

We also have some exciting news! Biz is coming to lecture on Thursday, June 12th, and there's still time to sign up. It's an opportunity you won't want to miss!

ENJOY READING

Fritz with a Z

THREE CARD MONTE

HISTORY AND PRESENTATION

Three-card monte—also known as “find the lady” or the “three-card trick”—is a classic street con that has duped countless victims over centuries.

Despite its simple appearance, this scam is a masterclass in deception, psychology, and sleight of hand. This article delves into the mechanics of the trick, its rich history, and the tactics scammers use to ensnare unsuspecting individuals.



“This is, without a doubt, one of the finest tricks that I’ve ever learned. This is one of the most magical things you can do for a lay audience. I use it all the time, and I usually use it as an opener. I’ve done this pretty much all over the world. I’ve even done it during a stage show where they have image projection, and I’ll tell you, it always kills.”

BILL MALONE

The Illusion of Simplicity

At first glance, three-card monte appears to be a straightforward game. A dealer displays three cards—typically two black cards and one red queen—and places them face down on a surface. The objective seems simple: keep your eyes on the red queen as the dealer shuffles the cards and pick it out to win. However, this is where the illusion begins.

POPULARITY AND APPEAL

Relatable

- Fun game format (“Find the lady/ace”)
- Based on something real

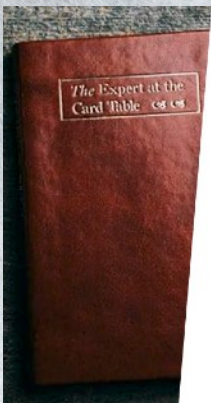
Easy plot to follow

- Works for children and adults
- Works even with a language barrier

Appeals to interests

- Gambling
- Con artists

The dealer employs sleight of hand to manipulate the cards, ensuring the red queen is never where it appears to be. Even if a player correctly identifies the queen, the dealer has tricks up their sleeve to prevent a payout. For instance, an accomplice might place a higher bet on the same card, and the dealer will honor the higher bet, leaving the original player empty-handed.



“But there is not a single card feat in the whole calendar that will give as good returns for the amount of practice required, or that will mystify as greatly, or cause as much amusement, or bear so much repetition, as this little game; and for these reasons we believe it worthy of unstinted effort to master thoroughly.”

S. W. ERDNAME



“This is an effect that I carry in my wallet and the story, plot and impact is simply wonderful. My routine is a hybrid of ideas from S. W. Erdnase, Dai Vernon, Roy Walton and Darwin Ortiz. I have performed this effect under many different conditions, and it never fails to entertain and register with a powerful impact.”

MICHAEL VINCENT



ORIGINS OF MONTE


Mexican Monte:

- 40-card deck (10s, 9s, and 8s removed).
- Banker deals top and bottom cards face-up
- The Monte (remaining deck) is placed in the middle
- Players bet on which card will match the gate card
- The Monte is turned over to reveal the gate (bottom) card
- Matching suit: Banker pays 1 for 1
- No match: Banker collects bets

Spanish Monte:

- Uses 4 face-up cards instead of 2.

The Psychology Behind the Scam



ORIGINS OF THREE CARD MONTE

First known record of a monte-style card scam is in France in 1408

- This version involved more than three cards but had similar gameplay and deception.
- The exact mechanics from that era remain unclear.

First known record of a three card scam called monte was "French Monte" in San Francisco in 1857

- French miners recently arrived in San Francisco
- In the two decades prior, three card games were played in New Orleans, which has French influences
- It is an invented ruse to distinguish it from Mexican and Spanish Monte and to give it legitimacy as another international version of Monte.

Three-card monte isn't just about quick hands; it's a psychological trap. Scammers often work in teams, with accomplices known as shills pretending to be enthusiastic players who win frequently. This creates a false sense of confidence in onlookers, making them believe they can also win.

