

Written a Book?

Claim Your FREE *Writer's Guide to Publishing* and learn how to publish your book now.

Advertise on NYTimes.com

THE SCAN

Science Events: Magic Illusions and the Music of Particles



Shannon Paras

A teacher performs an experiment in the 2010 Iron Science Teacher competition.

By JASCHA HOFFMAN
Published: June 24, 2013

Coming events and reading matter at the intersection of science and culture.

Connect With Us on Social Media @nytimescience on Twitter.

Science Reporters and Editors on Twitter

Like the science desk on Facebook.



CONTEST

Iron Science Teacher Competition.

Exploratorium, Pier 15, San Francisco. June 28 and July 12 at noon. Included with museum admission (\$25 adult, \$19 students/teachers). [\(Live webcast.\)](#)

In the cult Japanese television show “[Iron Chef](#),” frantic cooks have an hour to whip up a meal around a secret ingredient like river eel or asparagus. At this competition at the San Francisco [Exploratorium](#), science teachers will face a similar trial. Before a live audience, and with running commentary, they must transform everyday items into eye-popping science lessons. Past years’ ingredients have included paper clips, light bulbs, chalk, leaves and eggs. “It makes science more approachable to see it in everyday objects,” said Linda Shore, who directs the museum’s Teacher Institute, which hosts the competition. When money is scarce, cheap demonstrations also allow instructors to, as one teacher put it, “teach the \$10 million state science standards on a \$10 budget.”

SOUND

[Collide@CERN](#). Public lecture by Bill Fontana. Globe of Science and Innovation, CERN, Switzerland. July 4 at 7 p.m. (Live webcast.)

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on Log In With Facebook nytimes.com Privacy Policy | What's This?

What's Popular Now

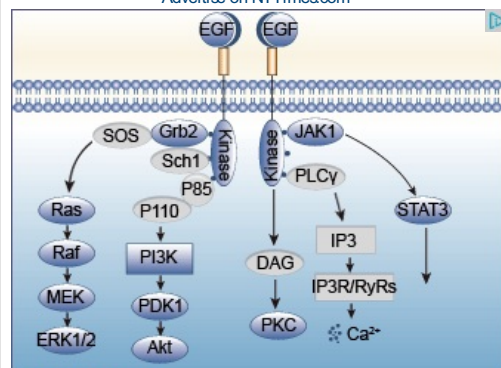
Gay Married Man in Florida Is Approved for Green Card



Germans Loved Obama. Now We Don't Trust Him.



Advertise on NYTimes.com



Selleckchem.com | EGFR Pathway

MOST E-MAILED

MOST VIEWED

- ROME JOURNAL
When Italians Chat, Hands and Fingers Do the Talking
- PAYING TILL IT HURTS
American Way of Birth, Costliest in the World
- From the Mouths of Babes and Birds
- PAUL KRUGMAN
War On the Unemployed
- Actors Today Don't Just Read for the Part.
Reading IS the Part.
- Paid via Card, Workers Feel Sting of Fees
- Breaking the Seal on Drug Research
- OPINION
Germans Loved Obama. Now We Don't Trust Him.
- The Suicide Detective

[FACEBOOK](#)
[TWITTER](#)
[GOOGLE+](#)
[SAVE](#)
[E-MAIL](#)
[SHARE](#)
[PRINT](#)
[REPRINTS](#)

STEVE CARELL
TONI COLLETTE



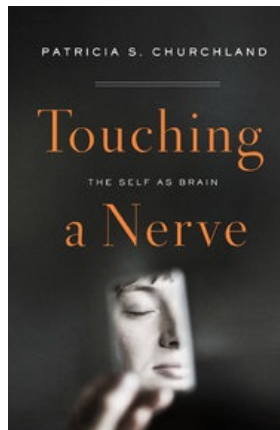
Stuart Davidson

For 30 years the sound sculptor [Bill Fontana](#) has transformed structures like the Golden Gate Bridge and the Eiffel Tower into enormous sound installations. What could he do with the world's largest particle accelerator? We're about to find out as Mr. Fontana begins his residency at CERN, the European physics lab that runs the [Large Hadron Collider](#). At a lecture on the first anniversary of the announcement of a particle believed to be the Higgs boson, Mr. Fontana will play [recordings he gathered last winter of particle-accelerating machines](#). (This summer, with the accelerator turned off, he will echo these sounds through the 17-mile tunnel.) The young cosmologist Subodh Patil, chosen as Mr. Fontana's "inspiration partner," will also speak. "The cosmic microwave background can be thought of as the echo of the Big Bang that we're still 'hearing,'" Dr. Patil wrote in an e-mail. "My recent work has focused on understanding how variations in the speed of sound during inflation imprints distinct overtones on the echo."

