



Attention and awareness in stage magic: turning tricks into research

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“ Just as vision scientists study visual art and illusions to elucidate the workings of the visual system, so too can cognitive scientists study cognitive illusions to elucidate the underpinnings of cognition. Magic shows are a manifestation of accomplished magic performers' deep intuition for and understanding of human attention and awareness. By studying magicians and their techniques, neuroscientists can learn powerful methods to manipulate attention and awareness in the laboratory. Such methods could be exploited to directly study the behavioural and neural basis of consciousness itself, for instance through the use of brain imaging and other neural recording techniques.

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