THE HYPE – FIRST ILLUSTRATIONS

Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin (1861). *Les Triceries des Grecs Dévoilées*

- Held by long edges

Professor Hoffmann (1869). *More Magic*

- Held by first (index) and second (middle) fingers on short edges
- Large gap between cards

Erdnase, S. W. (1902). *The expert at the card table*

- Held by second (middle) and third (ring) fingers on short edges
- Small gap between cards

As the game progresses, the dealer might intentionally let a new player win a small amount to build trust. Once the player feels confident, they are encouraged to bet larger sums, only to lose them quickly. The entire setup is designed to manipulate emotions and cloud judgment.

POPULAR VERSIONS

	Vernon Monte (1961)	Color Monte (1974)	Skinner Monte (1990)	Stand Up Monte (2012)
Easy to follow	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Everyday carry (EDC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Easy to learn		Yes	Yes	
Easy handling/sleights		Yes	Yes	Yes
No table needed				Yes
In their hands				Yes
Inspectable	Yes	Yes		
Authentic	Yes			
Quick tips	Borderless card backs (e.g., Beel)	Red queen, black joker, and custom €280 card	Go very slow as a joke	Plastic pocket card holder



DAN HARLAN ON SUCKER TRICKS

- Severe dislike of sucker tricks
- Audiences, especially children
 - Dislike making wrong choices
 - Dislike losing games
 - Dislike feeling inferior
- Big reason people hate magicians
 - Stupid magician told me I was wrong
 - Stupid magician tricked me


A Historical Con

The origins of three-card monte trace back to the 15th century, making it one of the oldest known confidence tricks. One of the most infamous practitioners was William "Canada Bill" Jones, a 19th-century riverboat gambler renowned for his skill in the game. Jones was so adept at the con that he reportedly amassed significant wealth before dying penniless, a testament to the transient nature of ill-gotten gains.

PRESENTATION OPTIONS

Structure your presentation in a way where the audience does not make wrong choices

- Tell a story
 - Share a personal or third-person story
 - Character makes choices, not the audience
 - Character loses the game, not the audience
- Give a Demonstration
 - Explain how it works (the methods or the scam)
 - You choose, not the audience (e.g., "People would think it's this card")
 - No one loses the game



IF YOU INSIST ON HAVING THEM CHOOSE A CARD

- Soften the Blow
 - "Where would people think the card is?"
 - "Take a guess"
 - "That's what I thought too"
 - "That's where it should be"
- Help Them Win
 - Tell them what card to choose to win
 - "I'm trying to help you win" if they choose wrong
 - Make all choices winners
- Expect people to make unexpected choices
 - If method can be exposed, don't give a choice
 - Don't make them feel bad for something unexpected
 - "You're smart/clever"
 - "Now you're catching on"
 - "That's what I thought too"

TEXT: FRANS DE GROOT

IDEAS AND SLIDES ARE MADE BY JOHN MOSCH

The whole presentation of John can be found on our website at The Buzz/Buzztalks accessible only for members of The Amsterdam Magic Society!

Magic and the Brain



Magicians have been testing and exploiting the limits of cognition and attention for hundreds of years. Neuroscientists are just beginning to catch up.

The spotlight shines on the magician's assistant. The woman in the tiny white dress is a luminous beacon of beauty radiating from the stage to the audience. The Great Tomsoni announces he will change her dress from white to red. On the edge of their seats, the spectators strain to focus on the woman, burning her image deep into their retinas. Tomsoni claps his hands, and the spotlight dims ever so briefly before reflareing in a blaze of red. The woman is awash in a flood of redness.

Whoa, just a moment there! Switching color with the spotlight is not exactly what the audience had in mind. The magician stands at the side of the stage, looking pleased at his little joke. Yes, he admits, it was a cheap trick; his favorite kind, he explains devilishly. But you have to agree, he did turn her dress red along with the rest of her. Please, indulge him and direct your attention once more to his beautiful assistant as he switches the lights back on for the next trick. He claps his hands, and the lights dim again; then the stage explodes in a supernova of whiteness. But wait! Her dress really has turned red.

