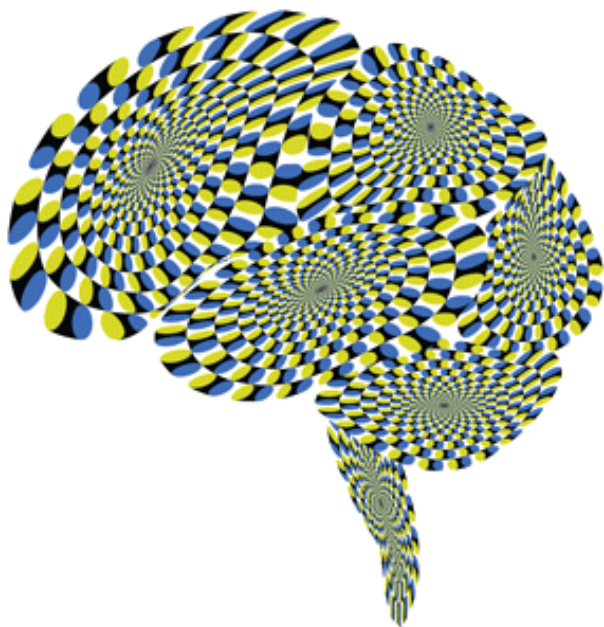


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Snakes on a brain

The latest *Journal of Neuroscience* features a [study](#) on the neuroscience behind Akiyoshi Kitaoka's famous [Rotating Snakes illusion](#) and to celebrate they're made a 'Rotating Brain' illusion for the front cover.



This type of illusion, often called a [peripheral drift illusion](#), was thought to occur due to slow drifting eye movements but this new study suggests that it is more likely to be explained by rapid but tiny eye movements called [saccades](#).

Brain-shaped version of Akiyoshi Kitaoka's "Rotating Snakes" illusion. In its usual presentation, the image consists of concentric circles of stepwise luminance gradients with curved edges, which produces a strong illusion of rotation in most observers. New evidence suggests this illusion is produced by transient oculomotor events such as microsaccades, saccades, and blinks, rather than continuous

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drift.

Despite the fantastic cover I expect the journal to outdo itself next time and have both an article explaining the neuroscience [Brocken spectre](#) as well as an image you can hide up a mountainside to create 20 metre tall ghost-like figures.

[Link to study](#) (via [BoingBoing](#))

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This entry was written by [vaughanbell](#) and posted on April 27, 2012 at 9:16 pm and filed under [Inside the Brain](#), [Seeing](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#). Follow any comments here with the [RSS feed for this post](#). [Post a comment](#) or leave a [trackback](#): [Trackback URL](#).

2 Comments



Mason Kelsey

Posted April 27, 2012 at 10:47 pm | [Permalink](#)

You write, "...a strong illusion of rotation in most observers."

So what does it mean if you don't see any rotation at all?

[Reply](#)



Rich

Posted April 30, 2012 at 12:16 pm | [Permalink](#)

I found that if I tracked across the image more or less randomly the snakes rotated. If I fixed my gaze on one of the black dots at the centre of a snake the rotation quickly stopped.

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