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RIVERSIDE: Researchers to discuss effects of magic



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10:00 PM PST on Thursday, November 25, 2010

Special to The Press-Enterprise

Two researchers from The Barrow Neurological Institute will discuss and demonstrate how magic tricks and visual illusions give insights into how our brain functions on Dec. 1 at 4:30 p.m. at the [University of California, Riverside](#).

Vision and cognition researchers Stephen Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde will address "Sleights of Mind: The Neuroscience of Magic" -- how the visual and cognitive illusions developed by artists and magicians can be applied to the study of neural bases of consciousness and perception. Their presentation will be in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Building 1128. The event is free and open to the public. Parking costs \$5.

Macknik and Martinez-Conde co-authored with [New York Times](#) science correspondent Sandra Blakeslee "Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic Reveals about Our Everyday Deceptions," published this month by [Henry Holt](#) and Co. The book is the first written about the neuroscience of magic."

All our life, every object we see, every person we know and every incident we experience are derived from brain processes, and not necessarily the result of an event in the real world," Macknik and Martinez-Conde wrote. "The same neural machinery that interprets the sensory inputs also creates our thoughts, imaginations and dreams; thus the world we experience and the world we imagine have the same physical bases in the brain.

"Just as physicists study the most minute subatomic particles and the largest galactic conglomerates to understand the universe, neuroscientists must examine the cerebral processes to understand how the brain builds our experience of reality. Likewise, the principles developed by magicians and illusionists throughout history can be very useful to manipulate attention and awareness in the laboratory."

The Barrow Neurological Institute of St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Ariz., is known worldwide as a leader in neurological research and patient care.

The event is sponsored by the UC Riverside Center for Ideas and Society.

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