The Great Tomsoni has done it again! The trick and its explanation by John Thompson (aka the Great Tomsoni) reveal a deep intuitive understanding of the neural processes taking place in the spectators' brains the kind of understanding that we neuroscientists can appropriate for our own scientific benefit. Here's how the trick works. As Thompson introduces his assistant, her skintight white dress wordlessly lures the spectators into



assuming that nothing certainly not another dress — could possibly be hiding under the white one. That reasonable assumption, of course, is wrong. The attractive woman in her tight dress also helps to focus people's attention right where Thompson wants it - on the woman's body. The more they stare at her, the less they notice the hidden devices in the floor, and the better adapted their retinal neurons become to the brightness of the light and the color they perceive.

All during Thompson's patter after his little "joke," each spectator's visual system is undergoing a brain process called neural adaptation. The responsiveness of a neural system to a constant stimulus (as

measured by the firing rate of the relevant neurons) decreases with time. It is as if neurons actively ignore a constant stimulus to save their strength for signaling that a stimulus is changing. When the constant stimulus is turned off, the adapted neurons fire a “rebound” response known as an after discharge.

In this case, the adapting stimulus is the red dress, and Thompson knows that the spectators’ retinal neurons will rebound for a fraction of a second after the lights are dimmed. The audience will continue to see a red afterimage in the shape of the woman. During that split second, a trap door in the stage opens briefly, and the white dress, held only lightly in place with Velcro and attached to invisible cables leading under the stage, is ripped from her body. Then the lights come back up.

Two other factors help to make the trick work. First, the lighting is so bright just before the dress comes off that when it dims, the spectators cannot see the rapid motions of the cables and the white dress as they disappear underneath the stage. The same temporary blindness can overtake you when you walk from a sunny street into a dimly lit shop.

Second, Thompson performs the real trick only after the audience thinks it is already over. That gains him an important cognitive advantage — the spectators are not looking for a trick at the critical moment, and so they slightly relax their scrutiny.

The New Science of Neuromagic

Thompson’s trick nicely illustrates the essence of stage magic. Magicians are, first and foremost, artists of attention and awareness.

They manipulate the focus and intensity of human attention, controlling, at any given instant, what we are aware of and what we are not. They do so in part by employing bewildering combinations of visual illusions (such as afterimages), optical illusions (smoke and mirrors), special effects (explo-

sions, fake gunshots, precisely timed lighting controls), sleight of hand, secret devices and mechanical artifacts (“gimmicks”).

But the most versatile instrument in their bag of tricks may be the ability to create cognitive illusions. Like visual illusions, cognitive illusions mask the perception of physical reality. Yet unlike visual illusions, cognitive illusions are not sensory in nature. Rather they involve high-level functions such as attention, memory and causal inference. With all those tools at their disposal, well-practiced magicians make it virtually impossible to follow the physics of what is actually happening, leaving the impression that the

only explanation for the events is magic. Neuroscientists are just beginning to catch up with the magician’s facility in manipulating attention and cognition. Of course the aims of neuroscience are different from those of magic; the neuroscientist seeks to understand the brain and neuron underpinnings of cognitive functions, whereas the magician wants mainly to exploit cognitive weaknesses. Yet the techniques developed by magicians over centuries of stage magic could also be subtle and powerful probes in the hands of neuroscientists, supplementing and perhaps expanding the instruments already in experimental use. Neuroscience is becoming familiar with the methods of magic by subjecting magic itself to scientific study in some cases showing

KEY CONCEPTS

- Magic tricks often work by covert misdirection, drawing the spectator’s attention away from the secret “method” that makes a trick work.
- Neuroscientists are scrutinizing magic tricks to learn how they can be put to work in experimental studies that probe aspects of consciousness not necessarily grounded in current sensory reality.
- Brain imaging shows that some regions are particularly active during certain kinds of magic tricks.

