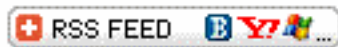




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Monday, 11 August 2008

### Magicians: Neurologists!

Proving once again that innovation can come from anywhere, the conjunction between magic and neuroscience has of late been quite productive. [Boston Globe](#):

In the past year... a few researchers have begun to realize that magic represents... a deep and untapped store of knowledge about the human mind.

At a major conference last year in Las Vegas, in a scientific paper published last week and another due out this week, psychologists have argued that magicians, in their age-old quest for better ways to fool people, have been engaging in cutting-edge, if informal, research into how we see and comprehend the world around us. Just as studying the mechanisms of disease reveals the workings of our body's defenses, these psychologists believe that studying the ways a talented magician can short-circuit our perceptual system will allow us to better grasp how the system is put together.

'I think magicians and cognitive neuroscientists are getting at similar questions, but while neuroscientists have been looking at this for a few decades, magicians have been looking at this for centuries, millennia probably,' says Susana Martinez-Conde, a neuroscientist at the Barrow Neurological Institute and coauthor of [one of the studies](#), published online last week in Nature Reviews Neuroscience. 'What magicians do is light-years ahead in terms of sophistication and the power of these techniques.' (hyperlink added)

If you're interested in experiencing that short-circuited perception for yourself, catch Teller, who will be at the IdeaFestival in September. Individual and all-access passes [are available now](#).

Wayne

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