THE ART OF ILLUSION...

Wired | The trick is called Looks Simple, and the point is that even a puff on a cigarette, closely examined, can disintegrate into smoke and mirrors. "People take reality for granted," Teller says shortly before stepping onstage. "Reality seems so simple. We just open our eyes and there it is. But that doesn’t mean it is simple."

"Tricks work only because magicians know, at an intuitive level, how we look at the world," says Macknik, lead author of the paper. "Even when we know we're going to be tricked, we still can't see it, which suggests that magicians are fooling the mind at a very deep level." By reverse-engineering these deceptions, Macknik hopes to illuminate the mental loopholes that make us see a woman get sawed in half or a rabbit appear out of thin air even when we know such stuff is impossible. "Magicians were taking advantage of these cognitive illusions long before any scientist identified them," Martinez-Conde says.

Fist tap to my man Dale.