—*The Editors*

for the first time how some of its methods work in the brain. Many studies of magic conducted so far confirm what is known about cognition and attention from earlier work in experimental psychology. A cynic might dismiss such efforts: Why do yet another study that simply confirms what is already well known?

But such criticism misses the importance and purpose of the studies. By investigating the techniques of magic, neuroscientists can familiarize themselves with methods that they can adapt to their own purposes. Indeed, we believe that cognitive neuroscience could have advanced faster had investigators probed magicians' intuitions earlier. Even today magicians may have a few tricks up their sleeves that neuroscientists have not yet adopted.

By applying the tools of magic, neuroscientists can hope to learn how to design more robust experiments and to create more effective cognitive and visual illusions for exploring the neural bases of attention and awareness. Such techniques could not only make experimental studies of cognition possible with clever and highly attentive subjects; they could also lead to diagnostic and treatment methods for patients suffering from specific cognitive deficits, such as attention deficits resulting from brain trauma, ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder), Alzheimer's disease, and the like. The methods of magic might also be put to work in "tricking" patients to focus on the most important parts of their therapy, while suppressing distractions that cause confusion and disorientation.

Cognitive neuroscience already recognizes at least two kinds of covert misdirection. In what is called change blindness, people fail to notice that something about a scene is different from the way it was before. The change may be expected or unexpected, but the key feature is that observers do not notice it by looking at the scene at any one instant in time. Instead the observer must compare the postchange state with the prechange state. Many studies have shown that changes need not be subtle to

cause change blindness. Even dramatic alterations in a visual scene go unnoticed if they take place during a transient interruption such as a blink, a saccadic eye movement (in which the eye quickly darts from one point to another) or a flicker of the scene. The "colorchanging card trick" video by psychologist and magician Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire in England is a dramatic example of the phenomenon (the video is seen here)



In Wiseman's demonstration, which you must see to appreciate, viewers fail to notice shifts in color that take place off camera. It is worth nothing that despite its name, the colorchanging card trick video does not use magic to make its point. In attentional blindness differs from change blindness in that there is no need to compare the current scene with a scene from memory. Instead people fail to notice an unexpected object that is fully visible directly in front of them.

Psychologist Daniel J. Simons invented a classic example of the genre. Simons and psychologist Christopher F. Chabris, both then at Harvard University, asked observers to count how many times a "team" of three basketball players pass a ball to each other, while ignoring the passes made by three other players. While they concentrated on counting, half of the observers failed to notice that a person in a gorilla suit walks across the scene (the gorilla even stops briefly at the center of the scene and beats its chest!).

No abrupt interruption or distraction was necessary to create this effect; the counting task was so absorbing that many observers who were looking directly at the gorilla nonetheless missed it.

Tricking the Eye or Tricking the Brain?

Magicians consider the covert form of misdirection more elegant than the overt form. But neuroscientists want to know what kinds of neural and brain mechanisms enable a trick to work. If the artistry of magic is to be adapted by neuroscience, neuroscientists must understand what kinds of cognitive processes that artistry is tapping into.

Perhaps the first study to correlate the perception of magic with a physiological measurement was published in 2005 by psychologists Gustav Kuhn of Durham University in England and Benjamin W. Tatler of the University of Dundee in Scotland. The two investigators measured the eye movements of observers while Kuhn, who is also a magician, made a cigarette “disappear” by dropping it below a table. One of their goals was to determine whether observers missed the trick because they were not looking in the right place at the right time or because they did not attend to it, no matter which direction they were looking. The results were clear: it made no difference where they were looking.