BOOK

Touching a Nerve: The Self as Brain, by Patricia S. Churchland. Norton. 304 pages. \$26.95. (Read an [excerpt](#).)

"You cannot understand the mind without understanding how the brain works," writes the philosopher Patricia S. Churchland in this marvelous [book](#), which uses recent findings from neuroscience and evolution to illuminate deep questions about human nature. After early chapters debunking the soul and afterlife, Dr. Churchland gives a nuanced account of sex, violence and morality, working up gently but ambitiously from brain chemicals to ethical norms. She predicts that consciousness, which she believes may be shared in some form by all mammals and birds, will eventually be understood by the convergence of "a million little important results," not by a miraculous discovery. Throughout the book Dr. Churchland draws on episodes from her early life on a Canadian farm to illustrate her arguments. A trustworthy guide, she gives comfort not by simplifying the research but by asking the right questions.



MUSEUM

[Illusion. Science Gallery](#). Trinity College, Dublin. Opens July 11.



10. NEWSANALYSIS
The End of Car Culture

[Go to Complete List »](#)

[Show My Recommendations](#)



Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

[The Future of Glasses](#)

Perfect Focus for Every Distance

Try Superfocus Risk Free

www.superfocus.com/BestGlasses

A good magician exploits the flaws and biases of your nervous system. A new show at the Science Gallery in Dublin, curated by the psychologist [Richard Wiseman](#), asks what the illusions might reveal about how our brains work. The show will feature a variety of deceptive artworks, many involving mirrors. In a reflective trick popular in the Victorian era, glowing letters will seem to fly from a glass bottle. In a high-tech illusion, viewers' expressions are [mimicked by an animal's head](#) overlaid on their own in a digitally enhanced mirror. There will also be some good old-fashioned tricks, with a pair of neuroscientists — Stephen Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde, co-authors of "[Sleights of Mind](#)" — on hand to explain their cognitive underpinnings. "Illusions allow us to study how and why the brain fills in missing or ambiguous information," said Paul Gleeson, a researcher for the show who is also a magician.



A version of this review appeared in print on June 25, 2013, on page D5 of the New York edition.

[f](#)
[t](#)
[+](#)
[SAVE](#)
[E-MAIL](#)
[SHARE](#)

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

- CERN
- Fontana, Bill
- Exploratorium
- Science and Technology

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

Brain Training Games

Improve memory and attention with scientific brain games.
www.lumosity.com

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM

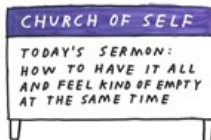


U.S. »



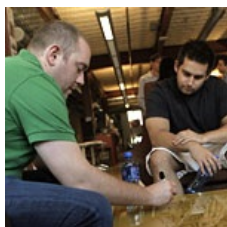
In Wyoming, Signs of Same-Sex Marriage Thaw

OPINION »



The Stone: The Gospel According to 'Me'

BUSINESS »

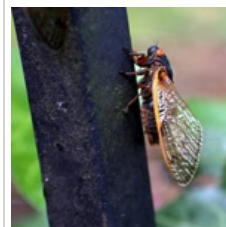


Detroit Seeks App Builders

OPINION »

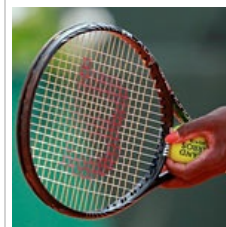
Coming Out About Abortion
 Room for Debate asks whether the shape of the debate would change if more women discussed their experiences.

N.Y. / REGION »



Cicadas Go Quiet, but Many Missed the Show

TENNIS »



Williams Began Surge With Racket Change