A similar study of another magic trick, the “vanishing-ball illusion,” provides further evidence that the magician is manipulating the spectators’ attention at a high cognitive level; the direction of their gaze is not critical to the effect. In the vanishing-ball illusion the magician begins by tossing a ball straight up and catching it several times without incident. Then, on the final toss, he only pretends to throw the ball. His head and eyes follow the upward trajectory of an imaginary ball, but instead of tossing the ball, he secretly palms it. What most spectators perceive, however, is that the (unthrown) ball ascends—and then vanishes in midair. The year after his study with Tatler, Kuhn and neurobiologist Michael F. Land

of the University of Sussex in England discovered that the spectators’ gaze did not point to where they themselves claimed to have seen the ball vanish. The finding suggested the illusion did not fool the brain systems responsible for the spectators’ eye motions. Instead, Kuhn and Land concluded, the magician’s head and eye movements were critical to the illusion, because they covertly redirected the spectators’ attentional focus (rather than their gaze) to the predicted position of the ball. The neurons that responded to the implied motion of the ball suggested by the magician’s head and eye movements are found in the same visual areas of the brain as neurons that are sensitive to real motion. If implied and real motion activate similar neural circuits, perhaps it is no wonder that the illusion seems so realistic.

Kuhn and Land hypothesized that the vanishing ball may be an example of “representational momentum.” The final position of a moving object that disappears is perceived to be farther along its path than its actual final position—as if the predicted position was extrapolated from the motion that had just gone before.

More Tools of the Trickery Trade

Spectators often try to reconstruct magic tricks to understand what happened during the show—after all, the more the observer tries (and fails) to understand the trick, the more it seems as if it is “magic.” For their part, magicians often dare their audiences to discover their methods, say, by “proving” that a hat is empty or an assistant’s dress is too tight to conceal a second dress underneath. Virtually everything done is done to make the reconstruction as hard as possible, via misdirection.

But change blindness and inattentional blindness are not the only kinds of cognitive illusions magicians can pull out of a hat. Suppose a magician needs to raise a hand to execute a trick. Teller, half of the renowned

stage magic act known as Penn & Teller, explains that if he raises his hand for no apparent reason, he is more likely to draw suspicion than if he makes a hand gesture—such as adjusting his glasses or scratching his head—that seems natural or spontaneous. To magicians, such gestures are known as “informing the motion.”

Unspoken assumptions and implied information are also important to both the perception of a trick and its subsequent reconstruction. Magician James Randi (“the Amazing Randi”) notes that spectators are more easily lulled into accepting suggestions and unspoken information than direct assertions. Hence, in the reconstruction the spectator may remember implied suggestions as if they were direct proof.

Psychologists Petter Johansson and Lars Hall, both at Lund University in Sweden, and their colleagues have applied this and other magic techniques in developing a completely novel way of addressing neuroscientific questions. They presented picture pairs of female faces to naive experimental subjects and asked the subjects to choose which face in each pair they found more attractive. On some trials the subjects were also asked to describe the reasons for their choice. Unknown to the subjects, the investigators occasionally used a sleight-of-hand technique, learned from a professional magician named Peter Rosengren, to switch one face for the other—after the subjects made their choice. Thus, for the pairs that were secretly manipulated, the result of the subject’s choice became the opposite of his or her initial intention.

Intriguingly, the subjects noticed the switch in only 26 percent of all the manipulated pairs. But even more surprising, when the subjects were asked to state the reasons for their choice in a manipulated trial, they confabulated to justify the outcome—an outcome that was the opposite of their actual choice! Johansson and his colleagues call the phenomenon “choice blindness.” By tacitly but strongly suggesting the subjects had already made a choice, the investigators were able to

study how people justify their choices—even choices they do not actually make.

The Pickpocket Who Picks Your Brain

Misdirection techniques might also be developed out of the skills of the pickpocket. Such thieves, who often ply their trade in dense public spaces, rely heavily on socially based misdirection—gaze contact, body contact and invasion of the personal space of the victim, or “mark.” Pickpockets may also move their hands in distinct ways, depending on their present purpose. They may sweep out a curved path if they want to attract the mark’s attention to the entire path of motion, or they may trace a fast, linear path if they want to reduce attention to the path and quickly shift the mark’s attention to the final position. The neuroscientific underpinnings of these maneuvers are unknown, but our research collaborator Apollo Robbins, a professional pickpocket, has emphasized that the two kinds of motions are essential to effectively misdirecting the mark. We have proposed several possible, testable explanations.

One proposal is that curved and straight hand motions activate two distinct control systems in the brain for moving the eyes. The “pursuit” system controls the eyes when they follow smoothly moving objects, whereas the “saccadic” system controls movements in which the eyes jump from one visual target to the next. So we have hypothesized that the pickpocket’s curved hand motions may trigger eye control by the mark’s pursuit system, whereas fast, straight motions may cause the saccadic system to take the lead. Then if the mark’s pursuit system locks onto the curved trajectory of the pickpocket’s hand, the center of the mark’s vision may be drawn away from the location of a hidden theft. And if fast, straight motions engage the mark’s saccadic system, the pickpocket gains the advantage that the mark’s vision is suppressed while the eye darts from point to point. (The

phenomenon is well known in the vision sciences as saccadic suppression.)

Another possible explanation for the distinct hand motions is that curved motions may be perceptually more salient than linear ones and hence attract stronger attention. If so, only the attentional system of the brain, not any control system for eye motions, may be affected by the pickpocket's manual misdirection. Our earlier studies have shown that the curves and corners of objects are more salient and generate stronger brain activity than straight edges. The reason is probably that sharp curves and corners are less predictable and redundant (and therefore more novel and informative) than straight edges. By the same token, curved trajectories may be less redundant, and therefore more salient, than straight ones.

Controlling Awareness in the Wired Brain

The possibilities of using magic as a source of cognitive illusion to help isolate the neural circuits responsible for specific cognitive functions seem endless. Neuroscientists recently borrowed a technique from magic that made volunteer subjects incorrectly link two events as cause and effect while images of the subjects' brains were recorded. When event A precedes event B, we often conclude, rightly or wrongly, that A causes B. The skilled magician takes advantage of that predisposition by making sure that event A (say, pouring water on a ball) always precedes event B (the ball disappearing). In fact, A does not cause B, but its prior appearance helps the magician make it seem so. Cognitive psychologists call this kind of effect illusory correlation.

In an unpublished study in 2006 Kuhn and cognitive neuroscientists Ben A. Parris and Tim L. Hodgson, both then at the University of Exeter in England, showed videos of magic tricks that involved apparent violations of cause and effect to subjects undergoing functional magnetic resonance imaging. The subjects' brain images were compared with those of a control group: people who watched videos showing no apparent causal violations.

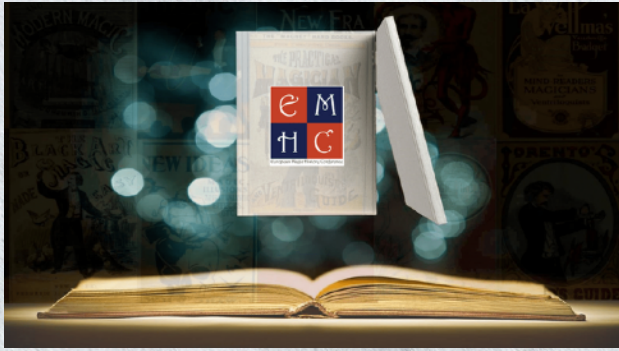
The investigators found greater activation in the anterior cingulate cortex among the subjects who were watching magic tricks than among the controls. The finding suggests that this brain area may be important for interpreting causal relationships.

The work of Kuhn and his colleagues only begins to suggest the power of the techniques of magic for manipulating attention and awareness while studying the physiology of the brain. If neuroscientists learn to use the methods of magic with the same skill as professional magicians, they, too, should be able to control awareness precisely and in real time. If they correlate the content of that awareness with the functioning of neurons, they will have the means to explore some of the mysteries of consciousness itself.

[THE AUTHORS]

Susana Martinez-Conde and **Stephen L. Macknik** are at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, where Martinez-Conde is director of the Laboratory of Visual Neuroscience and Macknik is director of the Laboratory of Behavioral Neurophysiology. Their article "Windows on the Mind" appeared in the August 2007 issue of *Scientific American*. The authors thank their magician collaborators for sharing many insights: Mac King, James Randi (aka the Amazing Randi), Apollo Robbins, Teller (from Penn & Teller) and John Thompson (aka the Great Tomsoni). They are also grateful to the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness and the Mind Science Foundation.





THE ASTI MANUSCRIPT

We confirm another conference that, personally, we consider unique in its kind and value, dedicated to an incredible book: the Asti Manuscript.

Discovered among piles of paper and old chairs in the 1980s, then apparently lost and then rediscovered in 2012, the "Asti Manuscript", a volume without a date or author, has been dated to a period between 1680 and 1730 due to the binding, the writing, the decorations and the type of ink. Aurelio Paviato studied the volume in depth with surprising results, finding techniques and effects thought to be prior to the dating of the work.

The Asti manuscript, a true discovery, a small revolution in the history of illusionism, then attracted the attention of the Conjuring Arts Research Center in New York, which in 2013 published a monographic issue of the magazine *Gibecière* dedicated to the volume, reproduced in its entirety and with the text translated into English.

Despite to the publication in the journal and the numerous newspaper articles about the discovery that have appeared in Italy, we are convinced that this volume has not received the due consideration, so we have asked Aurelio Paviato to resume the conference he prepared on the occasion of the discovery and to expand it, illustrating some of the techniques highlighted in the volume and speaking about the various "discoveries" made. Exclusively for the EMHC, Aurelio will therefore speak about this magnificent volume and the secrets it holds.

One more good reason to register! and if you haven't already, you can do so by following the link below:

[European Magic History Convention](#)





Out of sight out of my mind

Guilt.

Guilt in art is a subject I've struggled with a lot. This doesn't mean guilt in the way that we magicians can look at a guilty body—you know, the posture that gives away a palm or a move. I mean guilt in the mental sense. Feeling guilty because I'm not working on magic when I could be working on magic.

When my day job started to become more serious, this feeling of guilt started to rise. All of a sudden, I wasn't studying anymore, and I had to divide my time even more than I used to. Now I had to choose between magic and my other passions such as reading, music, cooking, and working out.

During some periods, I'd get obsessed over something other than magic—maybe a song on the guitar, such as Little Wing, or a design project like web design. I would get to a point where I'd spend all my free time that month doing that one thing—the one thing that interested and obsessed me at that moment. In the beginning, this was a huge source of guilt. I'd feel guilty because I was spending time that I could be spending on magic, on things that weren't magic.

I would tell myself how much better I could've been, how much further along, and how much more I could've known if I'd only spent my time on magic. Heck, I would be making more money with magic if I'd only spent my time doing magic as opposed to other things. Even though I had all these thoughts and feelings that were torturing me, I kept going.

For some reason, my current interest in a hobby kept prevailing, and I kept going with it. This is what eventually saved me.



There was a point when something clicked. I can still clearly remember that at one point I was learning Little Wing on the guitar, and I was having so much fun doing it!

I started to learn all these new and interesting ways to move across the fretboard, and all of a sudden, something clicked—something that made me better at magic.

A way to apply rhythm, and how that can be used to make things more interesting and different. I still have feelings of guilt from time to time when I'm not doing magic, but from the experience described above, I've learned something important:

"Everything that you learn can be applied to magic—it doesn't matter what it is."

This is a truth that keeps giving me peace of mind, but at the same time, keeps astounding me. I keep being able to make magic more interesting and magical just by using the things I've learned from other interests.

I would even go as far now as to say that people should start looking at other things they find interesting in order to become better magicians.

Leave magic for a while—something like a month would be enough—and pursue other things. When you come back, you will have noticed a shift. You'll have a new drive to do magic, but even more, you'll be able to apply new knowledge—be it conscious or unconscious.

RICO WEELAND

CAMPUS MAGICO

We do many things, on stage we do too many things. Our tricks are full of our things. Internal (secret) and external (perceived) things.

- Most of the time I perceive magicians who won't let their routines breathe.
- Please, breathe. Take a deeeep breath.
- And do you know what will happen?
- The silence.

And when silence... then you start listening. You will be able to hear things from the outside. And things from the inside.

This that you hear will affect you somehow. So your trick won't be an automatic repetition or an uncontrolled improvisation. And you will enjoy, discover and express in a richer way. When we have a script, we can act or react. And by reacting, I don't mean another automatic response from an unexpected event that takes us to a brief detour (maybe a gag stored somewhere in your memory) and then getting back to the prefixed road. Rather than a road, I prefer to think of the sea. In both cases, we have a goal destination, but rather than going in a straight line you can let yourself drift while keeping an eye on the destination (so we don't get lost in muddy waters).

Exercise

Take any of your tricks, play some random music, listen to it, breathe, start moving letting the music lead your body. No rush, no hurry, no predetermined moves.

And just notice what moments you enjoyed the most. Those moments when you were not deciding but just letting yourself be moved. Do it again with a complete different style of music. Let's take agency of our magic again. If you would like to discuss these topics further, feel free to reach out to have a talk. If you are looking for someone to help you go forward (or backwards) in your magic let's talk to see how can I help like I have helped so many magicians consulting, directing or advising. And if you are ready to fully embark in these feelings, we still have the last spots of Campus Magico 2025 waiting for you. For information click [here](#).

FERNANDO FIGUERAS



Curated Mysteries at Scala Amsterdam in June (20 min show)

Join Rico for a short format of Curated Mysteries. In 20 minutes Rico will take you through a short history of the world of magic, the meaning behind magic and why we should care about magic. You will see some of the most beautiful magic tricks lost in the sands of time, and now revived for the first time in an intimate magic performances in the city centre of Amsterdam."

For information and dates click [here](#)

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AGENDA

May 24 - 25 May - [Magicon 2025](#)
Meinerzhagen, Germany

May 31 - [Tampa Bay Festival of Magic](#) in
Tampa, Florida.

June 9 [AMSociety Meeting](#), Mascini
Amsterdam

June 11 [Bar Magic Show](#) Amsterdam

June 19 [Bar Magic Show](#) Amsterdam
Magic Circle Convention June 22

June 26 [Bar Magic Show](#) Amsterdam

July 3 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#): 9th
anniversary at Mascini Amsterdam

June 12 [Lecture BIZ](#), Amsterdam

June 22 [Magic Circle Convention](#) London

July 7-19 - [Melbourne Magic Festival](#)
Melbourne, Australia

July 9-12 - IBM Convention in Houston,
Texas. www.ibmconvention.com
and www.magician.org

July 14 [AMSociety Meeting](#), Mascini
Amsterdam

July 14-19 - [FISM/World Championship of
Magic](#) in Turin, Italy

July 27-31 - [FCM International
Convention](#) in Danville, Indiana, USA

July 30 through August 2 - [Abbott's Get
Together](#) in Colon, Michigan - USA

August 3-6 - [MAGIC Live!](#) in Las Vegas
Nevada - USA

August 12 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) ft.
Michal Skubida

August 13-16 - [KIDabra](#): Chatanooga,
Tennessee - USA

August 21 - 24 - [European Magic Historic
Conference](#) Riga, Latvia





Amsterdam Magic Society

Zeedijk 24

1012 AZ Amsterdam

www.amsterdammagicsociety.com

amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com

